LRC Guidelines for the 3-Article Draft* Dissertation
(A article draft becomes an article only AFTER it is published)

NOTE: The 3 article-draft dissertation alters the format—but not the extent of the research and the substantive commitment—expected in traditional dissertation research. This “alternative” dissertation option is available to ALL, but is most appropriate for doc students who are planning to apply for tenure-stream positions in research institutions, during their last year in the doctoral program.

What is it?
The 3 stand-alone article-draft dissertation option is very different from the traditional 5-chapter dissertation. Many claim that it is more challenging and more time consuming. So, WHY would anyone select this option? This option has gained popularity in recent years across many institutions of higher education—especially after the 2008 stock market crash. Limited state support of higher education institutions, the narrowing of tenure-stream positions, and, consequently, tougher competition among candidates, have made this option gain track—especially for candidates at research institutions, where teaching loads are usually lower (4 courses a year, compared to 6-9 courses a year in “teaching” institutions).

What is a stand-alone article draft?
Contrary to the dissertation chapters that typically convey a section/part of the whole study, a stand-alone empirical article draft includes ALL the components of a research project/dissertation in it (i.e., Introduction, Theoretical Framework(s), Relevant Literature, Methods, Findings/Results and Discussion/Implications).

The 3-article draft dissertation will comprise of:
- An abstract that synthesizes all 3 article drafts (250-500 words)
- A short introductory chapter
- 3 stand-alone article drafts. The length and style of each article drafts will vary depending on the peer-reviewed journal to which it will be intended—students should follow each journal’s guidelines for authors
- A short concluding chapter

The short introduction should function as the cord that weaves the 3 article drafts together and describes, for the reader, their ‘collective meaning’ and their ‘combined contribution’ to the field. It should include: □1) A definition or statement of the problem or research questions, and which ms addresses which; □2) A statement of the importance of the problem, i.e., the rationale, why it is worth researching, why it matters to the field; □3) The theoretical foundation(s) across all 3 article drafts; 4) A brief summary of which literature is reviewed where; 5) The methodology used to answer the RQs posited.

The short conclusion will briefly summarize the dissertation’s major findings, limitations, discussion, and recommendations. The student will also present and discuss linkages (i.e., similarities and differences) between the separate article drafts that are included in the dissertation, striving as much as possible to present the document as
chance of publication success.

The formal dissertation proposal for the 3-article dissertation should be the same as the traditional dissertation proposal. After, once you have collected your data, you should send a short proposal updating your committee members on your plans for producing 3-articles. The proposal for this option must include:

a. A draft abstract for each the 3 potential article drafts  
b. List of proposed peer-reviewed journals, 1 journal per article draft  
c. An updated timeline for the completion of the work.

Dissertation defense

The defense of the dissertation proposal is expected to parallel the proposal defense for a traditional dissertation.

Students should decide as early as possible, in concert with their dissertation chair, whether to pursue the 3-manuscripts dissertation format. However, students may switch from one format to the other at any time provided that their dissertation committee approves the switch (we will need a form).

An example of how to “split” your LRC dissertation into 3 article drafts:

- One empirical research article geared towards to a tier 1 research journal (for example: Language, Identity and Society or QSE, Journal of Applied Linguistics, English Education, Anthropology & Education Quarterly (AEQ), etc.)
- One empirical article to submit to a tier 1 or a crossover ms (crossover journals include: Journal of Adult & Adolescent Literacy (JAAL) or to Language Arts, Journal of Latinos in Education, Theory into Practice, etc.
- One practitioner ms to be submitted to a journal such as Voices from the Middle, Talking Points, The Clearing House, English Journal, etc.