

Some Notes on Writing CGSC Comps Proposals

Begin, somewhere early (page 1 or 2) with an overview of the question you are pursuing. Provide some rationale for its importance to the field of cognitive science, and make it clear how this thesis will credibly serve as an integration or capstone experience for your major. (This rationale could come at the end of the proposal, but it should be somewhere).

Next, include a literature review. What's been done on this problem, by whom, and what are the current controversies and issues? In other words, what background are you drawing on, and what does a reader need to know to follow the proposal?

Next, give an overview of either your proposed design (empirical comps) or structure (outline) of your paper (lit review). What are the "boundaries" of your paper? What sources will you rely most heavily upon? What will your approach be? Lit review comps—you are now done!

For empirical comps, end your first section with a statement of your hypotheses (limit to a reasonable number, please!) The rationale for the hypotheses should be evident from your lit review.

Next comes your method section—list in details who you will recruit and how, what materials you will use, what instructions you will give and what procedures you will follow.

Next, results. Give as detailed an account as possible of the statistical analyses you are planning, and how these connect to your hypotheses.

Next, discussion. What pattern(s) of results will support your hypotheses, which will disconfirm them, and which will be ambiguous?