



***Assignment 4:  
Final Research Paper Proposal***

***ScWk 242 – Session 14 Slides***

# ***Methods & Research Design***

- **Identify and describe the quantitative and the qualitative research designs that you are proposing. Provide a brief rationale for why you chose these research designs to study your topic.**
- **What are some quantitative designs?**
- **What are some qualitative designs?**

# *Sample*

- **Identify and describe the sampling method you are proposing for the quantitative and qualitative portions of the proposed study (i.e., simple random sampling, convenience sampling, etc.)**
- **Indicate the anticipated sample size for quantitative and qualitative samples**
- **Describe (in general) the anticipated demographic characteristics of your quantitative and qualitative samples**

## ***Study Site***

- **Identify and describe where your study will take place, including city and state and, if applicable, agency name.**

# ***Measures and Instrumentation***

For the *quantitative* portion of the proposed study:

- Identify and describe the *operational definition* (e.g. how it is measured) for the independent and the dependent variables.
- Describe the *type of quantitative study instrument* being used, such as a survey, a case record review form, or if the data are supposed to come from administrative data, indicate that here.
- Describe *the reliability of the quantitative study instrument*, if known. If not known, then describe how you would address reliability issues (e.g. how will you know if the instrument is reliable)?
- Describe *the validity of the quantitative study instrument*, if known. If not known, then describe how you would address validity issues (e.g. how will you know if the instrument is valid)?

## ***For the qualitative portion of the proposed study:***

- **Identify and describe *the main domains that are to be explored* (e.g. the main topics you are going to ask about)**
- **Describe *the type of qualitative study instrument* being proposed, such as a semi-structured interview guide, or a focus group guide.**
- **Describe how potential issues related to the *credibility and trustworthiness* of the data will be addressed**

# ***Human Subjects Considerations***

- **Describe how you will obtain informed consent, ensure participants' confidentiality or anonymity, protect them from harm, and submit your proposal to an IRB for review and approval.**
- **Data Collection Procedures**
- **Describe, step by step, how you will:**
  - **Recruit potential participants (if applicable)**
  - **Collect data from participants**
  - **What will happen when you collect data (survey, interview questions, audio recording, field notes, etc..)**
  - **If the proposed study includes an intervention, describe the intervention in this section**



# ***Proposed Analysis***

For the quantitative portion:

- Describe the types of descriptive statistics that you are proposing to use for each variable of interest, including: demographic variables, the independent variable, the dependent variable and also any important extraneous (i.e. confounding) variables that may influence the possible relationship between the independent and the dependent variables.
- Describe the type of inferential statistics that you are proposing to use to test your hypothesis.





## ***For the Qualitative Portion:***

- Describe your anticipated process for qualitative analysis (i.e. ongoing, cyclical process of reading and re-reading transcripts and field notes)
- Describe the coding process you will use (content, thematic, comparative, narrative), you can combine these approaches.

## ***Study Design Strengths and Limitations***

- **Describe the potential strengths and limitations of your proposed methods.**
- **Consider strengths and limitations of each component in the methods section, however describe here only the most important strengths and limitations.**

## ***Anticipated Findings and Implications***

- **Include in a separate section**
- **Briefly state what you expect your findings to be, and explain the implications of your specific, anticipated results for social work (i.e., its influence on practice, policy, theory, and/or future research).**

# Minimum of 15 References

- **Although a majority of references are cited in the literature review, the introduction and methods section can contain references as well.**
- **Appendices: This section contains your demographic questions, interview questions if applicable or other items and questions, copies of your instruments, and/or other detailed documentation relevant to your study.**

# *Grading and Evaluation*

## *Evaluation of writing:*

- **Extensively edit your own paper and/or have others assist you.**
- **Do not expect your instructor to edit your draft or final paper for you.**
- **It is your responsibility to read through the paper to identify and fix errors.**
- **The word program will usually show many of these problems colored in red or green – FIX THEM!**

# ***Linking Literature Review to Your Proposal***

**Make *clear connections* between:**

- **The information presented in your *literature review***
- **Your *research statement* (“This research examines....”)**
- **Your *hypothesis* (quantitative) and your *research question* (qualitative)**
  - ✓ **Is there a logical connection between the information that you present and your research statement?**
  - ✓ **Can the reader easily see why your proposed study would be important to the field of social work?**

# *Writing: Technical Issues*

- **Do not use contractions in professional writing:**
  - Don't should be: do not, etc...).
- **When starting a sentence with a number, write the number out in words**
- **Affect vs. Effect:**
  - Affect is a verb or adverb, e.g., “Youth in the foster care system are affected by a number of challenging situations.”
  - Effect is a noun or object, e.g., “Multiple placement changes can have a number of negative effects on youth in the foster care system.”

# *Writing: Technical Issues*

**Paraphrase—do not generally use quotes:**

- **Paraphrasing means to use your own words to summarize and/or synthesize someone else's work**
- **Only use a quote of a passage of text if it is of some distinction or you are providing the definition of a concept.**
- **Paraphrasing is a skill that requires you to fully understand the meaning of the text you are citing.**
- **For more information see:**

**<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/619/1/>**



# *Writing: Technical Issues*

**Ensure adequate paragraph structure:**

- **Paragraphs should be at least three sentences (beginning (transition), middle (content) and end (conclusion))**
- **Paragraphs should focus on one idea and should never be longer than one page double spaced.**

# *Writing Tips*

- **Lead the reader on a journey (tell a good story) about why the study that you are proposing is important.**
- **Common feedback:**
  - ✓ **Re-word to improve clarity**
  - ✓ **Use topic-specific sub-section headings**
  - ✓ **Use transition sentences and phrases to link ideas**

# *Writing Tips*

- **Make sure to back up your statements with references. If you say: “Studies show...” “Research indicates...” There should be at least one reference after that sentence.**
- **Qualify whenever possible your own interpretations about research evidence as possibilities, rather than facts.**

# *APA In-Text Citations*

- **Properly cite secondary sources**
- **No “&” within in-text citations**
- **When referencing in-text:**
  - Use just the authors last name and date**  
(no first names, book title, journal/  
article titles or presentation titles)

# *APA In-Text Citations*

- Use page numbers for direct quotes only
- Use et al., for in-text citations only after you have already listed out all of the authors—if there are 6 or fewer authors (if more than 6, use et al. the first time).
- If there are only two authors, each author is listed every time

# ***More APA Rules***

**When describing a *population*—*put the individual first*, rather than the disorder/problem:**

- **People with mental illness (vs. the mentally ill)**
- **People with a substance use disorder vs. addicts, alcoholics etc...**
- **People with Autism vs. Autistics**
- **People who are undocumented or with unauthorized citizenship status vs. illegal immigrants**
- **Etc....**

# *Formatting Rules*

- **Do not use I, me, my, we, etc. - Use the third person, such as the author, this writer, etc.**
- **Use 12-point Times New Roman font with 1 inch margins throughout – change bottom margin to .8 if needed to ensure the margins area all the same size.**
- **Set orphan and widow controls**
- **Use ragged right, not right-justified margins**

# *Final Tips*

- **The due date is the last day of class on May 8**
- **Papers may be submitted via hardcopy in class, in my mailbox that afternoon, or via e-mail that day**
- **Your instructor can provide one quick review of a draft submitted at least three days prior to the due date, but only if your grade so far is B or less.**
- **Be sure to organize your work and stay on track – do not wait until the day before the assignment is due.**
- **Papers will be corrected within one week. You may give the instructor a self-addressed stamped envelope for mail-back of hard copies. Electronic copies will be returned via e-mail.**