ED 5006 Discussions and Notes:

Online Journal

Useful references:

<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/general>   Purdue University writing guidelines from Donna Hardy

www.polyu.edu.hk/htm/pdf/app_9_sample_outline_for_dissertation_new.pdf   from Michelle Gault

Henrichsen, L., Smith M. T. & Baker, D. S. (1997). Taming the research beast: Research methods in TESL and language acquisition. Retrieved October 27, 2003, from <http://linguistics.byu.edu/faculty/henrichsenl/researchmethods/RM_1_04.html>

from Michelle:

The great debate:
Positivist vs. postpositivist.
Qualitative vs. quantitative.
Existential vs. reality therapy.
Behavioral learning vs. constructivist learning.

"Of all of the above mentioned methods of discovering and acquiring knowledge, I think the most unusual or hardest to understand is knowledge derived from intuition and creativity."

That falls perfectly in line with information I found online about how knowledge is created by people. There are five ways (Weldon, 2002):

1. Experiential
2. Traditional (advice, rules, etc)
3. Authoritarian (experts in the field)
4. Experimental (scientific approach)
5. Revelational

It seems that the type you are describing is revelational. How did Einstein come up with those theories of relativity which seem to have no relation to his day to day personal experiences? Was it a divine calling? A burning bush? I have to wonder how much new knowledge comes from this source. And how valid and reliable is it when it does not come from a scientific source?...

Weldon, W. (March 2002). Research seminar: Part one ? qualitative research. Retrieved October 5, 2003, from <http://alfa.pedf.cuni.cz/~www_kppg/documents/qrs.rtf>

http://edemocracy.meetup.com/members/878

http://dmoz.org/Society/Politics/Democracy/Direct_Democracy/

http://www.dominion-web.com/directory/Top/Society/Politics/Democracy/Direct_Democracy

http://www.free-project.org/connect/links/

http://www.democracy-online.org/

http://www.election.com/

http://www.votehere.net/

http://www.lib.ied.edu.hk/edarticle/civic.htm

http://edu.uwe.ac.uk/cred/bibliographic/papers.asp

[Before the Citizenship Order: A Survey of Citizenship Education Practice in England. <http://www.lib.ied.edu.hk/cgi-bin/edarticle?EJ647064>](http://www.lib.ied.edu.hk/cgi-bin/edarticle?EJ647064); By Halpern, David

Chomsky, N. (1994) 'Democracy and Education' (Direct to: http://www.zmag.org/chomsky/talks/9410-education.html)

http://66.218.71.225/search/cache?p=Englund,+T.+(2000)+%27Rethinking+Democracy+and+Education%3a+towards+an+education+of+deliberative+citizens%27+&sub=Search&ei=UTF-8&url=_OVXu4mjRfgJ:www.oekonomische-bildung.de/materialien/download/Citizenship.pdf or the same in pdf:

http://www.oekonomische-bildung.de/materialien/download/Citizenship.pdf   citizenship and economic understanding in England

http://hub1.worlded.org/docs/vera/index1.htm   Civic Participation and Community Action Sourcebook

http://www.egov.vic.gov.au/Research/ElectronicDemocracy/voting.htm

http://www.louiseferguson.com/resources/evoting.htm

http://66.218.71.225/search/cache?p=The+Internet,+Democracy+and+Community%3a+another.big.lie.,+Hern,+Matt%3b+Chauk,+Stu+&sub=Search&ei=UTF-8&url=-5JvmVbc3NsJ:www.ncl.ac.uk/geps/research/politics/Schlosberg%2520Paper.doc

http://www.citejournal.org/vol2/iss4/socialstudies/article1.cfm   Computer Technology in Social Studies

http://66.218.71.225/search/cache?p=The+E-citizen.+Instructional+Technology.,+Lee,+John+K.++&sub=Search&ei=UTF-8&url=fe_aPyZrSDAJ:www.efmd.be/learninggroups/chapter/eisb2001proceedings/pdfs/MacNamara%2520%2520O%27Donnell%2520.pdf

Developing e-Citizens and e-Consumers, an Irish e-Commerce Case Study, MacNamara, O'Donnell

http://66.218.71.225/search/cache?p=Elections+in+Cyberspace.,+Corrado,+Anthony&sub=Search&ei=UTF-8&url=2f3nxBy21C4J:www.colby.edu/govt/ajc/Corrado_Brief.doc   Elections in Cyber Space

http://hub1.worlded.org/docs/vera/index1.htm   Civic Participation and Community Action Sourcebook

http://www.vote.org/economis.htm   from the Economist about direct democracy

http://www.cpsr.org/conferences/cfp93/shamos.html Electronic Voting

http://www.vote.org/swiss.htm   swiss egov

http://www.svekom.se/skvad/E-democracy-en.pdf   e-democracy in Sweden

http://www.rileyis.com/report/index.html evolution of e-government

http://publicus.net/articles/edempublicnetwork.html Steven Clif e-dem, e-gov, and public network

http://www.aic.gov.au/publications/tandi/ti224.pdf   Electronic Voting Benefits and Risks Dr. R Smith

http://www.mcil.co.uk/proceedings/2-proceedings-eceg2001.htm list of titles about egov, etc.

From Michele Gault

In addition to the recommendations given by our textbook on how to complete a literature review, I found some great suggestions from experts on this topic. For instance (CQU, 2000):

1. Make sure to keep complete and accurate records of everything read.
2. Identify referencing requirements and learn the style as soon as you can.
3. Summarise every paper you read
4. Think holistically (get the big picture)
5. Do not be afraid to think 'outside the square' - it is your review so try to find your own insights rather than just copy previous work.
6. Break the review into thematic sections, treat each thematic area as a 'mini' review.
7. Identify parent disciplines.
8. Go to leading journals and search for the recent issues for the latest information on the topic area. Use the references in those articles, and for "snowballing" - bouncing back and going through the history of the topic area.
9. While writing the discussion part of the literature review, defining your key points, keep the web browser open with SportDiscus (for example). So when you are looking for key points when writing, do a search to get the abstracts (in that key area). This helps formulate ideas. A great way of keeping rhythm going in your writing.

10) This is my own idea -> I use the highlighter option in Word so when I find sections of an article I like I can highlight them and save them for later. It really saves time.
I wanted to share these ideas because I thought they were helpful.

Tips and tricks from the experts (2000). CQU Library. Retrieved October 16, 2003, from <http://www.library.cqu.edu.au/litreviewpages/tips.htm>

from Judith Hayes U2/D2:According to Gall et al (1996) , there are six main purposes for a literature review and paying attention to these can ensure that your research will contribute to research knowledge. These purposes are:

delimiting the research problem,

seeking new lines of enquiry,

avoiding fruitless approaches,

gaining methodological insights,

identifying recommendations for further research

seeking support for grounded theory.

Glaser (1978) , suggests that reading current literature on indirect topics can help a researcher to recognize the impact of other research on their intended topic of study but still allow for creativity for their own approach.
In order to conduct an effective literature review, it is important to clearly state the problem question. This ensures that the literature you review is pertinent to your study.

from Shawn in U2/D1 response: form and contents of the research review:

Other parts of this unit (D2 and D3) focus on the usefulness of a literature review and knowing when enough is enough (as it relates to a literature review). A literature review in and of itself is not "research" but rather a justification for doing a research project. This is worth noting because many of you may have done literature reviews your instructors called "research" in other courses but that is only one part of what you will be working on for the course project here. may I see the literature review as one of 4 valuable pieces of the puzzle with the others focusing on the methods one would use to investigate a topic, the results of the investigation, and then the discussion of the results in terms of implications, recommendations, etc. Included below is an outline of a proposal for a "research" paper---this may help you see where we are going in this course.

ABSTRACT
A short synopsis of what your proposal will address. It will also include the purpose of this study, numbers of participants, findings and conclusions.

INTRODUCTION
The introduction will provide a brief overview of the research topic addressing the following

questions: (1) What is the general area of research? , (2) What is the representation of the studied population?, (3) What makes this topic of importance to researchers, administrators, and the local community?

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM
You will describe the phenomena to the reader. You will identify the problem, and highlight the issues you wish to examine and build your case to have conducted the study.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY
You will highlight the specifics on what you want to examine, your research questions and what the study will contribute to society, and educational field will be discussed.

LITERATURE REVIEW
A review of the major researchers and studies will be examined. What has been the overall nature of the research that has been conducted related to this problem at a national level, and what are the questions that these researchers are seeking to answer. Is there any debate related to this topic? You will present all sides and present any gaps or drawbacks in the literature.

CORE QUESTIONS AND HYPOTHESIS
What questions do you seek to answer? State and explain the hypothesis and propositions (statements that establish casual relations) that can answer the questions. It will be critical that you make an argument for why it is important to examine this problem.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY
Describe how you would plan to carry out the research project. What research tools will be utilized (e.g., surveys, opinions, statistics, data)? My steps to be taken and the timeline for carrying out the proposed research topic will be included. You definitely need to provide an accurate representation of what I am studying in this section.

DATA ANALYSIS
You will identify the type of statistical analysis I will be conducting.

PROJECTED FINDINGS
Discussion on the possible results in terms of statistical analysis, charts, graphics, and pictorial representations of my hypothetical data will be produced. There also needs to be discussion of what your data would appear to look like if the hypothesis was supported.

IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE AND RESEARCH
What will this research tell us as practitioners, researchers, educators, and policy makers? What insights would we have gained and what needs to be considered for the future?

CONCLUSIONS
Conclude with some final conclusions of the problem under study. All information will be brought together to make a final statement

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Nietzsche website: http://www.geocities.com/thenietzschechannel/

"When a true genius appears in this world, you may know him by this sign, that the dunces are all in confederacy against him."

> JONATHAN SWIFT
> *Thoughts on Various Subjects*

"While democracy must have its organizations and controls, its vital breath is individual liberty."

> CHARLES EVANS HUGHES
> 1908 U.S. Supreme Court Justice

"One of the penalties for refusing to participate in politics is that you end up being governed by your inferiors"

> PLATO

"It is dangerous to be right when the government is wrong."

> VOLTAIRE

" . . .the basic delusion that men may be governed and yet be free."

> MENCKEN

"Great spirits have always found violent opposition from mediocrities. The latter cannot understand it when a man does not thoughtlessly submit to hereditary prejudices but honestly and courageously uses his intelligence."

> ALBERT EINSTEIN

"Everything that is really great and inspiring is created by the individual who can labor in freedom ."

> ALBERT EINSTEIN

"All truth passes through three stages. First, it is ridiculed. Second, it is violently opposed. Third, it is accepted as being self-evident."
- Arthur Schopenhauer (1788-1860)

"Existence precedes essence."
-Jean-Paul Sartre

"Life is what happens while you are making other plans."
-John Lennon

That which does not kill you will only make you stronger.
-- Nietzsche

An optimist laughs to forget, a pessimist forgets to laugh.

In heaven all the interesting people are missing.

Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche

If I have seen farther than others, it is because I stood on the shoulders of giants.

Isaac Newton

You've achieved success in your field when you don't know whether what you're doing is work or play.

Warren Beatty

"When you gaze long into the abyss, the abyss also gazes into you."

- Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900)

"A poem is never finished, only abandoned."

- Paul Valery (1871-1945)

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E-voting trials ready for local elections

By Gareth Morgan [24-01-2003]

Young people encouraged to vote via web, SMS and digital TV

Retrieved Oct. 24, 2003 from: http://www.pcw.co.uk/News/1138249:

Trials taking place in local council elections this May could open the way for UK voters to elect governments from the comfort of their own armchair.

Over 1.5 million UK citizens will be eligible to vote electronically in council elections this May, as the government launches its most ambitious e-voting test to date.

And this could be extended to general elections by the time the Prime Minister seeks re-election.

Local Government Minister Nick Raynsford confirmed yesterday that 18 councils in the UK would pilot schemes enabling people to vote via text message, the internet and digital television.

"The pilots are an important step towards our aim of holding an e-enabled general election sometime after 2006," said Raynsford in a statement.

The government has been looking for ways to entice voters, especially younger ones, to participate in elections.

Recent years have seen voter numbers drop, amid increasing feelings of disenchantment with politics among young voters.

Councils across the country will trial a variety of polling methods, aimed at improving participation in elections.

They will test systems using the internet, touch-tone telephones, text messages, electronic voting at polling stations and digital TV.

"The pilots demonstrate councils' commitment to exploiting new technology to find innovative ways for people to participate in local democracy," said Sir Jeremy Beecham, chairman of the Local Government Association.

Voters will receive a special pack detailing the available options, and will be given personal ID numbers to prevent them registering multiple votes.

Details of which suppliers have been chosen to develop the e-voting framework are expected in the coming weeks.

E-voting developers dismiss criticism

By Dinah Greek [21-10-2002]

Academic's accusations dismissed as outdated

Retrieved Oct 24, 2003 from: http://www.pcw.co.uk/News/1136146

Organisations working on electronic voting technology have dismissed criticisms that it is unsafe and fundamentally flawed.

Fears were raised after Rebecca Mercuri, an assistant professor at Bryn Mawr College in Pennsylvania, told Cabinet Office officials earlier this month that e-voting systems are dangerous.

She claimed that the systems fail to provide the necessary accountability, offer poorer reliability and provide greater opportunity for fraud than traditional methods.

Mercuri, who has also addressed the American Congress about potential security problems, said last week that people could not rely on the security of e-voting.

She also pointed out at two seminars organised this month in the UK by independent think tank, the Foundation for Information Policy Research, that websites set up for internet voting could be "spoofed" and were vulnerable to sabotage.However, Julia Glidden, managing director of Election.com, a voting software and services company, vehemently denied the accusations.

"Mercuri is three years behind the times, and has not taken on board new technology and projects that governments around the world are working on," she told *vnunet.com*.

"I would feel more confident of her views if she was participating on the Oasis Committee, which is working on developing new XML technology for e-voting."

John Stevens, e-security demo programme manager at BT, which is developing security for e-government, also felt that Mercuri had taken no account of recent developments.

"We have, and are developing, robust systems in close co-operation with the government, and the pilot schemes being run around the UK are to test these out and address security issues," he said.

The UK government's response to Mercuri's warnings was lukewarm.

The Cabinet Office declined to comment, and the Electoral Commission, currently running trial e-voting schemes in local elections, was equally dismissive.

The Commission said in a report last August that more pilot projects are needed before the systems can be used for a national election and that it is looking at potential abuses of new voting methods, but it admitted that no electoral system is immune to fraud.

A spokesman for the Commission said: "Mercuri's visit was nothing to do with us but, from what we gather from the seminars and Cabinet Office meeting, there was not much new in the speech she gave.

"We are aware of all the issues and this didn't move the debate on at all."

International
France tests e-voting
26 March 2002
Retrieved Oct. 24, 2003 from : http://www.kablenet.com/kd.nsf/Frontpage/723B42A73CC7BFA980256B87005I

Small scale pilots will be run in two French constituencies over this year's elections

Two French constituencies have been selected to test electronic voting in forthcoming elections, according to a statement issued by France Telecom on 22 March 2002. Voters from Mérignac and Vandœuvre-les-Nancy will use a system named e-Poll, but will be required to vote on paper to confirm their choice.

The tests will take place over theri presidential elections on 21 April and 5 May 2002, and the parliamentary elections on 9 and 16 June 2002. Voters at selected polling stations will use the system, but also vote the conventional way as electronic voting has no legal status in France.

The e-Poll system includes an electronic ballot box, a server for counting votes and a secure network over which data is transmitted. Before the election each voter will receive a smartcard that contains personal data including fingerprints and assigned polling station.

In order to identify themselves they will slot the smartcard into an electronic ballot box, and place their finger on a fingerprint reader, which will compare it with the data on the smartcard. Voters will then follow the instructions on a touchscreen. The vote will be transmitted to a dedicated server and counted by computer.

An audio system will be installed at the Vandœuvre polling station to help visually impaired voters.

Vandouevre's mayor, Françoise Nicolas, said: "Electronic voting is part of our wish to promote responsible citizenship everywhere, particularly among young people, as well as among voters who are isolated or in difficulty by offering them new services. The new technologies are an outstanding educational tool for the entire community."

The e-Poll system was used in Avellino, Italy in October 2001 for voting in a constitutional referendum on regional autonomy. 94% of the voters who used the system said they were in favour of electronic voting.

It was developed by a consortium including France Telecom R&D, Siemens Computing, Aquitaine Regional Authority, Aquitaine Europe Communications, service company ANCITEL, the Italian Home Affairs Ministry, the Association of Italian Mayors and Municipium of Poland. All of these groups are working on new voting methods for their respective countries.

France would need to change its electoral law to make the method legally acceptable.

Source: *Kable's Electronic Government International*
Publication date: 26/03/2002

Recent Email from a Swiss Citizen

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Hi Mr. Ravitz,                              retrieved on
Oct. 24, 2003 from http://www.vote.org/swiss.htm

thank you for your interest in direct democracy.

*  In Switzerland we do vote about tax increases/decreases, tax
system,prisons, nuclear powerplants, rail-systems, foreign-
politics,international treaties, the finances of our villages,
counties,country, salary of our members of parliament, protection
of our landscape. I hope, one day everyone on this planet does
have similar rights and possibilities.
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*   The Initiative is very popular in switzerland and quite often, when we have to vote about a more popular theme, the turnouts are very high,by our standards (40%-50%) [up to 72% recently].
    But only a minority of the Initiatives have ever been successful. Though, the majority of them had massive influence in regular politics.
    The referendums have often been used to block some unwanted governmental activities and some international treaties, of which people had to fear major disadvantages (more traffic from the EU etc...)

A. First some simplified information about our Federation.
    The Swiss Federation is a union of 26 smaller units we call "Kantone" and "Halb-Kantone", you could use the term county and half-county, i think. Each of these "Kantone" has its own Government and Constitution. And often even these "Kantone" are subdivided into "Bezirke" (Regions).
    The Federation consists of two parliamentary chambers.
    One of these Chambers, the "Nationalrat" represents the population of a "Kanton", thus "Kantone" with more population send more folks to this chamber.
    The other one, the "Staenderat" represents the "Kanton" itself. Thus,each "Kanton" is sending two Members and each "Halb-Kanton" one.
    Our Parliament is not professional, thus "Miliz-System". There are two official sessions of Parliament each Year.

*   Switzerland doesn't have a real and powerful president, like the USA. We've got 7 ministers, elected by parliament, who rule this country.
    Every year another one of these is called 'First among equals', ... thus he is called president.
    There is one federal court seated in lausanne.
    You should know, every "Kanton" has its own laws, its own constitution, its own court. Only under certain conditions, you could appeal to the federal court (still very easy yet).

*   Thus elections of any parliament is very boring, since you see the same heap of boring faces every time.
    But our Federation and all of the "Kantone" have the possibility of public interaction into the political process:

    - Initiative: The Possibility to propose a change in constitution, or even to propose a new constitution at all. 100,000 signatures are required to place an initiative on the ballot. It is impossible yet, to directly change the laws, but since the constitution overrides law, the affected laws just get invalid, but not deleted.
    - Obligatorisches Referendum:
        The federal constitution demands, if some specified laws

are proposed by the parliament to change, there has to be a vote about it.
   - Fakultatives Referendum:
    If any other law changes, which doesn't underly any of the restrictions above, there is only one chance to get a vote about it: From the day on, a law has been accepted by parliament, any movement of people in switzerland has three months time to collect 50'000 approved signs of swiss citizens, to enforce a vote about it, otherwise it gets valid three months after proposal.
   - Petition: A non-binding proposal/question to the government.
B. Newspapers: I know, the "NZZ-Neue Zuercher Zeitung" is available in the USA. It's disadvantage is, it's written in german. It has all the major political discussions and the protocols of parliamentary sessions printed. It is influenced by the "Parti Radical Democratique/Freisinnig Demokratische Partei", which is a liberal party. It is the one party, which founded our Federative System, as it now is.

C. Some interesting Facts about Switzerland:
   The Organisation of Switzerland into several "Kantone" had originally been made by Napoleon the Ist. With some smaller exceptions The political map is still the same as when Napoleon was here.

* Our Constitution as it actually is, had massively been influenced by the Constitution of the USA.
   The major difference is: We don't have a powerful president, we have seven ministers, which rule together.
   Another major difference in our political life is:
 * We aren't used to have a single party ruling !
   We have four parties with this division of power:

   SVP (1 Minister), FDP (2), CVP (2), SP (2).

   SVP: Schweizerische Volks-Partei / Swiss people's party
        Traditional Party, on the right wing.
   FDP: Freisinnig Demokratische Partei / Free Democratic Party
        Liberal Party, centered.
   CVP: Christliche Volks-Partei / Christian people's party
        Liberal to Social Party, centered.
   SP: Sozialdemokratische Partei / Socialdemocratic Party
        Worker's Party, left.

* This Formula is called the "Zauberformel" (magic formula).
   Therefore our government is not only representing about 51% of all voting people, but even around 90% of our people.

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    The acceptance of our "Bundesrat" (council of the federation/
council of the ministers) is quite high, with one exception. The
one exception is everything concerning the European Union and the
UN.

D. If you're interested in our constitution, you should give a
phone to our embassy and ask for a copy. It's quite a small
document. There are official translations into french, italy,
german; these are relevant at court, there is often noted, which
language does apply to which paragraph. There surely are
translations into english, i think.

I wish you a nice day.

Patrick
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Planning a research study:

I. The research problem

    A. Research literature

    B. Theory-based research

    C. Extending or replicating existing research studies

        1. Check finds of a breakthrough study

        2. Check validity of research findings across different populations

        3. Check trends or change over time

        4. Check findings using different methodology

        5. Develop more effective interventions

    D. Team projects

II. The research proposal

    A. Introduction (problem, potential contribution, literature foundation, research hypothesis -- e.g., null or directional)

    B. Review of the literature (topic studies, methods critique, previous conclusions, practical applications)

    C. Research design (descriptive, casual-comparative, correlational, or experimental)

    D. Research methods (e.g., sampling procedures, data-collection procedures)

E. Data analysis (develop a plan for this)

F. Human subjects protection (to insure the safety of the participants of a research project)

G. Time line (projected schedule of implementation)

III. Pilot study (small scale testing of procedures to be studied)

IV. The main study or dissertation (APA format, front matter, introductory chapter, literature review, methods, results, discussion, back matter)

V. The journal report (e.g. a referreed journal

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form of research paper from Shawn Fitzgerald:

Proposal for a Master's Thesis
entitled

A Model Predicting Statistics Performance of Students
Utilizing Logistic Regression Procedures

by
Shawn M. Fitzgerald

_____
Advisor

_____
Second Faculty

The University of Toledo
1/9/95

ABSTRACT

You will have an abstract here. A short synopsis of what your proposal will address. It will also include the purpose of this study, numbers of participants, findings and conclusions.

Introduction

The introduction will provide a brief overview of the research topic addressing the general area of research and a brief description of what makes this topic of importance to researchers, administrators, and the local community?

Rationale or Statement of the Problem

Quantitative courses in general, and statistics courses in particular, are anxiety provoking for many students. For graduate students with potentially high levels of interrole conflict, statistic courses can be especially taxing. Since statistics content generally builds logically and sequentially from materials presented within courses themselves and between various levels of related courses, interrole conflict may be especially detrimental for academic success. If administrators and educators had a model to reliably predict potential failure in these courses, then a proactive strategy could be used to decrease the percentage of poorly performing students.

Purpose

The purpose of this study will be: (1) to assess the effects of various skill, demographic, and affective variables on the performance of graduate students in an advanced level statistics course, (2) to assess the effects of interrole conflict on performance of graduate students in an advanced level statistics course, (3) to build a general predictive model of performance in statistics for students in an advanced level statistics course, (4) to test the effectiveness of this model in relation to its accuracy in classifying those students predicted to pass or fail.

Literature Review

The literature identifies many different types of role conflict; role ambiguity (Beecher & Drelexer, 1986), role boundary (Caplin, Cobb, French, Harrison, & Pinneau, 1975), role insufficiency (House, McMichael, Wells, Kaplan, & Landerman, 1979) and role overload (Osipow & Davis, 1988). Most of these studies have investigated the relationship of interrole conflict as it relates to the worker and some outside agent such as the family or health (Beechr, King, & King, 1990). Few have concentrated on the relationship between interrole conflict as it pertains to the student and outside agents such as work or family and only one recent study has investigated the relationship between interrole conflict and student performance (Fenster, 1992).

When considering the research on interrole conflict both negative and a positive influences on task performance have been reported. On the negative side people perform below their own expectations simply because it is assumed that time and energy of students is finite (Goode, 1960). As such, it is believed that students operate in a "zero sum" environment where it is assumed that the time and energy a student invests in his/her family, job, and other outside activities represents a reduction in the time and energy that a student can devote to educational activities and development (Austin, 1984; Cohen, 1984). Researchers such as Marks (1977), Sieber (1974), and Thoits (1983) argue that interrole conflict tends to have a positive influence on performance because they view human time and energy as being both flexible and expandable. Multiple roles are thought to improve mental health and provide opportunities for

the development of effective time management skills (Archer and Lamnin, 1985; Desmond and Glenwick, 1987).

When one considers the research on interrole conflict and students at the graduate level, studies suggest that interrole conflict influences both the affect (e.g., anxiety and attitude) and ability (e.g., statistics ability) of these students (Dyk, 1987; Fenster, 1992). The influence of interrole conflict is said to result from the fact that many students at this level are not "traditional" students in that many fulfill roles other than that of student. These students generally have family and work obligations in addition to their student or academic obligations, they are generally older than traditional college students, and often show greater variability in the number of hours worked on a job (Beutell & O'Hare, 1987; Fenster, 1992a; Klotsche, 1966; McLaughlin, 1985; Metzner & Bean, 1987; Potts, 1992; Tinto, 1975).

Fenster's recent investigation (1992a) suggests that interrole conflict can play an important part in explaining performance in a statistics class. In addition, Fenster demonstrated that the influence of interrole conflict on performance was a negative one. These findings are consistent with Goode's (1960) beliefs that role conflict negatively impacts student performance. However, while Fenster's study considered the effects of variables related to demographic, skill, and interrole conflict variables, he neglected to address the influence of affective variables which are also suggested to influence student performance in statistics (Bendig & Hughes, 1954; Elmore, 1993, Feinberg & Halperin, 1978; Fenster, 1992b). As a result, there is a need to build a model that more fully explains student performance in statistics. It is the purpose of this study to consider variables related to affect in addition to various demographic, skill, and interrole conflict variables previously studied. The major ramification of developing a more accurate and reliable model to predict performance in statistics is that it will allow administrators to identify students who may be at risk of performing poorly in statistics, and as a result, a proactive strategy could be utilized to assist students where necessary prior to enrolling in an advanced graduate level statistics class. Identifying problem areas for students, and implementing activities or interventions that would help students in these areas should decrease the percentage of students performing poorly in quantitative courses.

General Research Question

What is the relationship between various skill, demographic, and affective variables and performance of graduate students in an advanced level statistics course.

General Research Hypotheses

The research hypotheses that will be investigated in this study will include:

H1: Gender will not be related to performance in an advanced level graduate statistics course.
H2: Anxiety with statistics will be related to performance in an advanced level graduate statistics course.
H3: Attitude towards statistics will be related to performance in an advanced level graduate statistics course.
H4: Previous background in math and statistics at the college level will be related to performance in an advanced level graduate statistics course.

H5: Number of years since last college level math/statistics class will be related to performance in an advanced level graduate statistics course.

H6: Number of hours working during the semester will be related to performance in an advanced level graduate statistics course.

H7: Student status (i.e., full-time/part-time) will be related to performance in an advanced level graduate statistics course.

H8: Number of prior courses taken in current program will be related to performance in an advanced level graduate statistics course.

H9: Number of courses taken in the current semester will be related to performance in an advanced level graduate statistics course.

Method

Subjects. Graduate students in an advanced statistics class will be utilized in this study. The subjects are likely to vary in regards to age, gender, employment status, student status (i.e., full or part-time), number of courses completed in their program, number of years since last college math class was taken, and total number of courses taken in math at both the college and high school levels.

Procedure and Instrumentation. One week prior to the final exam the subjects will be given a questionnaire to gather data on the demographic and skill independent variables. In addition to the questionnaire, students will be required to complete two instruments intended to measure anxiety towards statistics and attitude towards statistics. Both construct and content analysis will be performed on the instruments prior to administration to assess the validity of these instruments. To provide evidence of the reliability of these instruments internal reliability data will be collected. The dependent variable, final course grade, will be obtained from the course professor after the grades are submitted. Demographic, skill, affect, and performance data will be matched by student number or social security number to ensure anonymity.

Analysis. Analysis will be completed using SPSSX-windows software. Basic descriptive data will be included on all the independent variables in the study. Logistic regression analysis will be utilized to build a model that best predicts success and failure for students in an advanced level graduate statistics course. Procedures suggested by Hosmer and Lemeshow (1989) for model building and analysis of dependent variables with binary outcomes will be followed. As such, the first step in the overall analysis will involve analysis of correlational data to determine the relationships between the various independent variables and the dependent variable. In addition, the relationships between the independent variables will also be considered prior to considering all variables in a model so that problems associated with including highly correlated independent variables will be avoided. Following the initial analysis of the independent variables, the model building process will be conducted.

PROJECTED FINDINGS

Discussion on the possible results in terms of statistical analysis, charts, graphics, and pictorial representations of my hypothetical data will be produced. There also needs to be discussion of what your data would appear to look like if the hypothesis was supported.

IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE AND RESEARCH

What will this research tell us as practitioners, researchers, educators, and policy makers? What insights would we have gained and what needs to be considered for the future?

CONCLUSIONS

Conclude with some final conclusions of the problem under study. All information will be brought together to make a final statement.

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OF STICKS AND MISSILES

"All wars are boyish, and are fought by boys."

-- Herman Melville, "The March into Virginia," 1861

The little boys on our leafy street,

sticks in hand, moved

in their own worlds, green grass, maple trees.

Sticks were guns, swords,

arrows sailing through the air.

Soon the sticks will be bats,

racquets and clubs.

But they don't have to become missiles.

Boys can grow up.

They can see that war doesn't work anymore.

Even the chief war-monger says

we're in a rerun of a bad film.

War doesn't work

now that there are no secrets,

the nuclear tricks known

not just in Washington and Moscow,

but New Delhi, Islamabad,

Pyongyang, Jerusalem.

Big sticks can end life,

earth become barren-

no more indigo buntings and goldfinches

flying together like a moving stained glass window

not even a cricket to skip with a click

and not one green fly

on a rock

still warmed by the sun.

Ann Richman   Retrieved on December 22, 2003 from http://www.apecpeace.org/poem1.htm

Did all the lets and bars appear
To every just or larger end,
Whence should come the trust and cheer?
Youth must its ignorant impulse lend-
Age finds place in the rear.
All wars are boyish, and are fought by boys,
The champions and enthusiasts of the state:

ATTRIBUTION: Herman Melville (1819-1891), U.S. poet, novelist. The March into Virginia

Retrieved on December 22, 2003 from http://www.bartleby.com/66/5/39005.html

Final projects/papers (l electronic copy-sent in Word and one hard copy) needs to be in APA 5th Edition style format.

U1 Expectations Looking Forward

Here are a few questions I have to ask at the beginning:

1. Concerning the final projects: you mentioned that "Final projects/papers (1 electronic copy-sent in Word and one hard copy)". Since I have WordPad and WordPerfect on my computer, can the emailed attachment be sent as a file (which is composed in PageMaker 7) exported in to Adobe Acrobat Reader 5? I think almost every computer can open Acrobat Reader, in fact, it is needed and required for the Capella courses.

By "hard copy", I assume you mean a paper print out sent to you in Kent, Ohio. Is that correct?

2. One question I have is about the APA style in documenting references: The book mentions listing only the most recent printing, but some books might have been written long ago. For example the manual would say to use, for a book first published in 1848:

Tocqueville, de Alexis. (2000). Democracy in America.   New York: HarperCollins Publishers, Inc.

How about: Tocqueville, de Alexis. (1848, 2000). Democracy in America.   New York: HarperCollins Publishers, Inc.   instead? That way the first time reader would know that the book is not a recently written book.

I am also not sure where to put the "de" in the name.

3. Also, I am not sure what topic to write the final paper on. When should we know that? I am thinking of writing a complementary addition extending and developing the Action Plan written for ED 5004 or perhaps about the classroom experiences I have had.

I'm looking forward towards this course.

Richard Bloodworth

from Stephanie in U4D2: Research designed to "find out something" is sometimes called Theoretical Research. It is generally performed in a strict scientific manner employing the scientific method and attempting to test a hypothesis, construct a theory, or build a model.

Research designed to "bring about change" is Action Research. Action Research takes a less scientific, more personal approach to research and attempts to produce change and improvement.

_____

Below are the course discussions:

U1/D1

Introduce yourself to the other members of the class. Write about how you can help others in the group and about how the group can help you during this course. Some items to think about here:

How many on-line courses have you taken?

Describe previous experiences with research courses.
Describe (briefly) your area of interest.
What are your weaknesses/strengths?

For the past several years I have been teaching English in in foreign countries (Seoul, South Korea; Tokyo and Chiba, Japan; Prague, Czech Republic; Istanbul, Turkey; Xi'an and Shanghai, China; and now Taipei, Taiwan). Prior to the English teaching I was employed in mostly arts related activities having studied art and architecture. I received my degree BFA from the University of Georgia. I have lived mostly in Athens and Atlanta, GA in addition to the above mentioned cities and I have traveled around Europe and Asia.

I have taken one online course with a lab previous to this course. My previous university research courses mostly involved term papers written for literature and philosophy courses. My weaknesses might include a tendency towards procrastination resulting in staying-up-all-night writing sessions to meet deadlines but I intend to plan better in the future so that will happen less often. My strengths would include training in the visual arts and teaching experience as well as being drawn toward foreign cultures and experiences. For those reasons, I could perhaps help others in the class in those areas. Also, if you need anything from Taiwan or if you need any Chinese translation, I could help in that area too -- not me, mind you, but I know plenty of people here who could help in that area.

Reply sent to Michelle's response to my U1/D1:

My first trip abroad to teach began with someone who I knew in Atlanta, Georgia who was interviewed by a recruiter to teach in South Korea. He asked me if he should go there and I replied "I would". So off he went to Korea. Then two months later I got a call from him and he said "We need another teacher . Come over here and teach in this school." So I got my paperwork together, which required a university degree, and then packed and headed off to Korea -- just as random as that! When I arrived I knew I had entered another world far away from my previous experiences. My first sensation was that I was in some sort of waking dream (like the neutral zone in William Bridges' book, Transitions). There, there were no English signs anywhere and my utterances might as well have been the barking of a dog since the sounds I was making had no meaning to them and those they were making had no meaning to me. The words on this page would be meaningless to most of them unless translated into their language.   I eventually learned the Hangul alphabet (there are 22 letters and most of them match up to the Romanized letters that we use) and I learned a good deal about their culture such as their historical hatred of the Japanese who colonized them. I also eventually adjusted to their culture and adapted to their way of life. Korea is predominantly Buddhist and , speaking of change, a Buddhist saying states that you never put your foot into the same river twice.

Reply sent to Tina O'Block's response to my U1/D1:

I always answer that question with an evasive non-answer and say that it's a bit like asking a parent who their favorite child is. The answer is: all of them -- since there is something about each one that they like.

Response to Shawn:

Thank you for your response. The master's in am going for is in Professional Studies in Education. My bachelor's degree is in drawing and painting with majors, first in architecture, and then in art along with all of the other courses (as listed in my ED 5006 Profile). For the last several years I have been teaching ESL classes in various countries.

For my course paper I have thought about adding to the idea of the Action Plan paper which I did for ED 5004 which involves direct democracy and this could be done with both the K-12 and the post-secondary (as well as continuing education) in mind. The other possibility is something involving ESL -- so I need to decide on them. I could possibly even mix them together in a combined, coordinated and interconnected project. I'll keep you informed as other ideas come to mind. Please let me know if you, or anyone, has any ideas about a possible project.

I don't know if you saw them but I sent you some questions in the U1 Expectations section but I will put them here below for you to please answer when you can:

Here are a few questions I have to ask at the beginning:

1. Concerning the final projects: you mentioned that "Final projects/papers (l electronic copy-sent in Word and one hard copy)". Since I have WordPad and WordPerfect on my computer, can the emailed attachment be sent as a file (which is composed in PageMaker 7) exported in to Adobe Acrobat Reader 5? I think almost every computer can open Acrobat Reader, in fact, Reader is needed and required for the Capella courses.

By "hard copy", I assume you mean a paper print out sent to you in Kent, Ohio. Is that correct?

2. One question I have is about the APA style in documenting references. The book mentions listing only the most recent printing but some books might have been written long ago. For example, the manual would say to use, for a book first published in 1848:

Tocqueville, de Alexis. (2000). Democracy in America. New York: HarperCollins Publishers, Inc.

How about:

Tocqueville, de Alexis. (1848, 2000). Democracy in America. New York: HarperCollins Publishers, Inc.

instead? That way the first time reader would know that the book is not a recently written book.

I am also not sure where to put the "de" in the name.

3. Also, I am not sure what topic to write the final paper on. When should we know that? I am thinking of writing a complementary addition extending and developing the Action Plan written for ED 5004 or perhaps about the classroom experiences I have had.

I'm looking forward towards this course.

Richard Bloodworth

U1/D2

As depicted in "Walking with Cave Men" (2003), a BBC series about human evolution, the early hominids began to understand that the key to species survival was the transmission of discovered knowledge or , in other words, education. Most of the first mankind's knowledge was discovered accidentally: stone for tools (Homo habilis), the use of fire (Homo erectus), turpentine fuel for fire to keep the torches burning even in the rain (Homo ergaster), sewing for clothing (Neandertals), art, oil lamps, and tools (Cro-Magnum), up to modern technology (Homo Sapiens Sapiens). Even the uses of levers and wheels were probably discovered accidentally.

In today's world the methods that knowledge (In "Education Research" (2003), the four areas of knowledge are listed as description, prediction, improvement, and explanation) is discovered or created can also include accidental discoveries (Madame Curie and Radium, photography, etc.) as well as the use of the scientific method (hypothesis, experimentation, documentation, analysis, evaluation), reading, research and development, experimentation, experience, spiritualism, planned searches, introspection and inspiration, and intuition and creativity.

Of all of the above methods of discovering and acquiring knowledge, I think the most unusual or hardest to understand is knowledge derived from intuition and creativity. For example, how in the world did Einstein come up with the special and general theories of relativity which seem to have no relation to day to day personal experiences? The concepts seem to be not from this world but sent from above perhaps through some sort of "divine intervention". Concerning knowledge from intuition and creativity, Frederich Nietzche, as influenced by Arthur Schopenhauer, said that the purpose of education is to expose to the public the discoveries made by geniuses in order only to discover more geniuses for future knowledge:

"The role of the new educational institution would be to provide support and protection for those committed to his idea of culture. He talked of a new order of schools as the 'consecrated home of all higher and nobler culture', where the dedicated few prepare within themselves and around them for the birth of the genius and the ripening of his work."   (Peter Fitzsimons,University of Auckland).

Gall, M.D., Borg, W., & Gall, J.P. (2003). Educational research: An introduction. 7th Ed. Boston: Pearson Education, Inc.

.FEI Nietzsche, F (1872, 1909) On the Future of Our Educational Institutions, (translated with introduction by J.M. Kennedy), in The Complete Works of Friedrich Nietzsche, Ed. Oscar Levy. London: T. N. Foulis.

UM3 Nietzsche, F. (1874,1983) Schopenhauer as Educator, in Untimely Meditations, Transl. R.J Hollingdale. New York: Cambridge University Press.

EH Nietzsche, F. (1889, 1967) Ecce Homo (together with On the Genealogy of Morals), (translated and edited by W. Kaufmann). New York: Random House.

Fitzsimons, Peter (2003)Nietzsche's Schopenhauer and Education. Peter Fitzsimons, University of Auckland. Retrieved October 10, 2003, from http://www.vusst.hr/ENCYCLOPAEDIA/nietzsche.htm

Johanson,Donald & Edgar,Blake. *From Lucy to Language* (1996) New York: Simon & Schuster. Human Evolution Ancestral Lines. Retrieved October 10, 2003 from http://www.handprint.com/LS/ANC/evol.html

BBC Television (2003). Hunt or be Hunted, episode from Walking with Cave Men broadcast on the Discovery Channel.

Response to Michelle's response to my U1/D2

Thank you for you insights and observations. I have saved the information in my POJ of my ED 5006 file.w

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from Shawn Fitzgerald:

As one might expect many of you looked at how knowledge is created in very different ways. For example, some of you considered knowledge gained from the qualitative and quantitative perspectives, some considered basic vs applied ways of knowing, and others looked at knowledge gained through explanation, prediction, or description. Several looked at knowledge gained through educational research efforts compared to less structured ways of knowing such as intuition, tenacity, authority figures, and last, but not least, experience.

As you are all aware based on my postings to each of you who posted before Friday, I posted a learner's observation regarding experience compared to educational research. Some of you responded to my prompts with well supported statements about similarities and differences. Some believed that you could not have one without the other. Without offering an answer at this time I will pose the question one more time and I would like each of you to come back to this question at the end of the course to see where you stand at that time after reading more about validity and reliability of research design. Once again:

Which is more likely to result in "Valid" and "Reliable" observations?

Interesting observations on how knowledge is created. You mention both research and experience and suggest that through experience you have gained insights into parenting, teaching, etc., that you may not have had otherwise. My question to you is this, how is knowledge obtained

through research different than knowledge gained through experience? Which is more likely to result in "Valid" and "Reliable" observations?

Learner's posting:

How is knowledge discovered or created in education? The first two ways that come to mind are through research and experience. Educators research both through books and through experience. For instance, I believe I became a better educator when I became a parent. I had taught for 15 years before having children. Being able to see how my own children learned so differently and behaved so differently really made me look at the students in my classroom in a different way. The experience gave me new knowledge in being able to communicate effectively with parents. It helped me to better understand learning styles and their importance. As the parent of an ADD child, it made me realize that there really are children out there who have an attention problem that is not related to behavior.

My response to Shawn Fitzgerald in U1/D2:

from ED8111: Objectivity, I think, is largely a myth when human interpretation and analysis is involved. Anytime there is an assessment made, or an opinion developed, about anything, it is done from a subjective, biased view based on past experiences, values, traditions, education, semantics, rational and emotional considerations, quantitative and qualitative aspects, societal and political considerations, etc. Even the terms "good" and "bad" have relative meanings depending on who is subjectively doing the perceiving (i.e. beauty is in the eye of the beholder). All words have agreed upon meanings based on qualitative and quantitative considerations. So for these reasons, determining and assessing historical or socio-cultural accuracies are, at best, just approximations.

As I consider your question about the scientific method concerning the relationship between subjectivity and objectivity, I think the degree of scientific accuracy depends on quantitative and qualitative factors: the more quantitative factors that are involved then the more objective and less subjective a conclusion will be and the more qualitative factors are involved then the less objective and more subjective a conclusion will be. To illustrate the effectiveness of the use of objective and subjective factors for sociological evaluation in the social sciences and humanities, we can use a sports analogy: in a sprint race the factors of time and the first participant to cross the finish line determine the winner of the race so the results involve more quantitative criteria and objectivity, whereas in judged competitions, such as a gymnastics or dance events, the results involve more qualitative criteria and subjectivity.

In response to knowledge obtained via the methods of experience or educational research: which is more likely to result in "Valid" and "Reliable" observations? knowledge gained from the qualitative and quantitative perspectives

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My response:

Which method, experience or educational research, is most likely to result in the most valid and reliable results in determining knowledge?

First of all, the answer might depend on what sort of information is being derived. If the desired knowledge is how to best determine one's individual teaching style then perhaps learning by subjective experience is best though that method might involve quite a bit of trial and error. Usually, though, the most generally applicable and wide ranging information is obtained through more objective educational research. Also, usually, but not always, more information is obtained through the collected results and observations of many people than the efforts of only one person.

In most areas, the amount of validity and reliabilty of obtained information is dependent on (or directly proportional to) quantitative and qualitative factors: the more quantitative factors that are involved then the more objective and less subjective a conclusion will be and the more qualitative factors that are involved then the less objective and more subjective a conclusion will be. The problem with obtaining results from subjective observations is that the subjective analyses can sometimes be perceived from a biased perspective based on past experiences, values, traditions, education, semantics, rational and emotional considerations, quantitative and qualitative aspects, societal and political considerations, etc. whereas objectively obtained information is usually the result of quantified information, statistics, and measurement. To illustrate the effectiveness of the use of objective and subjective factors for the evaluation of educational research or epistemological considerations, we can use a sports analogy. In a running race the factors of time and the first participant to cross the finish line determine the winner of the race so the results involve more quantitative criteria and objectivity, whereas in judged events, such as a gymnastics or dance events, the results involve more qualitative criteria and subjectivity. In general, I think the higher the degree of quantification and objectivity that is used in obtaining information and knowledge, the higher is the resulting level of validity and reliability.

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Comment to Jan's U2/D2 discussion:

One of the dangers of new technology is that it seems to foster an MTV-instant gratification perception of the world -- always skimming and never delving. I would imagine that student who only read the papers' abstracts would not want his heart surgeon to learn his trade from the Cliff Notes on Surgery or from "Learning to do Heart Surgery for Dummies".

Letter to Shawn Fitzgerald,

As an email attachment I am sending the paper I wrote for ED5004 for you to read when you can concerning the development of a direct democracy (a concept that involves the ideas of Thomas Heaney, Jack Mezirow, Miles Horton, and Paulo Freire as discussed in Heaney's "Adult Education for Social Change: From Center Stage to the Wings and Back Again" which examines the role of education in the democratization of society). I am serious about this idea and want to further develop the concepts that were begun during the ED5004 course and would like to research the feasibility of and the methods for its implementation. The research could involve

historical precedents as well as techniques to develop the concepts and methods for educating the public on the procedures involved in direct democracy and this could be done beginning with the K-12 levels up through adult education.

I would appreciate your sharing any thoughts you might have concerning this idea.

Sincerely,

Richard Bloodworth

Response to Shawn sending me his paper: Speaking of Research.... Guidelines for Evaluating Research Articles After his letter:

> Richard, As I read your paper I was thinking that this is more like a political initiative than a researchable topic as it is presented. This does not mean and it can't be researchable but we will need to tweak this idea throughout the course to frame it in a way that reflects either a qualitative or quantitative approach to studying this topic. The biggest difference in what you have here, and what I will be looking for in terms of a research proposal, is that you will need to develop the methods section of your paper. That is the part of a paper related to answering the "how" question---it naturally follows the literature review which helps establish the "what" sections of a research paper. I am including in an attachment a paper that describes the various sections of a research paper---this is what I am expecting for part "c" of the course requirements. The only difference being that you will not actually be conducting a study for this class---just proposing one. I hope this helps.

Shawn:

Thank you for sending the email attachment of the paper, Speaking of Research ....: Guidelines for Evaluating Research Articles. It clearly delineates the form of a research paper. I have printed it out and have read it and will refer to it as I begin to write the paper.

As I mentioned, I thought the most interesting subject for me to write about is the growing trend in the world toward direct democracy through online voting and also the role of educational institutions in its implementation (the other idea, based on ESL classes in the world, I think has been written enough about -- I don't think we need, for example, another paper proving that, fortunately for all of the native English speakers, English is becoming the international language for world communication) . Even though direct voting via the Internet using computer technology is a relatively new field as far as history is concerned, and the amount of studies might be less than in other fields, there are still a significant amount of studies, either qualitative or quantitative, that have been done that I can review and I can also propose some other possible experiments that can be conducted (research methodology section of the paper).   Also, I like the idea of getting in on the (relative) ground floor, so to speak.

Something I wanted to discuss with you is the qualitative/quantitative issue: though much of the paper would involve qualitative discussions about the philosophy of democracy and how direct democracy can be implemented it can also possibly involve some quantitative statistics. One question I have for you is: can't a research paper be both qualitative and quantitative? It seems in the course discussions that it should be mostly one or the other. In my view, it seems to me that there could be a sliding scale from high to low with qualitative and qualitative characteristics

being represented on two parallel lines, one over the other, with the left side of the line representing the high end of the scale and the right side representing the low end of the scale, as depicted below:

qualitative: _____x_____

           High   Low

quantitative   _____x_____

The above diagram illustrates a research paper with high qualitative content and low quantitative content.

Another possibility could be: low qualitative and high quantitative.

Another could be: low qualitative and low quantitative (which would probably be not as useful for a research paper).

Another could be: high qualitative and high quantitative.

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U2/D1 Description of intended project

I intend to write about the procedures for developing direct democracy utilizing computer and Internet technology as well as the existing educational system. The first step is the development -- through research and proposed methods of implementation, study of precedents, and historical and literary references -- of the procedures and then the implementation (which would run concurrently with educating the public about the concept beginning with the K-12 levels up through post-secondary and adult levels) of the procedures involved in direct democracy. This will be a social impact or action research type project involving some theoretical, historical, socio-cultural, and evaluative aspects.

Response to Shawn U2/D1 reply and comment:

Could you help me understand what "direct democracy utilizing computer and internet technology" is? I am not familiar with this. What is this intended to influence? Will this be a qualitative or quantitative study? Perhaps if you framed a research question on this topic it would be more clear to me. Thanks in advance.

Direct democracy is basically the public voting directly on issues rather than through elected representatives who can, after elected, vote any way they choose.

In <u>Adult Education for Social Change: From Center Stage to the Wings and Back Again</u>, Thomas Heaney views adult education as participatory and as a tool for social change and where educational progressivism is the contemporay approach to educating the public. " 'Adult education turns out to be the most reliable instrument for social actionists' since it assures that any action undertaken would be authentically democratic" (Brookfield, 1984). Eduard Lindeman, as influenced by John Dewey, considers adult education to be intertwined with democracy, social action, and control by people over their daily lives. To Lindeman, adult education equals social change, a method to create good and productive citizens. Even if education is viewed as a "great selector" rather than a "great equalizer", each person can, as a result of education, find their niche, based on their abilities and merits, within a democratic society.   The concept of using the educational system to implement a direct democracy is closely connected with the ideas expressed by Heaney, Miles Horton, Paulo Freire, and Jack Mezirow since their approach is to empower the populace through education in order to create a democratic society. Since it is necessary to have an educated public in order to have democracy function efficiently, democracy is dependent on the educational system to survive and prosper.

The study would involve both qualitative and quantitative aspects. The qualitative and more subjective side of the research would involve a brief history of democracy, a brief discussion of the definitions of and philosophy of democracy, the use of the educational system to prepare learners for the use of direct democracy, and the contemporary uses of direct democracy in countries such as Switzwerland and Sweden. The quantitative and more objective side of the study would involve statistics and the numbers of people, governments, and institutions presently using these concepts, how they were implemented, and the reliability and effectiveness of those procedures.

Research question:

How has direct democracy, utililizing computer and Internet technology, been implemented and used in various countries and institutions and what has been and could be the role of educational systems in the implementation and continuing use of direct democracy?

Reference:

Heaney, Thomas. <u>Adult Education for Social Change: From Center Stage to the Wings and Back Again</u>. (1996). Retrieved October 15, 2003 from http://www.nl.edu/ace/Resources/Documents/ERIC1.html

Shawn's response: I now understand! However, I would disagree that your study would be both quantitative and qualitative---it looks more like it is all qualitative to me. Even though you may be describing a few points using numbers I do not think it qualifies it as quantitative---and that is not a bad thing!

My response: I think you are right that it will be predominantly qualitative but I hope to also uncover some quantitative facts, figures, numbers, and statistics during the literature search.

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U2/D2 Review of Relevant Literature

It is necessary and helpful to review the existing literature about the topic of one's research project so that one can learn from other people's research efforts in the same field and so that one does not repeat the same mistakes from the past or perform redundant or unnecessary research. Proceeding with the research of the literature involves establishing preliminary (search engine results and lists of publications relevant to one's research area such as the Educational Resources Information Center or ERIC), secondary (indirect), and primary (direct) sources. The researcher can explore and delve in to the subject of research to determine what previous research projects and experiments have been attempted and executed and what the statistical results and conclusions are. The research projects can be quantitative, which tend to have more objective interpretations of the data, or qualitative, which tend to have more subjective interpretations. It is also useful and informative to perform meta-analyses which are basically studies of studies or the cumulative results of several studies on the same area of research and which tend to have more quantitative and statistical data.

Reference:

Gall, M.D., Borg, W., & Gall, J.P. (2003). Educational research: An Introduction. 7th Ed. Boston: Pearson Education, Inc.

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posting by Judith Hayes for U2/D2:

According to Gall et al (1996) , there are six main purposes for a literature review and paying attention to these can ensure that your research will contribute to research knowledge. These purposes are delimiting the research problem, seeking new lines of enquiry, avoiding fruitless approaches, gaining methodological insights, identifying recommendations for further research and seeking support for grounded theory. Glaser (1978) , suggests that reading current literature on indirect topics can help a researcher to recognize the impact of other research on their intended topic of study but still allow for creativity for their own approach.
In order to conduct an effective literature review, it is important to clearly state the problem question. This ensures that the literature you review is pertinent to your study.

U2/D3 Review Completion ;]

When most of the desired and relevant information and conclusions concerning the researched topic are obtained and the writing of the review is completed and corrected then the literature review can be considered complete.

But, since in every research field new information is added daily, a literature review, like "a poem, is never finished, only abandoned." -- Paul Valery (1871-1945) ;]

Reference:

Robins, Gabriel. Good Quotations by Famous People. Retrieved October 16, 2003 from
<http://www.cs.edu/~robins/quotes.html>

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U3D1 Criteria for Sources

Discuss the three most critical criteria you found in your readings for deciding which research sources you should use in collecting the literature for your project.

1. Volume and variety of sources within the intended field of research as provided by the search engines such as Google and preliminary sources such as ERIC. Although with the multiple word field searches, such as Google, any article with the same word can show on the screen. For instance, if someone is looking up Isaac Newton he might also retrieve some listings that have anyone with the name Newton in the text. So it is important, in order to narrow down the search, to use the right combination of terms to end up with the desired sources. In ERIC, the research topics seem to be divided more into subject categories.

2. Reliability, reputation, adherence to facts, and locating well written and correct documents written in proper forms are also important. Google retrieves almost anything on the web, so the issue of quality can be a concern -- a high school term paper could turn up beside a Phd dissertation. ERIC, though, seems to filter out those writings that do not fit their accepted format.

3. Convenience and speed of retrieval since in today's world it is essential to obtain information quickly. This is something that the Internet offers with the search engines, links to websites, and lists of preliminary sources. The Internet can even access library card catalogues listing the needed publications including universtiy libraries and the Library of Congress. Only a few of the publications are online in full text but ordering books from an online bookseller can be time-consuming and expensive so if the researcher is near or in a traditional library, or a bookstore, then this would also be one of the best sources of information, that is, if the desired publications are available.

To satisfy the above mentioned criteria, computer based searches seem to offer the most complete and immediate solutions for finding primary (which could include direct interviews with the primary source), secondary, and preliminary sources.

U3/D2   Criteria for Publications

Discuss the three most important criteria you found in your reading for choosing specific books or articles that are most useful for your project.

1. Well-written and in-depth information (of course, pertaining to the researched topic). The information should be able to be supported by quantitative statistics and assessed by qualitative analysis.

2. The amount of quantitative and qualitative information in the publications. The quantitative

information should be obtained ethically and scientifically and the qualitative interpretations should be rational.

3. True, reliable, and verifiable information. If similar studies are done on a research topic and contain much different statistical information on the same issue then that study would need to be viewed skeptically or carefully. In that situation, the research methodolgy would need to be examined to see if there were any errors in measurement or interpretation.

Reference:

Gall, M.D., Borg, W., & Gall, J.P. (2003). Educational Research: An Introduction. 7th Ed. Boston: Pearson Education, Inc.

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U3D2 response to Lui

The cultural context and the cultural (and multicultural) content of publications are important criteria for choosing the publications for research information as are the points of view and subjectivity and objectivity of the author and the amount of qualitative or quantitative information that is in the publications.

U3D1 response to Karen

How current an article is is important but just because a study was done 10 or 20 or even 100 years ago doesn't mean it should be automatically discounted. The "newness" factor might have some bearing on some research topics but not all.

U3/D3 Critiques of Studies and Articles

In "Developing e-Citizens and e-Consumers, an Irish e-Commerce Case Study", John MacNamara and David O'Donnell offer a comprehensive study of the effects the new cyber culture of the computer and the Internet and their effects on society, culture, and education. and the necessity for society and the educational system to produce "e-literate" citizens for the resulting new society. As they state it in their abstracted introduction: "We present a very simple argument: e-business needs e-consumers and eliterate workers; e-government needs e-citizens". They give many examples from Ireland where they are based and other nations and institutions using online voting. I think they present an in-depth description and qualitative analysis of the trends toward e-government, e-commerce, e-education, and e-culture in general backed by knowledge, examples, and statistics.

One of the concerns many people have about online voting revolves around the security and privacy issues and these are well explored by Dr.Russel Smith in "Electronic Voting: Benefits and Risks". Russell, who is deputy director of research at the Australian Institute of Criminology, thinks national electronic voting will be prevalent in the near future, but people are hesitant because security and secrecy issues and some people now attach a certain ritual to voting

and some would therefore want to resist online voting in order to hold on to past traditions. He even includes a history of the changing methods of voting procedures.   He mentions that there would have to be sophisticated servers for many people voting at the same time but the pluses of speed and accuracy, ease of use, lower costs compared to paper ballots, the fact that online voting is already successfully being used in many countries, etc.outweigh the minuses. Dr. Smith mentions in an interview with Rachel Lebihan that, in his opinion, security is not an insurmountable problem, since the solutions that are used in financial transactions can be incorporated into methods for e-voting. I think his expertise and knowledge is evident in his writing and his use of examples and I think with many other technical experts on the project that the security and efficiency issues can be solved.

The third attachment has several short pieces and letters about e-democracy and e-voting in other countries.

Smith said he didn't really consider security as being an issue, as the same commercial solutions as are used for financial transactions would be incorporated into e-voting systems. "I think if it's adequate for that purpose [financial transactions] it should be for this as well." And whilst there are instances of manipulation of paper voting systems, "I think these problems probably will continue to exist with e-voting," .

Before national electoral electronic voting takes off in Australia, Smith said he foresees repeat trials of those that were carried

"Computers are already used to an enormous extent in the electoral system," ."

MacNamara, J. O'Donnell, D. (2001). Developing e-Citizens and e-Consumers, an Irish e-Commerce Case Study. Retrieved October 24, 2003 from http://66.218.71.225/search/cache?p=The+E-citizen.+Instructional+Technology.,+Lee,+John+K.++&sub=Search&ei=UTF-8&url=fe_aPyZrSDAJ:www.efmd.be/learninggroups/chapter/eisb2001proceedings/pdfs/MacNamara%2520%2520O%27Donnell%2520.pdf

Smith, Russel. Electronic Voting: Benefits and Risks. (2002). Retrieved October 24, 2003 from http://www.aic.gov.au/publications/tandi/ti224.pdf

E-Democracy articles by countries. Retrieved October 24, 2003 from http://dmoz.org/Society/Politics/Democracy/Direct_Democracy/

Lebihan, Rachel. Arm twisting to hinder home electronic voting. Retrieved on October 24, 2003 from http://www.zdnet.com.au/newstech/communications/story/0,2000048620,20265293,00.htm

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U3D3 letter to Karen about e-voting

first letter:

I'll look up the exact source and quote later to give you but in my readings about voting efficiency one organization estimated that the lost votes during the 2000 U.S. presidential election could have been up to 2 million votes -- not exactly a precise accounting feat.

--

second letter:

The estimate of lost votes during the 2000 U.S. presidential election was four to six million, not two million as I had previously written.

Here's the quote taken from Where to Now for E-Voting?:

"Amongst other problems, The CalTech/MIT Voting Technology Project estimated some four to six
million votes were lost in 2000 due to ballot, equipment, registration or polling-place problems. In
response, Americans clamoured for new voting technology to replace the ageing machines peppering
US polling booths across the nation." (Bushell, 2003).

Even though we perhaps put too much weight on to brand name dependence, I think most people would agree that MIT and CalTech are prestigiously reputable outfits and would trust their research results. However, since the 4 to 6 million figure seems to be such an outrageously out-of-bounds and unexpected estimate, that's the sort of information that, if someone were to write an official report on the state of online voting, they would want to examine by looking up the research methodology of that particular project (perhaps by contacting the authors of the research project) to determine how those figures were deduced.

References:

Bushell, Sue. (2003). Where to Now for E-Voting? Retrieved Oct. 24, 2003 from
http://www.cio.com.au/
index.php?id=405941257&eid=-601

from U6D2 from Jan concepts related to data collection and analysis

Descriptive observational variable
inferential observational variables
evaluative observational variables
criterior related observer reliability
intra-observer reliability
inter-observer reliability
observer drift
reliability decay

observer omission
observer contamination
descriptive stage
focused stage
selected stage
theoretical saturation

*****

U4D1

Describe to your classmates one of the problems you selected about which you intended to carry out a research or action project. Share with them what your purpose is. Is it research or is it action? Post early in the week, then return later to comment on the postings of your fellow classmates.

from Michele: A couple of months ago I worked for a local business college called call Western University. The college is facing a critical time is its history stemming from severe drops in student enrollments and financial instability. For three decades the university has designed curriculum based on traditional theories of learning and instructional design that is centered around the teacher and not the student. During the past five to ten years, this process of developing instruction has resulted in outdated curriculum and dissatisfied learners. Retention rates are the lowest in it history.

I was interested in carrying out an action project for this college that involves creating a proposal for Western University to adopt a new paradigm of learning (Reigeluth, 1999) which emphasizes innovative theories about how people learn. I believe that in order to meet the unique needs of its growing diverse adult learner population, Western University must reevaluate its instructional design and facilitation processes. The purpose of my research would be to:

1) describe the new paradigm of learning that embraces a constructivist approach to instructional design (which employs student centered learning strategies);

2) develop a plan for the college to systematically implement these strategies into their existing curriculum.

Consequently, before I ever had a chance to propose this project, I was laid off. Therefore, I have decided to move into another direction with my final master?s degree project.

I definitely consider this project to be an action project intended to bring about change.

Reigeluth, C. M. (1999). Instructional design theories. Vol. II: A new paradigm of instructional theory. London: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

As I mentioned, I thought the most interesting subject for me to write about is the growing trend in the world toward direct democracy through online voting and also the role of educational institutions in its implementation (the other idea, based on ESL classes in the world, I think has been written enough about -- I don't think we need, for example, another paper proving that, fortunately for all of the native English speakers, English is becoming the international language for world communication) . Even though direct voting via the Internet using computer technology is a relatively new field as far as history is concerned, and the amount of studies might be less than in other fields, there are still a significant amount of studies, either qualitative or quantitative, that have been done that I can review and I can also propose some other possible experiments that can be conducted (research methodology section of the paper).   Also, I like the idea of getting in on the (relative) ground floor, so to speak.

For my course paper I have thought about adding to the idea of the Action Plan paper which I did for ED 5004 which involves direct democracy and this could be done with both the K-12 and the post-secondary (as well as continuing education) in mind. The other possibility is something involving ESL -- so I need to decide on them. I could possibly even mix them together in a combined, coordinated and interconnected project. I'll keep you informed as other ideas come to mind. Please let me know if you, or anyone, has any ideas about a possible project

Direct democracy is basically the public voting directly on issues rather than through elected representatives who can, after elected, vote any way they choose.

In Adult Education for Social Change: From Center Stage to the Wings and Back Again, Thomas Heaney views adult education as participatory and as a tool for social change and where educational progressivism is the contemporay approach to educating the public. " 'Adult education turns out to be the most reliable instrument for social actionists' since it assures that any action undertaken would be authentically democratic" (Brookfield, 1984). Eduard Lindeman, as influenced by John Dewey, considers adult education to be intertwined with democracy, social action, and control by people over their daily lives. To Lindeman, adult education equals social change, a method to create good and productive citizens. Even if education is viewed as a "great selector" rather than a "great equalizer", each person can, as a result of education, find their niche, based on their abilities and merits, within a democratic society.   The concept of using the educational system to implement a direct democracy is closely connected with the ideas expressed by Heaney, Miles Horton, Paulo Freire, and Jack Mezirow since their approach is to empower the populace through education in order to create a democratic society. Since it is necessary to have an educated public in order to have democracy function efficiently, democracy is dependent on the educational system to survive and prosper.

The study would involve both qualitative and quantitative aspects. The qualitative and more subjective side of the research would involve a brief history of democracy, a brief discussion of the definitions of and philosophy of democracy, the use of the educational system to prepare learners for the use of direct democracy, and the contemporary uses of direct democracy in countries such as Switzwerland and Sweden. The quantitative and more objective side of the study would involve statistics and the numbers of people, governments, and institutions presently using these concepts, how they were implemented, and the reliability and effectiveness of those procedures.

Research question:

How has direct democracy, utililizing computer and Internet technology, been implemented and used in various countries and institutions and what has been and could be the role of educational systems in the implementation and continuing use of direct democracy?

Reference:

Heaney, Thomas. Adult Education for Social Change: From Center Stage to the Wings and Back Again. (1996). Retrieved October 15, 2003 from http://www.nl.edu/ace/Resources/Documents/ERIC1.html

One problem within the educational system involves political philosophy: if most societies are called democratic then why don't the people govern the country by voting directly and democratically (as is done in Switzerland, for example) on issues rather than voting only for representatives who can then vote any way they choose after they are elected? When educating post-secondary or adult students (or even K-12 students to prepare them for being adults), how can the concepts of democratically controlled governments be conveyed and transferred to them and how can they become directly involved in the implementation of democratically determined plans?

for U4D1:

1. Describe to your classmates one of the problems you selected about which you intended to carry out a research or action project. Share with them what your purpose is:

One problem with the educational system, and society in general, involves political philosophy: if most societies are called democratic then why don't the people govern by voting directly and democratically (as is done in Switzerland, for example) on issues rather than voting only for representatives? When educating post-secondary or adult students (or even K-12 students to prepare them for being adults), how can the concepts of democratically controlled governments be conveyed and transferred to the learners and how can they become directly involved in the implementation of democratically determined plans? My project involves exploring what methods have been used previously to establish direct democracies which are basically the public voting directly on issues rather than through elected representatives who can, after elected, vote any way they choose.

In Adult Education for Social Change: From Center Stage to the Wings and Back Again, Thomas Heaney views adult education as participatory and as a tool for social change and where educational progressivism is the contemporay approach to educating the public. " 'Adult education turns out to be the most reliable instrument for social actionists' since it assures that any action undertaken would be authentically democratic" (Brookfield, 1984). Eduard Lindeman, as influenced by John Dewey, considers education to be inexorably connected with democracy, social action, and control by people over their day to day existences. To Lindeman, adult education equals social change, a method to create good and productive citizens. The concept of using the educational system to implement a direct democracy is closely connected

with the ideas expressed by Heaney, Miles Horton, Paulo Freire, and Jack Mezirow since their approach is to empower the populace through education in order to create a democratic society. Since it is necessary to have an educated public in order to have democracy function efficiently, democracy is dependent on the educational system to survive.

Research question:

How has direct democracy, utililizing computer and Internet technology, been implemented and used in various countries and institutions and what has been and could be the role of educational systems in the implementation and continuing use of direct democracy?

2. Is it research or is it action?

As I view them, simply stated, a research project looks into the past whereas an action plan looks toward the future. The research project delves into previous studies and statistics on the researched topic while the action project is a particular plan and a projected time schedule for implementing the proposed plan. Since my first project was an action plan with a plan for the future this project will be more research based to look into what has been done before concerning the topic of direct democracy and its function in the educational system.

Heaney, Thomas. Adult Education for Social Change: From Center Stage to the Wings and Back Again. (1996). Retrieved October 15, 2003 from http://www.nl.edu/ace/Resources/Documents/ERIC1.html

Gall, M.D., Borg, W., & Gall, J.P. (2003). Educational Research: An Introduction. 7th Ed. Boston: Pearson Education, Inc.

U4D2

Discuss the differences between research designed to find out something and research designed to bring about change. Is it a good idea to try to do both in your research project? Why or why not? How about in your professional life?

from Stepanie: Research designed to "find out something" is sometimes called Theoretical Research. It is generally performed in a strict scientific manner employing the scientific method and attempting to test a hypothesis, construct a theory, or build a model.
Research designed to "bring about change" is Action Research. Action Research takes a less scientific, more personal approach to research and attempts to produce change and improvement.

There is a great table in the Gall text on page 580 that compares the two types of research. One of the more interesting differences include the theoretical researcher's emphasis on using a random sampling of data and participants while the action researcher will generally use her own classroom and students.

..

1. Discuss the differences between research designed to find out something and research designed to bring about change.

Research (to find out something) is researching past achievements, experiments, statistics, observations, and data by studying literature and past events and studies.   Examples of this type of research are historical and statistical research. This type of research requires, deliberation, thinking, examining, analyzing, rationalizing, and collecting and evaluating data.

Action research (to bring about change) is planning ahead for change and implementing the procedures to secure that change. Examples of this type of research are social impact (action) and theoretical research. (Action planning research and preparation can be "looking before you leap" by seeing what has been done before, learning from past experiences and mistakes, and looking at any "maps" or plans that might have been developed in the past). Action research is being in the middle of an activity as it is happening. In action research most of the in-depth thinking has occurred prior to the execution of the action plan but once the process has begun then it usually gains momentum and there is no turning back. To use a sports analogy, a platform high diver does not need to start thinking in the middle of a flip that he wished he had not jumped or that he had turned another direction -- at that point it is too late since the process has already begun; all of the thinking has been done in the training and preparation but not during the actual execution of the activity. Or to put it another way, whereas historical research is like studying the events in the calm after a storm, action research is like studying the events while a storm is happening.

2. Is it a good idea to try to do both in your research project? Why or why not? How about in your professional life?

Since a research project is a look into the past and an action plan is a look toward the future and for the same reason that someone can not be in two places at the same time or go in two directions simultaneously; one can not expect to explore the past and the future on the same trip (this holds true in professional life as well as in academic life). Likewise, one can not expect to do a research project and an action plan at the same time or in the same project. However, I think someone can, in two separate projects, do a research project and an action plan both on the same topic, with one complementing the other.

References:

Gall, M.D., Borg, W., & Gall, J.P. (2003). Educational Research: An Introduction. 7th Ed. Boston: Pearson Education, Inc.

U4D3

from Donna Hardy

INTRODUCTION

LITERATURE REVIEW

CORE QUESTIONS AND HYPOTHESIS

Questions I'll be asking:

1. What kinds of software may already be available.?
2. Is it cost effective or do we do our own programming?
3. What are our students expecting and demanding?
4. What is the time frame of the Department of Education to have changes in place.
5. How do students feel about completing information on line vs on paper? Do we offer both services to best serve our students.
6. What have others schools done and choices they have made.
7. What kind of support do we need from management to made this come to a reality.
8. What kind of support do I have with the sisters schools under the same umbrella?
9. What will be my internal pressures and external pressures in my pursuit?

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY
At this point I am planning to send information survey out
DATA ANALYSIS
 it will be quantitative because it is reproducible, flexible and scalable.

PROJECTED FINDINGS

IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE AND RESEARCHINTRODUCTION

LITERATURE REVIEW

CORE QUESTIONS AND HYPOTHESIS

Questions I'll be asking:

1. What kinds of software may already be available.?
2. Is it cost effective or do we do our own programming?
3. What are our students expecting and demanding?
4. What is the time frame of the Department of Education to have changes in place.
5. How do students feel about completing information on line vs on paper? Do we offer both services to best serve our students.
6. What have others schools done and choices they have made.
7. What kind of support do we need from management to made this come to a reality.
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RESEARCH METHODOLOGY
At this point I am planning to send information survey out
DATA ANALYSIS
 it will be quantitative because it is reproducible, flexible and scalable.

PROJECTED FINDINGS

IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE AND RESEARCH

INTRODUCTION

LITERATURE REVIEW

CORE QUESTIONS AND HYPOTHESIS

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

DATA ANALYSIS
.
PROJECTED FINDINGS

IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE AND RESEARCH

Draw up an outline of your course project and share it with the rest of the class. Respond to at least one other member of the class by asking whether or not they have fallen into the 'two-dissertation trap'. Help your classmate understand how they have done so.

Draw up an outline of your course project and share it with the rest of the class.
Title:
Importance of the Topic
Literature Review
Core Questions:
Methods:
        As described on page 623 in the glossary.
        Descriptive research: Types of investigation that measures the charactertics of a sample or population on prespecified variables.
Data Analysis:.
Conclusion

Assignment: draw up an outline of your course project and share it with the rest of the class.

Planning and developing a research study:

Here is a general outline derived from Educational Research: An Introduction (Gall, 2003):

I. The research problem

A. Research literature

B. Theory-based research

C. Extending or replicating existing research studies

    1. Check finds of a breakthrough study

    2. Check validity of research findings across different populations

    3. Check trends or change over time

    4. Check findings using different methodology

    5. Develop more effective interventions

D. Team projects

II. The research proposal

    A. Introduction (problem, potential contribution, literature foundation, research hypothesis -- e.g., null or directional)

    B. Review of the literature (topic studies, methods critique, previous conclusions, practical applications)

    C. Research design (descriptive, causal-comparative, correlational, or experimental)

    D. Research methods (e.g., sampling procedures, data-collection procedures)

    E. Data analysis (develop a plan for this)

    F. Human subjects protection (to insure the safety of the participants of a research project)

    G. Time line (projected schedule of implementation)

III. Pilot study (small scale testing of procedures to be studied)

IV. The main study or dissertation (APA format, front matter, introductory chapter, literature review, methods, results, discussion, back matter)

V. The journal report (e.g. a referreed journal)

****

Here is the outline based on my topic:

I. The research problem: How has direct democracy, utililizing computer and Internet technology, been implemented and used in various countries and institutions and what has been

and could be the role of educational systems in the implementation and continuing use of direct democracy?

      A. Research literature (on the subject of direct democracy from publications and Internet sources)

      B. Theory-based research (a discussion of the concept and history of democracy)

      C. Extending or replicating existing research studies (I can check to see how many of these exist)

          1. Check finds of a breakthrough study (look for breakthrough studies)

          2. Check validity of research findings across different populations (France, Estonia, Switzerland, etc.)

          3. Check trends or change over time (for Internet voting since from about 1990)

          4. Check findings using different methodology (control studies and random sampling)

          5. Develop more effective interventions (check what has been done before)

      D. Team projects (community and school projects)

II. The research proposal

      A. Introduction (problem, potential contribution, literature foundation, research hypothesis -- e.g., null or directional)

      B. Review of the literature (topic studies, methods critique, previous conclusions, practical applications)

      C. Research design (descriptive, causal-comparative, correlational, or experimental)

      D. Research methods (e.g., sampling procedures, data-collection procedures, researching literature, I am contemplating sending out questionaires to people including politicians and Congress members.

      E. Data analysis (develop a plan for this, by reading research data)

      F. Human subjects protection (to insure the safety of the participants of a research project, privacy issues)

      G. Time line (projected schedule of implementation -- only for the action plan)

III. Pilot study (check studies made in France, Estonia, Switzerland, etc. and perhaps propose local pilot studies at universities, etc.)

IV. The main study or dissertation (APA format, front matter, introductory chapter, literature review, methods, results, discussion, back matter -- this is the actual structure of the paper which would contain the information within this outline)

V. The journal report (e.g. a referreed journal)

The paper will use, with the above information, the following organizational structure:

Front matter
Introduction
Literature review
Core questions and hypothesis
Research Methodology
Data analyasis
Projected findings
Implications for practice and research
Back matter

Reference:

Gall, M.D., Borg, W., & Gall, J.P. (2003). Educational Research: An Introduction. 7th Ed. Boston: Pearson Education, Inc.

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to Marcia Anderson:
According to the statement below the future of education will be in online or e-learning: Cisco Systems president and CEO, John Chambers has reportedly said that "the next big killer application for the Internet is going to be education. Education over the Internet is going to be so big it is going to make e-mail look like a rounding
error." (MacNamara, O'Donnell, 2003)

Reference:

MacNamara, J. O'Donnell, D. (2001). Developing e-Citizens and e-Consumers, an Irish e-Commerce Case Study. Retrieved October 24, 2003 from http://66.218.71.225/search/cache?p=The+E-citizen.+Instructional+Technology.,+Lee,+John+K.++&sub=Search&ei=UTF-8&url=fe_aPyZrSDAJ:www.efmd.be/learninggroups/chapter/eisb2001proceedings/pdfs/MacNamara%2520%2520O%27Donnell%2520.pdf

Here is an outline as derived from Educational Research: An Introduction (Gall, 2003):

I. The research problem: How has direct democracy, utililizing computer and Internet technology, been implemented and used in various countries and institutions and what has been and could be the role of educational systems in the implementation and continuing use of direct democracy?

      A. Research literature (on the subject of direct democracy from publications and Internet sources)

      B. Theory-based research (a discussion of the concept and history of democracy)

      C. Extending or replicating existing research studies (I can check to see how many of these exist)

            1. Check finds of a breakthrough study (look for breakthrough studies)

            2. Check validity of research findings across different populations (France, Estonia, Switzerland, etc.)

            3. Check trends or change over time (for Internet voting since from about 1990)

            4. Check findings using different methodology (control studies and random sampling)

            5. Develop more effective interventions (check what has been done before)

      D. Team projects (community and school projects)

II. The research proposal

      A. Introduction (problem, potential contribution, literature foundation, research hypothesis -- e.g., null or directional)

      B. Review of the literature (topic studies, methods critique, previous conclusions, practical applications)

      C. Research design (descriptive, causal-comparative, correlational, or experimental)

      D. Research methods (e.g., sampling procedures, data-collection procedures, researching literature, I am contemplating sending out questionaires to people including politicians and Congress members.

      E. Data analysis (develop a plan for this, by reading research data)

      F. Human subjects protection (to insure the safety of the participants of a research project, privacy issues)

      G. Time line (projected schedule of implementation -- only for the action plan)

III. Pilot study (check studies made in France, Estonia, Switzerland, etc. and perhaps propose local pilot studies at universities, etc.)

IV. The main study or dissertation (APA format, front matter, introductory chapter, literature review, methods, results, discussion, back matter -- this is the actual structure of the paper which would contain the information within this outline)

V. The journal report (e.g. a referreed journal)

Below is a simplified version of the form that the proposal will take:

Front matter
Introduction
Literature review
Core questions and hypothesis
Research Methodology
Data analyasis
Projected findings
Implications for practice and research
Back matter

Outline for my paper:

(all in APA Format)

Front Matter: Title page, Preface and Acknowledgements, Table of contents, List of tables, List of figures

 INTRODUCTION How has direct democracy, utililizing computer and Internet technology, been implemented and used in various countries and institutions and what has been and could be the role of educational systems in the implementation and continuing use of direct democracy?

CORE QUESTIONS AND HYPOTHESIS

How has direct democracy been practiced in other countries and institutions and how effective has it been?

How can the educational system participate in the implementation of a direct democracy utilizing Internet and computer technology?

How can direct democracy be introduced and taught in Social Studies and Political Science courses?

How can a constitutional amendment be proposed?

How can the reliability of Internet voting be assessed?

How can the privacy and security of voters be assured?

How can the public be informed of issues to be voted on?

How can the voters register their votes via the Internet or computer?

How can the public be made aware of the safety and limitations of direct democracy?

How can the public be made aware of the roles and duties of citizens in a democracy?

How can the public be made aware of the philosophy and history of democracy?

LITERATURE REVIEW (on the subject of direct democracy from publications and Internet sources)

review of preliminary, primary and secondary sources concerning the topic of direct democracy.

     A. Research literature (on the subject of direct democracy from publications and Internet sources)

     B. Theory-based research (a discussion of the concept and history of democracy)

     C. Extending or replicating existing research studies (I can check to see how many of these exist)

          1. Check finds of a breakthrough study (look for breakthrough studies)

          2. Check validity of research findings across different populations (France, Estonia, Switzerland, etc.)

          3. Check trends or change over time (for Internet voting since from about 1990)

          4. Check findings using different methodology (control studies and random sampling)

          5. Develop more effective interventions (check what has been done before)

PROJECTED FINDINGS

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY
At this point I am considering sending out a questioaire to people including politicians and Congress members and researching previous studies and perhaps suggesting some local studies to be done at universities and in communities and local governments.   Pilot study (check studies made in France, Estonia, Switzerland, etc. and perhaps propose local pilot studies at universities, etc.)

RESULTS

DATA ANALYSIS
it will be quantitative because it is reproducible, flexible and scalable.

DISCUSSION

IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE AND RESEARCH

CONCLUSION

Back Matter: Bibliography, Footnotes, Appendixes

Reference:

Gall, M.D., Borg, W., & Gall, J.P. (2003). Educational Research: An Introduction. 7th Ed. Boston: Pearson Education, Inc.

Reflections:

Some of what I have learned thus far in this course:

1. Differentiating between preliminary, primary, and secondary sources.

2. Qualitative research (variables, qualitative analysis, interpretative, naturalistic, subjective, localized)

3. Quantitative research (constants, quantitative analysis, statistical, fixed, objective, universal)

4. Research methods (sampling procedures, data-collection, experimention, questionaires, reviewing literature, narrative review,vote counting, chi-square method, meta-analysis)

Reference:

Gall, M.D., Borg, W., & Gall, J.P. (2003). Educational Research: An Introduction. 7th Ed. Boston: Pearson Education, Inc.

P.S. I still don't know what the chi-square method is but I guess I'll find out about that later.

Looks to have the making of a solid proposal once the details are filled in. Looks as if you are at least asking the right questions and you should be heading in the right direction for making a

good case for this study. Be sure your sources are both recent and focused on the topic. I like your questions and I think that the use of a questionnaire is appropriate for this topic. So, it appears you have a good start here.

Recommendations for improvement:
One logistic issue first. I think it would make more sense to move your core questions after your literature review. To me, it makes sense to present your rationale/argument for your study and then tell the reader what you are going to do.

sfitzgerald@earthlink.net

Thank you for your observations about the proposal outline.

In a previous letter you mentioned that the course paper would be a proposal rather than an actual research project but it seems to me that if I include the results of a questionaire that I would send out that that part at least would be considered actual research (thank you for the suggestion to read Chapter 8 as I think that would be helpful in developing a questionaire -- I think I would use mostly closed-ended and one or two open ended questions to keep the questionaire short and concise). Also, I think a good amount of the paper would be reviews of previous projects and literature and discussions of the subject of democracy and direct democracy and examples of its use today.

I'll send segments of the paper to you as I begin to flesh it out and as its form begins to develop, if that is alright with you.

Sincerely,

Richard Bloodworth

P.S. Yes, I'm interested in the results of the mid-quarter evaluation.

Lui 4.3 I've been reading your postings with interest as I have been teaching ESL for several years in various countries even though my primary training is in art and architectecture though I had a CELTA course -- certificate for English language teaching for adults.

Lui U5 outline   In addition to ESL (English as a Second Language), there are also the terms TEFL (Teaching English as a Foreign Language) and TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) since sometimes English might not be the second but instead a third or fourth, etc. language for them besides their native language as this is often the case in Europe or Asia. You mentioned total immersion and that is the only method I have used, one reason is that I do not speak the languages in the countries where I have taught ESL (Korea, Japan, Turkey, China, and now Taiwan). I think most of the student's first language of the classes you are referring to is Spanish so the methods would be similar to the the ones I have been using. My sister, on the

other hand, teaches ESOL in the USA in Georgia where the students come from a variety of countries since they are the children of emigrants to the USA. In the classes I have been teaching, all of the students speak the same language (students are not allowed to used their native language during the classes). But in both types of classes, where students speak the same or a variety of first languages, a total immersion method is used.

--

Shawn,

I thought we were to try to send two responses per entire unit but I will try to send at least one per discussion. I sent a 4.1 comment to Marcia on 11-03-03 about e-learning and a late 4.2 response to Stephanie and Lui on 11-11-03.

Thank you,

Richard

Jan,   You've hit on a real minefield here. It makes us wonder how many of the "facts" we read are really true. Thinking that way can make someone feel suspicious of any information, even somewhat paranoid.   The manipulation of data is almost expected in the advertising field but what about accountants altering information, such as in the WorldCom or Enro scandals, or a scientist skewing data in order to qualify for a grant or even a Nobel Prize.   Richard

---

U5D1

Constitutional amendments are permanent additions to the Contitution, though they can be counter amended as was the case with the Prohibition Amendment, that require a 2/3 vote from both houses of the Congress and therefore very difficult to obtain. There have been twenty seven Constitutional Amendments with the most recent being in 1992 which involved no Congressional self salary increases while the legislators are in their terms. The twelfth Amendment concerning changing the method of electing the president of the United States using the Electoral College was added in 1803 after the first ten Amendments, the Bill of Rights, were added in 1791.

Develop two research questions or problems that would lend themselves to resolution using a qualitative method of inquiry. Discuss which inquiry method would be appropriate for each question or topic.

1. How can the concept of direct democracy be introduced and the procedures for its implementation and utilization be taught in Social Studies and Political Science courses?

Of the methods research design (descriptive, causal-comparative, correlational, and experimental) and methods of inquiry (surveys, opinion polls, statistical data, questionaires, sampling procedures, data collection procedures, etc.), I think the best approach to answer this question would be a descriptive design utilizing a questionaire sent to all of the Social Studies and Political Science teachers (that the researcher can locate) in public and private schools from the K-12 levels up through post-secondary and adult education. The questionaire could contain closed and open ended questions in addition to a blank suggestion space at the end of the questionaire where the instructors can add any thoughts that they may have on the subject.

---

2. How can a Constitutional amendment be proposed?

Constitutional amendments are permanent additions to the Contitution, though they can be counter amended as was the case with the Prohibition amendment, that require a 2/3 vote from both houses of the Congress and therefore very difficult to obtain. There have been twenty seven Constitutional Amendments with the most recent being in 1992 which involved no Congressional self salary increases while the legislators are in their terms. The twelfth Amendment concerning changing the method of electing the president of the United States using the Electoral College was added in 1803 after the first ten Amendments, the Bill of Rights, were added in 1791.

I think this inquiry can be accomplished by doing a thorough historical and literature research of all of the previous 27 amendments and how they were done. Additionally, a questionaire concerning procedures for obtaining an amendment could be sent out to focus groups related to the topic and eventually a petition could be circulated.

Reference:

Gall, M.D., Borg, W., & Gall, J.P. (2003). Educational Research: An Introduction. 7th Ed. Boston: Pearson Education, Inc.

U5D1 response to Marcia Anderson

I think the quality of an education depends on the curriculum, texts, instructors, and knowledge offered and the facilities available to the learners. But whether the instruction occurs in an expensive private or a public school or in an online environment, the quality of education is ultimately determined by the efforts of the individual learners and no amount of the aforementioned characteristics can provide a quality education if the learner does not willingly participate in the educational processes. So, therefore, both online and traditional educational methods can provide a quality education if the students are willing for that to happen.

U5D2

What are some advantages and disadvantages of qualitative and quantitative methods of inquiry?

Qualitative research (postpositivist research). Inquiry that is grounded in the assumption that individuals construct social reality in the form of meanings and interpretations, and that these constructions tend to be transitory and situational. The dominant methodology is to discover these meanings and interpretations by subjecting the resulting data to analytic induction. (Gall, 2003).

Qualitative research characteristics: variables, selective sampling of smaller populations, qualitative analysis, interpretive, transitory, naturalistic, subjective, localized.

ADVANTAGES:

Can flow with the requirements of the research methodology

Has an emergent quality

People can identify with this type of research more easily than to dry statistics

Can bring cases and examples to life or application

Can adapt to and account for execeptions to the general trends

Flexible and adaptive to new data collecting methods

Can frame new research questions

Needs smaller researched populations

Forward-looking

DISADVANTAGES:

Subjective

Can be inclined toward being biased

Varying

Ethical problems including disguising the identities of researched groups

Requires highly developed language skills

Labor intensive research

More difficult to detect patterns

U5D2 Strengths and weaknesses that Shawn asked for

Strengths:

There is a need for explanation and research in this topic.

There would be public interest and support of this idea.

This concept would satisfy the definition and requirements of democracy.

Weaknesses:

Some of this project might involve going into unexplored territory so there could be some sense of "feeling in the dark"

This idea depends on and requires the ethical use of the system and a security system to assure that.

A great deal of research in this area would be time consuming and labor intensive.

Quantitative research (positivist research). Inquiry that is grounded in the assumption that features of the social environment constitute an objective reality that is relatively constant across time and settings. The dominant methodology is to describe and explain features of this reality by collecting numerical data on observable behaviors of samples and by subjecting these data to statistical analysis. (Gall, 2003).

Quantitative research characteristics: constants, random samplings of larger populations, quantitative analysis, statistical, stationary, analytical, objective, universal.

ADVANTAGES:

Objective

Factual

Analytical

Numerical

Universal

Reliable

Constant

Formula based

Mathematically describable

DISADVANTAGES:

Rigid, inflexible

Dry, factual

Detached, uninteresting, colorless, dull

Difficult for people to relate to

Research process is difficult to change once begun

Difficult to generalize to other situations

Requires larger sized researched populations

Backward-looking

Possible ethical problems including "inventing" data

Reference:

Gall, M.D., Borg, W., & Gall, J.P. (2003). Educational Research: An Introduction. 7th Ed. Boston: Pearson Education, Inc.

U6D1

Using the problem or research topic from your proposed study provide a rationale regarding the type of data your would collect, and how you think you would analyze it relative to the resolution of the problem or topic you have selected. Post early in the week, then return later and comment on the postings of your fellow classmates.

Concerning the research topic of direct democracy and its present use and the methods of its implementation and and ways of introducing and educating the public about the concept, the methods of collecting data would involve research in the history of these ideas by reviewing past research, experiments, and uses of direct democracy through a search of literature, studies, and experiments done on the topic. Also, another method would involve the use of interviews, surveys, and questionaires conducted with the general public, focus groups, and politicians as well as social studies and political science teachers.

The information gathering instruments used would involve closed form and open form questions and the use of quantitative (in determining numbers, statistics, percentages, etc.) and qualitative (such as in eliciting opinions from the respondents for open form questions) forms of collecting and analyzing the data.

U6D2

Agree with 2 or 3 other members of the class to divide twelve (12) concepts and terms related to data collection and analysis among you. Each team member is to research and share their understanding of these concepts with the other members of your team (so that each team covers all twelve concepts). Once teams are formed please compile and converse via email so that the course-room does not become overloaded with these conversation strands. Once compiled, post the list under a group name that is representative of your group. from Jan u6d2:

Descriptive observational variable
inferential observational variables
evaluative observational variables
criterior related observer reliability
intra-observer reliability
inter-observer reliability
observer drift
reliability decay
observer omission
observer contamination
descriptive stage
focused stage
selected stage
theoretical saturation

Since we are each to choose 4 concepts to discuss and there are 3 of us and 3 chapters whose contents we are to cover, I thought one idea, or the simplest approach, is for each of us to take one of the 3 chapters (Chapters 7, 8, and 9). Of the three, I would like to discuss the concepts in Chapter 8 which is about data from questionaires. I can tell you the exact four concepts later. That is one idea another is to jointly make a list of concepts and each of us choose four but I thought the idea I mentioned would be the most effective considering the communication and time limitations we need to contend with. So what do you think about that idea? We could later compile all three discussions into one essay.

--

Tina Nov 19, 2003 : Hi Stephanie and Richard! I like Stephanie's idea of choosing our own terms and seeing if they overlap. Since Stephanie wanted to focus on Chapter 7, I think I would like to focus on Chapter 8-questionnaires and interviews. I could pool my 4 concepts from there if that is OK with you guys. The discussion question wasn't very clear on what we were to cover, so I guess it is essentially up to us. Let me know your thoughts! -- Tina O'Block

Tina Nov 19-03: Dear Richard, I had been thinking about each of us taking a chapter too! Since you already have your concepts thought out for Chapter 8, I will take Chapter 9. I am using observations in my research study so it will be beneficial for me to cover concepts relating to this topic. I am assuming this assignment is due by the end of this week. I am planning on writing mine up tomorrow. Combining our ideas for posting is a good idea. I will email my contribution to you and Stephanie tomorrow. -- Tina O'Block

Steph Nov 19, 03: I'll go for that. I like chapter 7. Tina has also stated that she likes chapter 8, so you two need to work that out. I imagine that there are plenty of words to chose from in chapter 8 for both of you to do that. I'll send you my words tonight.   Stephanie

from Stephanie 11-20-03 : I have chosen to discuss the following ideas. Let me know if they somehow intersect with any of your ideas.

Content-related validity

Test Reliability

Item Response Theory

Hello Tina and Stephanie,

Your reviews look great! I'll try to finish mine by Friday night (Friday morning USA time).

As for a name for a group, if we are to have one, it could be "e-menage a trois" or if that is too provocative perhaps "Three's company" or perhaps just our names: "Tina-Stephanie-Richard Triad." What ideas do you have?

So that I won't hold you up, you can go ahead and post them separately under our group's heading and then we can combine them into one composition later.

Richard

U6 Triad:

the telephone.

Response rate

Our concern with response rates is linked to the effect of low rates on the representativeness of the sample, and the consequent accuracy of the population estimates. Anywhere you get less than 100% response rate is in some sense a 'threat' to the accuracy and usefulness of the survey; the lower the response, the greater the threat. As you've seen, maximising the response rate is a problem with all voluntary surveys. In general terms, the less the survey uses face-to-face questioning, the harder it is to get a high response rate.

Exercise 8.1

Draw up a table that summaries the advantages and disadvantages of the various survey formats.

Exercise 8.2

Describe how you would organise the pilot survey for a major study of how people in Victoria would react to a proposal to replace the current voting system with a `first-past-the-post' system.

You should now carry out [Practical Exercise 5 <prac5.php>](prac5.php)

Questionnaire design

One of the foibles of human nature is that we expect - against most available evidence - that we will create something worthwhile every time we approach a problem. This expectation seems to increase with the (apparent) simplicity of the task. This is clearly true of questionnaire design. It seems so easy to write down a series of questions; how hard can it be?

The answer is: quite hard, really - if you want to do it well. The design and construction of questionnaires is a predominantly subjective process that is largely guided by the experience of the designer; the more questionnaires you have created, the more likely it is that the next survey will be closer to 'perfect'. Mostly this is because an experienced designer should (hopefully) learn from his or her mistakes, and will avoid repeating them.

Anyone who deals with questionnaire design develops, by personal experience and critical analysis of other people's designs, what one might call design guidelines (perhaps even rules) for good questionnaires. Everyone will have slightly different principles, so those presented here are not going to be universally accepted.

Dear Tina and Stephanie,

I sent the composition as an email and now as an attachment in Adobe Acrobat Reader 5. I'm not sure if you can post mine as an attachment from your computers so I sent the email version too. I'll be able to log back on Sunday morning (your time) so let me know what you would like for me to do. (If I should post mine separately under our heading or wait until we combine them all together into one composition). I can copy and paste (as you probably already know how: by selecting the entire text then pressing "Ctrl C" to copy and then putting the blinking cursor on the letter page where the text is to be copied to and then pressing "Ctrl V" to paste it) them all together into one composition when I return if you would like. Let me know what you think would be the best approach.

Richard

U6D2: My part of the Three's Company triad:

QUESTIONNAIRES: (documents that ask the same questions of all individuals in a sample).

Advantages:

-- Used mostly in quantitative research since it is standardized and the results are statistical

-- Lower costs in sampling over a large geographical area than interviews

-- Time needed to collect data is less than with interviews

Disadvantages:

-- Can not probe as deeply into beliefs, attitudes, and inner experiences as interviews

-- Not possible to modify or clarify items after the questionnaire is distributed

INTERVIEWS (oral questions by the interviewer and oral answers by the respondents):

Advantages:

-- Used mostly in qualitative research with open-ended questions

-- Adaptable

-- Interviewers can follow up to obtain more information or clarify misunderstood areas

-- Can build trust and rapport with respondents

-- Gives research a human voice or human "touch"

-- Can be used to obtain information not able to be obtained by other means

Disadvantages:

-- Difficult to standardize the interview situation so that the interviewer does not influence the respondent to respond in an expected way

-- Does not provide anonymity from the interviewer

-- To assure respondent's anonymity, the interviewer must report results without revealing the respondent's identity

TO CONSTRUCT THE RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE:

Define research objectives

Select a sample

Design the questionnaire format

Pretest the questionnaire (pilot surveys)

Precontact the sample

Write a cover letter and distribute the questionnaire

Follow-up on non-respondents

Analyze the data (Gall, 2003).

PILOT SURVEYS:

A pilot survey can be used to find out whether the survey is going to be successful and if it will achieve an acceptable response rate, and provide reliable data on the relevant topics. The pilot survey can determine the following information:

Are the correct number of questions being asked (too many or not enough)?

Are the questions going to yield the desired information? .

Is the survey wording clear and effective or is it misleading and confusing? Do the respondents answer the questions in the intended way and not leave any blank?

Are the instructions clear and unambiguous?

What is the optimum size for the pilot sample? .

The results of the pilot survey should not be used as if the results had been collected during the

main survey.

Ask respondents to state in their own words what they think each question means.

The pilot response rate varies depending on who or what groups the questionnaires are sent to.

QUESTIONNAIRE DESIGN:

The design and construction of questionnaires is a predominantly subjective process that is mostly determined by the experience of the designer. Surveys can be from one to twenty pages or more. Adequate background information should be included in a cover letter so the intend respondent will be interested in responding to the questionnaire.

An important issue in the variety, number of, and sequencing of questions so as to get the intended information yet not overwhelm the respondent with a burdensome number of questions. The two main types of questions are open-ended and closed-ended questions, both of which can be asked in a formal or an informal tone, and can be used in an appropriate mix in both qualitative and quantitative research. A questionnaire should be kept as short as possible but a longer questionnaire should be broken into sections and usually numbered and the questionnaire should be as clear, detailed and unambiguous as possible.

QUESTIONNAIRE LAYOUT:

There should be a good use of whitespace which is the space between questions and sections with no writing to enhance readability.

The questionnaire needs to have a preamble that explains the purpose of the survey and this can be part of the cover letter or at the head of the questionnaire.

There should be instructions to the respondents at the beginning of each section.

Questions should be numbered questions and, if the questionnaire is divided into sections, the section should be indicated as part of the question numbering system.

There should be specific instructions associated with each question to aid in the correct completion of that questions.

To save everyone's time, the respondents should be able to bypass questions (or whole sections) that are not relevant to them by using filter questions, with instructions such as "If you answered YES to Question 8 please go to Question 12)".

Respondents who are unsure about answering a question should be able to respond with "Don't Know", "Undecided", or "Not Applicable", etc.

WORDING OF QUESTIONS IN A QUESTIONNAIRE:

Clear and unambiguous wording.

Word questions in such a way that the response is what the respondent really thinks about the topic.

Make questions as simple as possible: do not assume that the respondent knows difficult words or concepts

Be sure not to use double negatives, grammatical errors, slang, colloquialisms, or spelling mistakes

Be sure not to use a double yes and no question that could contain both yes and no answer. ("Are you a member of the _____ Party and did you vote for the party's candidate in the last election?") There are four possible answers to this question (Yes/Yes, Yes/No, No/Yes, No/No).

Be sure to be culturally sensitive while wording questions.

QUESTION TYPES:

CLOSED FORM: (the question permits only pre-specified responses such as in multiple choice or True/False questions) which can be assessed numerically and more objectively.

Advantages:

-- Makes quantifying and analysis easier and more direct

-- Questions can be pilot-tested more easily

-- Can be used to calculate percentage of respondents who answered questions in a particular way

-- Disadvantages:

-- Can not express individual views

-- Can not express views non-conforming to the structure of the questionnaire

-- The respondent can not offer creative views or solutions

OPEN FORM: (respondents can make any response they wish such as in essay questions) which requires a more subjective assessment.

Advantages:

-- Can have interesting responses

-- Can have more in depth responses

-- Can use optional (can be answered or not) questions

-- For qualitative research results can be analyzed by a grounded-theory approach

Disadvantages:

-- Time consuming

-- Analysis requires development of a category system

-- Many readers are needed to analyze transcripts

-- More difficult and time-consuming to analyze

STRUCTURED FORM:

boxes: (e.g. check the box, including multiple choice and True/False questions)

scales: linear (e.g. from strongly agree to strongly disagree scales) and tabular (tables or charts)

DATA FROM TARGET GROUPS:

Key informant questionnaires and interviews are data from people who have special knowledge (e.g. experts) that would not otherwise be available to the researcher. This group tends to be more educated, informed, and articulate about a particular topic that the general public is.

Survey questionnaires and interviews are those used to supplement data that have been collected by other methods. These include confirmation survey interviews which are structured interviews that produce evidence to confirm earlier findings, participant construct interviews which are used to learn how informants structure their physical and social world, and projective techniques which use ambiguous stimuli to elicit subconscious perceptions.

Focus group questionnaires and interviews are group interviews addressing questions to a group of individuals who have been assembled for this purpose or interviewing groups that share a common goal.

Reference:

Gall, M.D., Borg, W., & Gall, J.P. (2003). Educational Research: An Introduction. 7th Ed. Boston: Pearson Education, Inc.

Goodman, A. Data Collection and Analysis. Retrieved on Nov 20, 2003 from <http://www.deakin.edu.au/~agoodman/sci101/index.php>

Surveys and questionnaires are an effective way of gathering information since they are documents that ask the same questions of all individuals in a sample so, for that reason, a great deal of time is saved by asking the same closed form questions. But to get individualized responses, open ended questions could be added in either surveyed interviews or questionnaires to elicit individualized opinions and responses.

--

These are very good definitions and examples of the terms that are examined; I particularly liked the explanation of the Halo Effect.

U6D2 Three's Company Compilation :

COLLECTING RESEARCH DATA WITH TESTS

.Administering tests and evaluating the results is a common method of collecting data for research. The quality of this research data, however, is dependent on the quality of the tests. There are five common criteria against which the quality of a test is determined. These include 1) objectivity, 2) standard conditions of administration and scoring, 3) standards for interpretation, 4) fairness, 5) validity and 6) reliability. Validity and reliability are both multifaceted and will be discussed further. Along with these five criteria, the construction of a test, and more specifically each item on a test, is a complex effort. One theory that is used in the approach to test construction is item response theory.

Content Validity

One important measure of the validity of a test is obtained by looking at the content validity. Content validity is defined as "the extent to which inferences from a test's scores adequately

represent the content or conceptual domain that the test is claimed to measure" (Gall, Gall, Borg, 2003). Or as Messick describes, "content-related validity refers to the extent to which the test questions represent the skills in the specified subject area" (Messick, 1989). Content validity is determined by comparing the content of a test with the construct that it claims to measure. In a classroom setting, this construct can be equated with the course content that was presented by the teacher. Thus, a test with high content validity will have questions that cover the material presented by the teacher to the students. While it is not necessary or feasible for a test to cover every piece of information covered in the course, it is important that a representative sample of the content domain be covered by the test.

When selecting a test for research purposes, it is always essential that the validity of the test be considered. It is especially important, however, when the research involves the effect of instructional methods on achievement. In such a case, the significance of the findings will be of no use if the tests were not aligned with the course content.

The importance of content validity is also extremely pronounced in an environment of standardized testing. It is not reasonable to expect children to perform successfully on tests when they have not been exposed to the constructs being measured by the test.

Test Reliability

Test reliability is "the extent to which there is measurement error present in the scores yielded by a test" (Gall, Gall, Borg, 2003). To understand test reliability, one must first understand that there is a difference between a tester's "true score" on a test and the scores that he actually obtains on the test. A "true score" is a measurement of the tester's actual ability (knowledge of content or ability to perform) and can vary greatly from the score received from a test.

When defining the reliability of a test, two variables are identified; reliability coefficient and standard deviation. A reliability coefficient of 1 is a perfectly reliable test, while a test that has a coefficient of 0 has no reliability. The standard deviation describes the amount of deviation that is present when comparing all of the scores to the mean score. There are numerous methods used to calculate these values depending on the circumstances surrounding the tests and available resources of time, money and expertise.

Several factors contribute to measurement error and a test reliability of less than 1. 1) Every test contains only a sampling of the content that it covers. The appropriateness of the chosen content and the ability for it to measure the construct affect the reliability. 2) Those who administer the test can create measurement error if their procedures do not follow the standards. 3) Those who score the test can create measurement error if they do not follow consistent scoring procedures. 4) Testing conditions can have adverse effects on the test-takers. 5) The condition (health, motivation) of the tester can affect the way he performs on the test (Gall, Gall, Borg, 2003).

Item Response Theory

Item response theory (IRT) is an approach to test construction based on the assumptions that 1)

and individual's performance on a test item reflects a single ability, 2) individuals with different amounts of that ability will perform differently on the item, and 3) the relationship between the variables of ability and item performance can be represented by a mathematical function (Gall, Gall, Borg, 2003).

When constructing a test with this method, items of varying difficulty are created to enable the scorer to more accurately measure the ability of a test-taker, and items that are either too easy or too hard are not given to the test-taker. Thus, constructing a test using IRT allows the test to be fashioned for test-takers with varying abilities and still to provide accurate scores for all test-takers.

Advantages of IRT include 1) test can be customized for students of varying abilities, 2) construction of parallel tests of equivalent difficulty is possible, and 3) a reduction in measurement error is possible with the construction of test with more items that are consistent with the ability of the test-taker.

Although the complexity of creating a test with this method, IRT is routinely used in the construction of standards-based tests. Anyone using the results of such tests should be aware of the underlying theory.

Norm-Referenced Mesurement

Norm-Referenced Measurement interprets a person's test score in relation to the scores of others who have taken the same test. Norm-referenced tests yield information regarding the student's performance in comparison to a norm or average of performance by similar students (Rodríguez, 1997). The resulting score is generally a percentile ranking that details what percentage of people in the norming sample (sample of test population used to create a table of scores and percentiles) scored at the same level or below the person being evaluated.

This approach to measurement is very useful to evaluate the broad abilities of test-takers, but the greatest problem with norm-referenced measurements is the inability to use the results to measure specific abilities of test-takers. It is also very possible for the norming table to become "polluted" if the norming sample is not routinely updated, because over time the results of test-takers can vary greatly. For this reason, it is imperative that great care be taken when establishing the norming sample (Rodríguez, 1997).

COLLECTING RESEARCH DATA WITH QUESTIONAIRES AND INTERVIEWS:

In collecting research data, two methods that can be used are questionnaires and interviews. Below are descriptions as well as advantages and disadvantages of each:

Questionnaires (documents that ask the same questions of all individuals in a sample):

Advantages:

-- Used mostly in quantitative research since it is standardized and the results are statistical

-- Lower costs in sampling over a large geographical area than interviews

-- Time needed to collect data is less than with interviews

Disadvantages:

-- Can not probe as deeply into beliefs, attitudes, and inner experiences as interviews

-- Not possible to modify or clarify items after the questionnaire is distributed

Interviews (oral questions by the interviewer and oral answers by the respondents):

Advantages:

-- Used mostly in qualitative research with open-ended questions

-- Adaptable

-- Interviewers can follow up to obtain more information or clarify misunderstood areas

-- Can build trust and rapport with respondents

-- Gives research a human voice or human "touch"

-- Can be used to obtain information not able to be obtained by other means

Disadvantages:

-- Difficult to standardize the interview situation so that the interviewer does not influence the respondent to respond in an expected way

-- Does not provide anonymity from the interviewer

-- To assure respondent's anonymity, the interviewer must report results without revealing the respondent's identity

Steps in Constructing the Research Questionnaire:

Define research objectives

Select a sample

Design the questionnaire format

Pretest the questionnaire (pilot surveys)

Pre-contact the sample

Write a cover letter and distribute the questionnaire

Follow-up on non-respondents

Analyze the data (Gall, 2003).

Pilot Surveys:

A pilot survey can be used to find out whether the survey is going to be successful and if it will achieve an acceptable response rate, and provide reliable data on the relevant topics. The pilot survey can determine the following information:

Are the correct number of questions being asked (too many or not enough)?

Are the questions going to yield the desired information? .

Is the survey wording clear and effective or is it misleading and confusing? Do the respondents answer the questions in the intended way and not leave any blank?

Are the instructions clear and unambiguous?

What is the optimum size for the pilot sample? .

The results of the pilot survey should not be used as if the results had been collected during the main survey.

Ask respondents to state in their own words what they think each question means.

The pilot response rate varies depending on who or what groups the questionnaires are sent to.

Questionnaire Design:

The design and construction of questionnaires is a predominantly subjective process that is mostly determined by the experience of the designer. Surveys can be from one to twenty pages or more. Adequate background information should be included in a cover letter so the intend respondent will be interested in responding to the questionnaire.

An important issue in the variety, number of, and sequencing of questions so as to get the intended information yet not overwhelm the respondent with a burdensome number of questions. The two main types of questions are open-ended and closed-ended questions, both of which can be asked in a formal or an informal tone, and can be used in an appropriate mix in both qualitative and quantitative research. A questionnaire should be kept as short as possible but a longer questionnaire should be broken into sections and usually numbered and the questionnaire should be as clear, detailed and unambiguous as possible.

Questionnaire Layout:

There should be a good use of whitespace, which is the space between questions and sections with no writing, to enhance readability.

The questionnaire needs to have a preamble that explains the purpose of the survey and this can be part of the cover letter or at the head of the questionnaire.

There should be instructions to the respondents at the beginning of each section.

Questions should be numbered questions and, if the questionnaire is divided into sections, the section should be indicated as part of the question numbering system.

There should be specific instructions associated with each question to aid in the correct completion of that questions.

To save everyone's time, the respondents should be able to bypass questions (or whole sections) that are not relevant to them by using filter questions, with instructions such as "If you answered YES to Question 8 please go to Question 12)".

Respondents who are unsure about answering a question should be able to respond with "Don't Know", "Undecided", or "Not Applicable", etc.

Wording of Questions in a Questionnaire:

Clear and unambiguous wording.

Word questions in such a way that the response is what the respondent really thinks about the topic.

Make questions as simple as possible: do not assume that the respondent knows difficult words or concepts

Be sure not to use double negatives, grammatical errors, slang, colloquialisms, or spelling mistakes

Be sure not to use a double yes and no question that could contain both yes and no answer. ("Are you a member of the _____ Party and did you vote for the party's candidate in the last election?") There are four possible answers to this question (Yes/Yes, Yes/No, No/Yes, No/No).

Be sure to be culturally sensitive while wording questions.

Question Types:

Closed Form: (the question permits only pre-specified responses such as in multiple choice or True/False questions) which can be assessed numerically and more objectively.

Advantages:

-- Makes quantifying and analysis easier and more direct

-- Questions can be pilot-tested more easily

-- Can be used to calculate percentage of respondents who answered questions in a particular way

Disadvantages:

-- Can not express individual views

-- Can not express views non-conforming to the structure of the questionnaire

-- The respondent can not offer creative views or solutions

Open Form: (respondents can make any responses they wish such as in essay questions, which require a more subjective assessment):

Advantages:

-- Can have interesting responses

-- Can have more in depth responses

-- Can use optional (can be answered or not) questions

-- For qualitative research results can be analyzed by a grounded-theory approach

Disadvantages:

-- Time consuming

-- Analysis requires development of a category system

-- Many readers are needed to analyze transcripts

-- More difficult and time-consuming to analyze

Structured Form

boxes: (e.g. check the box, including multiple choice and True/False questions)

scales: linear (e.g. from strongly agree to strongly disagree scales) and tabular (tables or charts)

Data from Target Groups

Key informant questionnaires and interviews are data from people who have special knowledge (e.g. experts) that would not otherwise be available to the researcher. This group tends to be more educated, informed, and articulate about a particular topic that the general public is.

Survey questionnaires and interviews are those used to supplement data that have been collected by other methods. These include confirmation survey interviews which are structured interviews that produce evidence to confirm earlier findings, participant construct interviews which are used to learn how informants structure their physical and social world, and projective techniques which use ambiguous stimuli to elicit subconscious perceptions.

Focus group questionnaires and interviews are group interviews addressing questions to a group of individuals who have been assembled for this purpose or interviewing groups that have a shared goal.

COLLECTING RESEARCH DATA THROUGH OBSERVATION

Observations in Quantitative Research

These observations are sometimes known as structured observations because what is to be observed is specifically defined beforehand. This type of observation is "useful when the

evaluator desires to observe specific behaviors or characteristics" (Worthen, Sanders & Fitzpatrick, 1997, p. 376).   These specific behaviors or characteristics are defined as variables. Defining the variables to be observed is the first step in conducting this type of observation.

These variables can be classified into three types: descriptive, inferential, and evaluative. "Descriptive observational variables require no inference making on the part of the researcher. You see something and write it down" (Brown, p.1). This type of variable usually yields reliable data. "Inferential observational variables require the researcher to make inferences about what is observed and the underlying emotion" (Brown, p. 1). These variables are not as reliable as descriptive variables. "Evaluative observational variables require the researcher to make an inference and a judgment from the behavior" (Brown, p. 1). Evaluative variables are the least reliable of the three.

After defining the variables to be observed the next step is choosing how the information should be recorded. "Structured methods of observation typically involve using checklists or forms for recording observations. These are often called observation schedules" (Worthen, Sanders & Fitzpatrick, 1997, p. 377). Many standard observation schedules or forms are already available. These not only save the researcher time because they don't have to make their own, but since they have been used in previous studies they are valid and reliable and allow the researcher to compare their results to previous ones. If there are no existing observation forms that include all the variables to be studied the researcher may construct their own. Most schedules basically include a description of the variable, a place to record the variable, and sometimes a rating scale.

Now the observations actually need to be recorded onto the forms. If multiple observers are going to be used it is important to train all observers in the specific procedures to be used so that all data is consistent. There are four types of recording procedures that define how the observations are recorded: duration, frequency-count, interval, and continuous. "Duration recording monitors the percent of time or the total time that a behavior occurs in a specified time period" (McIntyre, p.1).This is best used when observing one variable or variables that do not occur simultaneously. "In frequency-count recording the observer records each time a target behavior occurs" (Gall, Gall & Borg, 2003, p. 258). Tallies are usually used for this. This is best when observing behaviors that are do not last for a long time. "Interval recording involves observing the behavior of an individual at given intervals" (Gall, Gall & Borg). This can be used to estimate the duration of a behavior. The data from these 3 types of recording procedures is numerical in nature and can be analyzed with a variety of statistical techniques. The last type, continuous recording, is more narrative in nature. It "involves recording all the behavior of the target individual of individuals for a specified observation interval" (Gall, Gall & Borg, p. 259). The observer focuses on specific behaviors that have been defined in the research study and then does a content analysis of the data.

Observations in Qualitative Research

This type of observation is sometimes referred to as unstructured observation. Unlike quantitative observations these observations do not specify specific variables to focus on at the beginning. The focus emerges out of the observation itself and the researcher is free to change or shift their focus at any time. In addition, these observations are more holistic in nature, taking note of the entire context in which behaviors occur.

This change in focus can occur in 3 stages. The first is descriptive where the observations are very general and unfocused in nature. The next is the focused stage where the researcher begins to focus on specific behaviors of interest. The last is the selected stage where the actual research problems or statements start to emerge and the researcher begins to analyze and define these statements.

"Qualitative observation depends less on available instruments and more on the evaluator or observer" (Worthen, Sanders & Fitzpatrick, 1997, p. 377). It allows the researchers to describe what is happening in their own words and use their own feelings and interpretations in these descriptions. There are 4 different roles the observer can take in qualitative observations. These roles explain how involved the researcher decides to become in the program being observed. The first is the complete observer where the researcher makes "no effort to blend in with the group but instead focuses on carefully observing the verbal and nonverbal cues of the participants" (Worthen, Sanders & Fitzpatrick). The opposite of this is the complete participant role where the researcher becomes an actual member of the group. The next two roles fall in between these two extremes. The observer-participant role is where the researcher is mainly an observer and only interacts with individuals on a casual basis as in conversations. The participant-observer role is where the researcher interacts with and has a meaningful relationship with the individuals but "does not engage in activities that are at the core of the group's identity" (Gall, Gall & Borg, 2003, p. 268).

Qualitative observations are usually recorded with field notes. These notes contain a description of the events, environment, behaviors, participants, etc. as well as the researcher's own reflections. Field notes should be as detailed as possible and can include visual details such as sketches, pictures, videotapes, etc.

Worthen, Sanders & Fitzpatrick note certain steps that qualitative observation usually takes:

1) thorough preparation through reading documents and records or chatting with informants or stakeholders
2) articulating the purpose of your observations (unstructured)
3) looking at (not for) what occurs
4) listening to what occurs
5) asking questions (after listening and observing)
6) assimilating and synthesizing information
7) checking working hypotheses with other data
8) triangulating, confirming, and cross-checking

Unobtrusive Measurements in Quantitative Research

Sometimes the validity and reliability of a study can be affected when individuals change their typical behavior when they know they are being observed or information is being collected about them. A way of avoiding these effects can be to use unobtrusive measurements. "Unobtrusive measures are characterized by the fact that the data are collected in a natural setting, and the individuals are unaware that they are being observed" (Gall, Gall & Borg, 2003, p. 275). Worthen, Sanders & Fitzpatrick offer several examples of unobtrusive data sources:

1) physical traces - physical evidence left from some past behavior
2) archival records - the ongoing, continuing records of society

3) private records - those not ordinarily left open to the public
4) contrived observation - the use of hardware devices for observation (videotape, audiotape)

Quantitative researchers analyze these sources using preconceived concepts or theories about the data and record them with numerical or statistical data. These results should be used in conjunction with other measurement methods.

Unobtrusive Measures in Qualitative Research

Qualitative researchers can use the unobtrusive data sources stated above for quantitative research as well as the following. Disguised field observations where "the researcher pretends to join or actually is a member of a group and records data about that group. The group does not know they are being observed for research purposes" (Brown, p. 1). The researcher can take on the complete-participant, observer-participant, or participant-observer roles. They can also study material culture and practice-oriented material culture using a holistic approach and trying to gain insights into a group's social context or reality. Material culture refers to "the various objects created by different groups throughout history" (Gall, Gall & Borg, 2003, p. 277). Practice-oriented material culture "is distinguished by its association with particular practices and meanings" (Gall, Gall & Borg).

Unobtrusive measures can offer valuable data but they all have limitations, the biggest being validity and reliability. It is hard to get a representative sample and replicating these types of situations is difficult. And of course there are ethical considerations, mainly informed consent and invasion of privacy. Institutional review boards may waive informed consent if the following conditions exist:

The individuals being studied will incur no risk; the anonymity of the participants   will be maintained; it is impossible to conduct the study under the condition of informed consent; and the study promises to produce significant benefits (Gall, Gall & Borg, 2003, p. 277).

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U7D1

Outline relative to how the final report will be written:

Below is a simplified version of the form that the proposal will take:

Front matter
Introduction
Literature review
Core questions and hypothesis
Research Methodology
Data analyasis
Projected findings
Implications for practice and research
Back matter

Outline for my paper:

(all in APA Format)

FRONT MATTER: Title page, Table of contents, List of tables, List of figures

INTRODUCTION How has direct democracy, utilizing computer and Internet technology, been implemented and used in various countries and institutions and what has been and could be the role of educational systems in the implementation and continuing use of direct democracy?

CORE QUESTIONS AND HYPOTHESIS

How has direct democracy been practiced in other countries and institutions and how effective has it been?

How can the educational system participate in the implementation of a direct democracy utilizing Internet and computer technology?

How can direct democracy be introduced and taught in Social Studies and Political Science courses?

How can a constitutional amendment be proposed?

How can the reliability of Internet voting be assessed?

How can the privacy and security of voters be assured?

How can the public be informed of issues to be voted on?

How can the voters register their votes via the Internet or computer?

How can the public be made aware of the safety and limitations of direct democracy?

How can the public be made aware of the roles and duties of citizens in a democracy?

How can the public be made aware of the philosophy and history of democracy?

LITERATURE REVIEW (on the subject of direct democracy from publications and Internet sources)

review of preliminary, primary and secondary sources concerning the topic of direct democracy.

    A. Research literature (on the subject of direct democracy from publications and Internet sources)

    B. Theory-based research (a discussion of the concept and history of democracy)

    C. Extending or replicating existing research studies (check to see how many of these exist)

        1. Check finds of a breakthrough study (look for breakthrough studies)

        2. Check validity of research findings across different populations (France, Estonia, Switzerland, etc.)

        3. Check trends or change over time (for Internet voting since from about 1990)

        4. Check findings using different methodology (control studies and random sampling)

        5. Develop more effective interventions (check what has been done before)

PROJECTED FINDINGS

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY
Introduction

Research questions

Data collection plan

Data analysis

Experimentation

Pilot test

RESULTS

DATA ANALYSIS
it will be quantitative because it is reproducible, flexible and scalable.

DISCUSSION

IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE AND RESEARCH

CONCLUSION

Recommendations

Limitations

Implications

BACK MATTER: Bibliography, Footnotes, Appendixes

Reference:

Gall, M.D., Borg, W., & Gall, J.P. (2003). Educational Research: An Introduction. 7th Ed. Boston: Pearson Education, Inc.

U7D2

The three most difficult issues in carrying out the project for this course:

1. Time (and geographical, since I am not in the United States) constraints in completing the assignments and the time involved in analyzing the anticipated collected data.

2. Completion of a thorough literature review

3. Sufficient questionnaire response (the initial questionnaire could be treated as a pilot survey)

I think everyone can relate to the time constraints and scheduling problems since we all have lives beyond the course(s) with personal and professional, etc. involvements so trying to schedule, accommodate, and complete all of our tasks can be a daunting task in itself.

U8D1

Many of the ethical issues mentioned here are economic in nature; some of them are concerns related to all topics and others are more specific to the topic I am writing about.

Some of the ethical abuses are:

-- Manipulating, skewing, or creating data to achieve a desired outcome.

-- Bribery to officials for the purpose of obtaining a contract.

-- Kickbacks or promising part of any project rewards to the project's participants.

-- Plagiarism from either the experimenter's or research writer's part of the research project.

-- Buying votes or opinions.

-- Paying the participant to behave in a certain way or to say what the researcher wants them to say.

-- Giving the research participants the answers to questions the researcher wants them to give in return for payment.

Of course, I don't think any of these would occur in any of this course's research papers , just as I don't expect an automobile accident while riding in a car, but they are all possible ethical abuses that can occur in research procedures.

Tina, It might be trouble contacting all of those people, though with email or telephone calls it should not be that difficult to do, but I can't imagine them not agreeing to let you conduct your project considering the nature of your project.

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ED5006 Paper

Title Page

A Proposal for Questionnaires to Obtain the Public's Opinions about Direct Democracy and a Survey of Teachers about Methods of Teaching Direct Democracy in Schools

ED5006

Research Methodology

December 2003

Richard Bloodworth

P.O.Box 78123

Atlanta, GA 30357

RBloodworth99@yahoo.com

Dr. Shawn Fitzgerald

"All truth passes through three stages. First, it is ridiculed. Second, it is violently opposed. Third, it is accepted as being self-evident." (Arthur Schopenhauer, 1788-1860)

"We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable [inalienable] Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness. That to secure these Rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed..." Thomas Jefferson (1743 - 1826).

"Every nation has a right to govern itself internally under what forms it pleases, and to change these forms at its own will." -Thomas Jefferson to Thomas Pinckney, 1792.

Democracy: "government by the people; *especially* **:** rule of the majority", the first definition of "democracy" in the Merriam-Webster dictionary.

"Democracy arises out of the notion that those who are equal in any respect are equal in all respects; because men are equally free, they claim to be absolutely equal.
In a democracy the poor will have more power than the rich, because there are more of them, and the will of the majority is supreme." Aristotle

"Amongst other problems, The CalTech/MIT Voting Technology Project estimated some four to six million votes were lost in 2000 due to ballot, equipment, registration or polling-place problems. In response, Americans clamored for new voting technology to replace the aging machines peppering US polling booths across the nation." (Bushell, 2003).

Contents:
ABSTRACT
A short synopsis of what your proposal will address. It will also include the purpose of this study, numbers of participants, findings and conclusions.

INTRODUCTION
The introduction will provide a brief overview of the research topic addressing the following questions: (1) What is the general area of research? , (2) What is the representation of the studied population?, (3) What makes this topic of importance to researchers, administrators, and the local community?

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM
You will describe the phenomena to the reader. You will identify the problem, and highlight the issues you wish to examine and build your case to have conducted the study.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY
You will highlight the specifics on what you want to examine, your research questions and what the study will contribute to society, and educational field will be discussed.

LITERATURE REVIEW
A review of the major researchers and studies will be examined. What has been the overall nature of the research that has been conducted related to this problem at a national level, and what are the questions that these researchers are seeking to answer. Is there any debate related to this topic? You will present all sides and present any gaps or drawbacks in the literature.

CORE QUESTIONS AND HYPOTHESIS
What questions do you seek to answer? State and explain the hypothesis and propositions (statements that establish casual relations) that can answer the questions. It will be critical that you make an argument for why it is important to examine this problem.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY
Describe how you would plan to carry out the research project. What research tools will be utilized (e.g., surveys, opinions, statistics, data)? My steps to be taken and the timeline for carrying out the proposed research topic will be included. You definitely need to provide an accurate representation of what I am studying in this section.

DATA ANALYSIS
You will identify the type of statistical analysis I will be conducting.

PROJECTED FINDINGS
Discussion on the possible results in terms of statistical analysis, charts, graphics, and pictorial representations of my hypothetical data will be produced. There also needs to be discussion of what your data would appear to look like if the hypothesis was supported.

IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE AND RESEARCH
What will this research tell us as practitioners, researchers, educators, and policy makers? What insights would we have gained and what needs to be considered for the future?

CONCLUSIONS

Five important skills and concepts I have learned by taking ED5006.

I.   Differentiating between preliminary (i.e. ERIC), secondary and primary sources.
Preliminary sources such as ERIC and Google should have the following:

1. Volume and variety of sources within the intended field of research as provided by the search engines such as Google and preliminary sources such as ERIC. Although with the multiple word field searches, such as Google, any article with the same word can show on the screen. For instance, if someone is looking up Isaac Newton he might also retrieve some listings that have anyone with the name Newton in the text. So it is important, in order to narrow down the search, to use the right combination of terms to end up with the desired sources. In ERIC, the research topics seem to be divided more into subject categories.

2. Reliability, reputation, adherence to facts, and locating well-written and correct documents written in proper forms are also important. Google retrieves almost anything on the web, so the issue of quality can be a concern -- a high school term paper could turn up beside a Phd dissertation. ERIC, though, seems to filter out those writings that do not fit their accepted format.

3. Convenience and speed of retrieval since in today's world it is essential to obtain information quickly. This is something that the Internet offers with the search engines, links to websites, and lists of preliminary sources. The Internet can even access library card catalogues listing the needed publications including university libraries and the Library of Congress. Only a few of the publications are online in full text but ordering books from an online bookseller can be time-consuming and expensive so if the researcher is near or in a traditional library, or a bookstore, then this would also be one of the best sources of information, that is, if the desired publications are available.

To satisfy the above mentioned criteria, computer based searches seem to offer the most complete and immediate solutions for finding **primary** (which could include direct research on or interviews with the primary source), secondary, and preliminary sources

II.   **Secondary** sources such as books and other publications should have:

1. Well-written and in-depth information (of course, pertaining to the researched topic). The information should be able to be supported by quantitative statistics and assessed by qualitative analysis.

2. The amount of quantitative and qualitative information in the publications. The quantitative information should be obtained ethically and scientifically and the qualitative interpretations should be rational.

3. True, reliable, and verifiable information. If similar studies are done on a research topic and contain much different statistical information on the same issue then that study would need to be viewed skeptically or carefully. In that situation, the research methodology would need to be examined to see if there were any errors in measurement or interpretation. How current an article is is important but just because a study was done 10 or 20 or even 100 years ago doesn't mean it

should be automatically discounted. The "newness" factor might have some bearing on some research topics but not all.

III. The difference between **qualitative** research (variables, qualitative analysis, interpretative, naturalistic, subjective, localized) and

IV. quantitative research (constants, quantitative analysis, statistical, fixed, objective, universal).

IV. Research methods (sampling procedures, data-collection, experimentation, questionnaires, reviewing literature, narrative review, vote counting, chi-square method, meta-analysis) and using the APA format for form and content to develop a research proposal. It is necessary and helpful to review the existing literature about the topic of one's research project so that one can learn from other research efforts in the same field and so that one does not repeat the same mistakes from the past or perform redundant or unnecessary research. Proceeding with the research of the literature involves establishing preliminary (search engine results and lists of publications relevant to one's research area such as the Educational Resources Information Center or ERIC), secondary (indirect), and primary (direct) sources. The researcher can explore and delve in to the subject of research to determine what previous research projects and experiments have been attempted and executed and what the statistical results and conclusions are. The research projects can be quantitative, which tend to have more objective interpretations of the data, or qualitative, which tend to have more subjective interpretations. It is also useful and informative to perform meta-analyses which are basically studies of studies or the cumulative results of several studies on the same area of research and which tend to have more quantitative and statistical data. When most of the desired and relevant information and conclusions concerning the researched topic are obtained and the writing of the review is completed and corrected then the literature review can be considered complete.

///////////////////////////////

b. A brief critical analysis of what you consider to be the most important concept or theory that you have learned about in this course (Maximum 6-8 pages).

U2/D2 Review of Relevant Literature

U5D2

I. In reviews of relevant literature in executing a research plan it is necessary to be aware of the characteristics of qualitative and quantitative research, and the concepts involved in them are the most important concepts for me to have learned in this course.

Below are definitions of qualitative and quantitative methods of inquiry as well as the advantages and disadvantages of each:

QUALITATIVE RESEARCH (postpositivist research). Inquiry that is grounded in the

assumption that individuals construct social reality in the form of meanings and interpretations, and that these constructions tend to be transitory and situational. The dominant methodology is to discover these meanings and interpretations by subjecting the resulting data to analytic induction. (Gall, 2003).

Qualitative research *characteristics*: variables, selective sampling of smaller populations, qualitative analysis, interpretive, transitory, naturalistic, subjective, localized.

ADVANTAGES:

Can flow with the requirements of the research methodology

Has an emergent quality

People can identify with this type of research more easily than to dry statistics

Can bring cases and examples to life or application

Can adapt to and account for exceptions to the general trends

Flexible and adaptive to new data collecting methods

Can frame new research questions

Needs smaller researched populations

Forward-looking

DISADVANTAGES:

Subjective

Has a tendency toward being biased

Can be varying and unstable

Ethical problems including disguising the identities of researched groups

Requires highly developed language skills

Labor intensive research

More difficult to detect patterns

Strengths:

There is a need for explanation and research in this topic.

There would be public interest and support of this idea.

This concept would satisfy the definition and requirements of democracy.

Weaknesses:

Some of this project might involve going into unexplored territory so there could be some sense of "feeling in the dark"

This idea depends on and requires the ethical use of the system and a security system to assure that.

A great deal of research in this area would be time consuming and labor intensive.

QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH (positivist research). Inquiry that is grounded in the assumption that features of the social environment constitute an objective reality that is relatively constant across time and settings. The dominant methodology is to describe and explain features of this reality by collecting numerical data on observable behaviors of samples and by subjecting these data to statistical analysis. (Gall, 2003).

Quantitative research *characteristics*: constants, random samplings of larger populations, quantitative analysis, statistical, stationary, analytical, objective, universal.

ADVANTAGES:

Objective

Factual

Analytical

Numerical

Universal

Reliable

Constant

Formula based

Mathematically describable

DISADVANTAGES:

Rigid, inflexible

Dry, factual

Can be detached, uninteresting, colorless, dull

Difficult for people to relate to

Research process is difficult to change once begun

Difficult to generalize to other situations

Requires larger sized researched populations

Backward-looking

Possible ethical problems including "inventing" data

In answering the question: which method, experience (qualitative) or educational (quantitative) research, is most likely to result in the most valid and reliable results in determining knowledge? One must realize that the answer to the question might depend on what sort of information is being derived. If the desired knowledge is how to best determine one's individual teaching style then perhaps learning by subjective experience is best though that method might involve quite a bit of trial and error. Usually, though, the most generally applicable and wide ranging information is obtained through more objective educational research. Also, usually, but not always, more information is obtained through the collected results and observations of many people than the efforts of only one person.

In most areas, the amount of validity and reliability of obtained information is dependent on (or directly proportional to) quantitative and qualitative factors: the more quantitative factors that are involved then the more objective and less subjective a conclusion will be and the more qualitative factors that are involved then the less objective and more subjective a conclusion will be. The problem with obtaining results from subjective observations is that the subjective analyses can sometimes be perceived from a biased perspective based on past experiences, values, traditions, education, semantics, rational and emotional considerations, quantitative and qualitative aspects, societal and political considerations, etc. whereas objectively obtained information is usually the result of quantified information, statistics, and measurement. To illustrate the effectiveness of the use of objective and subjective factors for the evaluation of educational research or epistemological considerations, we can use a sports analogy. In a running race the factors of time and the first participant to cross the finish line determine the winner of the race so the results involve more quantitative criteria and objectivity, whereas in judged events, such as a gymnastics or dance events, the results involve more qualitative criteria and subjectivity. In general, I think the higher the degree of quantification and objectivity that is used in obtaining information and knowledge, the higher is the resulting level of validity and reliability.

II. The other most important set of skills that I learned in this course pertained to planning and developing a research study:

Here is a general outline for designing a research plan as derived from Educational Research: An Introduction (Gall,Gall & Borg, 2003):

I. The research problem

    A. Research literature

    B. Theory-based research

    C. Extending or replicating existing research studies

        1. Check finds of a breakthrough study

        2. Check validity of research findings across different populations

        3. Check trends or change over time

        4. Check findings using different methodology

        5. Develop more effective interventions

    D. Team projects

II. The research proposal

    A. Introduction (problem, potential contribution, literature foundation, research hypothesis -- e.g., null or directional)

    B. Review of the literature (topic studies, methods critique, previous conclusions, practical applications)

    C. Research design (descriptive, causal-comparative, correlational, or experimental)

    D. Research methods (e.g., sampling procedures, data-collection procedures)

    E. Data analysis (develop a plan for this)

    F. Human subjects protection (to insure the safety of the participants of a research project)

    G. Time line (projected schedule of implementation)

III. Pilot study (small scale testing of procedures to be studied)

IV. The main study or dissertation (APA format, front matter, introductory chapter, literature review, methods, results, discussion, back matter)

V. The journal report (e.g. a refereed journal)

The form of the of a research paper (in APA style) itself should contain the following information:

Front matter
Introduction
Literature review
Core questions and hypothesis
Research Methodology

Data analysis

Results
Projected findings

Discussion
Implications for practice and research
Back matter

AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA

c. A 10-15 page overview of a possible integrative project of your choice. Included in the overview should be a description of the topic, topics from the literature that could provide the context for the project, and a description of how the project will be conducted or developed, anticipated results, an outline of the final written report, and any potential ethical dilemmas and their resolution.

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ED5006 Paper

Title Page

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ED5006

Research Methodology

December 2003

Richard Bloodworth

P.O.Box 78123

Atlanta, GA 30357

RBloodworth99@yahoo.com

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You will highlight the specifics on what you want to examine, your research questions and what the study will contribute to society, and educational field will be discussed.

LITERATURE REVIEW

A review of the major researchers and studies will be examined. What has been the overall nature of the research that has been conducted related to this problem at a national level, and what are the questions that these researchers are seeking to answer. Is there any debate related to this topic? You will present all sides and present any gaps or drawbacks in the literature.

CORE QUESTIONS AND HYPOTHESIS

What questions do you seek to answer? State and explain the hypothesis and propositions (statements that establish casual relations) that can answer the questions. It will be critical that you make an argument for why it is important to examine this problem.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY   Advantages and Disadv of Questionnaires, Surveys, Interviews, Pilot Surveys, Closed-ended and Open-ended Questions,

Describe how you would plan to carry out the research project. What research tools will be utilized (e.g., surveys, opinions, statistics, data)? My steps to be taken and the timeline for carrying out the proposed research topic will be included. You definitely need to provide an accurate representation of what I am studying in this section.

DATA ANALYSIS

You will identify the type of statistical analysis I will be conducting.

PROJECTED FINDINGS

Discussion on the possible results in terms of statistical analysis, charts, graphics, and pictorial representations of my hypothetical data will be produced. There also needs to be discussion of what your data would appear to look like if the hypothesis was supported.

IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE AND RESEARCH

What will this research tell us as practitioners, researchers, educators, and policy makers? What insights would we have gained and what needs to be considered for the future?

CONCLUSIONS

Conclude with some final conclusions of the problem under study. All information will be brought together to make a final statement

TITLE PAGE   >

QUOTES   >

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ABSTRACT

This research proposal concerns the procedures for developing direct democracy in the United States of America utilizing computer and Internet technology as well as the existing educational system. The first step is the development -- through research and proposed methods of implementation, study of precedents, and historical and literary references -- of the procedures and then the implementation (which would run concurrently with educating the public about the concept beginning with the K-12 levels up through post-secondary and adult levels) of the procedures involved in direct democracy. This will be an action research project involving theoretical, historical, socio-cultural, and evaluative aspects.

INTRODUCTION:

Now is the time to utilize modern technology to allow the public to vote directly via the Internet, thus creating a government closer to a pure democracy.   The real possibility of a direct democracy, through direct voting, on the local, state, and national level now exists with the advent of Internet technology so now is the time to utilize modern technology to allow the public to vote directly via the Internet, thus creating a government closer to a pure democracy.

This study would involve obtaining opinions through questionnaires from the public, professionals, politicians, and focus groups concerning direct democracy and its feasibility and effectiveness as a method for establishing legislation and local, state, and national policy.   The study would also involve collecting information from teachers of Social Studies, Political Science, Civics and Government for their opinions and suggestions as to how the history and philosophical concepts of direct democracy could be included in and taught through the educational curriculum and how direct democracy could be implemented and training and information supplied through the schools and community and governmental organizations.

The qualitative and more subjective side of the research would involve a brief history of democracy, a brief discussion of the definitions and philosophy of democracy, the use of the educational system to prepare learners for the use of direct democracy, and the contemporary uses of direct democracy in countries such as Switzerland and Ireland. The quantitative and more objective side of the study would involve statistics and the numbers of people, governments, and institutions presently using these concepts, how they were implemented, and the reliability and effectiveness of those procedures.

Research question: How has direct democracy, utilizing computer and Internet technology, been implemented and used in various countries and institutions and what has been and could be the role of educational systems in the implementation and continuing use of direct democracy?

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM:

One problem with the educational system, and society in general, involves political philosophy: if most societies are called democratic then why don't the people govern by voting directly and

democratically (as is done in Switzerland, for example) on issues rather than voting only for representatives? When educating post-secondary or adult students (or even K-12 students to prepare them for being adults), how can the concepts of democratically controlled governments be conveyed and transferred to the learners and how can they become directly involved in the implementation of democratically determined plans? My project involves exploring what methods have been used previously in other countries and organizations to establish direct democracies, which are basically the public voting directly on issues rather than through elected representatives who can, after elected, vote any way they choose, and how these procedures can be introduced and used on a continuing basis in the political structures of the United States of America.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

To determine the level of interest in the public, the politicians and professionals involved, teachers, and students in the concept and practice of direct democracy. And to determine the practicality in implementing a direct democracy in the United States of America and the methods of training all voting citizens in using it on a continuing basis.

LITERATURE REVIEW

CORE QUESTIONS AND HYPOTHESIS

How has direct democracy been practiced in other countries and institutions and how effective has it been?
How can the educational system participate in the implementation of a direct democracy utilizing Internet and computer technology?
How can direct democracy be introduced and taught in Social Studies and Political Science courses?
How can a constitutional amendment be proposed?
How can the reliability of Internet voting be assessed?
How can the privacy and security of voters be assured?
How can the public be informed of issues to be voted on?
How can the voters register their votes via the Internet or computer?
How can the public be made aware of the safety and limitations of direct democracy?
How can the public be made aware of the roles and duties of citizens in a democracy?
How can the public be made aware of the philosophy and history of democracy?

1. How can the concept of direct democracy be introduced and the procedures for its implementation and utilization be taught in Social Studies and Political Science courses?

Of the methods research design (descriptive, causal-comparative, correlational, and experimental) and methods of inquiry (surveys, opinion polls, statistical data, questionnaires, sampling procedures, data collection procedures, etc.), I think the best approach to answer this question would be a descriptive design utilizing a questionnaire sent to all of the Social Studies and Political Science teachers (that the researcher can locate) in public and private schools from

the K-12 levels up through post-secondary and adult education. The questionnaire could contain closed and open ended questions in addition to a blank suggestion space at the end of the questionnaire where the instructors can add any thoughts that they may have on the subject.

2. How can a Constitutional amendment be proposed?

Constitutional amendments are permanent additions to the Constitution, though they can be counter amended as was the case with the Prohibition amendment, that require a 2/3 vote from both houses of the Congress and therefore very difficult to obtain. There have been twenty seven Constitutional Amendments with the most recent being in 1992 which involved no Congressional self salary increases while the legislators are in their terms. The twelfth Amendment concerning changing the method of electing the president of the United States using the Electoral College was added in 1803 after the first ten Amendments, the Bill of Rights, were added in 1791.

I think this inquiry can be accomplished by doing a thorough historical and literature research of all of the previous 27 amendments and how they were done. Additionally, a questionaire concerning procedures for obtaining an amendment could be sent out to focus groups related to the topic and eventually a petition could be circulated.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

While contacting the public, legislators, politicians, professionals, focus groups as well as teachers of Social Studies, Political Science, History, Civics and Government they methods most used would be questionnaires with briefly descriptive cover letters, surveys (and pilot surveys), and interviews all using mostly closed ended, and some open ended, questions. Pilot surveys could be employed utilizing university students with some questionnaires being sent to politicians and some to a random selection of respondents.

Most of the research information and questionnaire development issues would be derived from the following sources:

Gall, M.D., Borg, W., & Gall, J.P. (2003). Educational Research: An Introduction. 7th Ed. Boston: Pearson Education, Inc. and

Dillman, Don A. (1999). Mail and Internet Surveys: The Tailored Design Method. New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Salant, P. & Dillman, D. (1994). How to Conduct Your Own Survey. New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Goodman, A. (2003) Data Collection and Analysis; Retrieved on Nov 20, 2003 from
http://www.deakin.edu.au/~agoodman/sci101/index.php

Below is a brief overview of the concepts and methods of questionnaires, interviews, and surveys

as derived from the above sources:

Questionnaires are documents that ask the same questions of all individuals in a sample. Their advantages over interviews are that they are used mostly in quantitative research since they are standardized and the results are statistical, their costs are lower costs for sampling over a large geographical areas than interviews and the time needed to collect data is less than with interviews. Their disadvantages are that they can not probe as deeply into beliefs, attitudes, and inner experiences as interviews and it is not possible to modify or clarify question/items after the questionnaire is distributed.

Interviews are oral questions by the interviewer and oral answers by the respondents. Their advantages are: they are used mostly in qualitative research with open-ended questions, they are more adaptable, interviewers can follow up to obtain more information or clarify misunderstood areas, the interviewers can build trust and rapport with respondents, they give research a human voice or human "touch", they can be used to obtain information not able to be obtained by other means. Their disadvantages are that it can be difficult to standardize the interview situation so that the interviewer does not influence the respondent to respond in an expected way, they do not provide anonymity from the interviewer so to assure respondent's anonymity, the interviewer must report results without revealing the respondent's identity.

In order to construct the research questionnaire, one must define the research objectives, select a sample, design the questionnaire format, pretest the questionnaire (pilot surveys), pre-contact the sample, write a cover letter and distribute the questionnaire and then follow-up on non-respondents and, finally, analyze the data (Gall, Gall & Borg, 2003). The design and construction of questionnaires is a predominantly subjective process that is mostly determined by the experience of the designer. Surveys can be from one to twenty pages or more. Adequate background information should be included in a cover letter so the intended respondent will be interested in responding to the questionnaire. An important issue in the variety, number of, and sequencing of questions so as to get the intended information yet not overwhelm the respondent with a burdensome number of questions. The two main types of questions are open-ended and closed-ended questions, both of which can be asked in a formal or an informal tone, and can be used in an appropriate mix in both qualitative and quantitative research. A questionaire should be kept as short as possible but a longer questionnaire should be broken into sections and usually numbered and the questionnaire should be as clear, detailed and unambiguous as possible.

Concerning the questionnaire layout, there should be a good use of whitespace which is the space between questions and sections with no writing to enhance readability, the questionnaire needs to have a preamble that explains the purpose of the survey and this can be part of the cover letter or at the head of the questionnaire, there should be instructions to the respondents at the beginning of each section, questions should be numbered questions and, if the questionnaire is divided into sections, the section should be indicated as part of the question numbering system and there should be specific instructions associated with each question to aid in the correct completion of that questions To save everyone's time, the respondents should be able to bypass questions (or whole sections) that are not relevant to them by using filter questions, with instructions such as "If you answered YES to Question 8 please go to Question 12)" and, finally, respondents who are unsure about answering a question should be able to

respond with "Don't Know", "Undecided", or "Not Applicable", etc.

The wording in a questionnaire should be clear and unambiguous, questions should be worded in such a way that the response is what the respondent really thinks about the topic, questions should be made as simple as possible, and be sure not to use double negatives, grammatical errors, slang, colloquialisms, or spelling mistakes. One should be sure to be culturally sensitive while wording questions and be sure not to use a double yes and no question that could contain both yes and no answer. ("Are you a member of the _____ Party and did you vote for the party's candidate in the last election?" -- There are four possible answers to this question (Yes/Yes, Yes/No, No/Yes, No/No).

Closed form (the question permits only prespecified responses such as in multiple choice or True/False questions) items which can be assessed numerically and more objectively. This type has the advantages over open form items in that they make quantification and analysis easier and more direct, their questions can be pilot-tested more easily and they can be used to calculate percentages of respondents who answered questions in a particular way. The disadvantages are that they can not express individual views, can not express views non-conforming to the structure of the questionnaire, and the respondent can not offer creative views or solutions.

Open form (respondents can make any response they wish such as in essay questions) items, which require a more subjective assessment, have some advantages over closed form questions which include: they can have interesting responses to them, they can have more in depth responses, they can use optional (can be answered or not) questions, and for qualitative research results, they can be analyzed by a grounded-theory approach. Some of their disadvantages are that they can be time consuming, their analysis requires development of a category system, they are more difficult and time-consuming to analyze and many readers are needed to analyze transcripts.

The structured form of questionnaires can include **boxes**: (e.g. check the box, including multiple choice and True/False questions) and **scales** such as *linear* (e.g. from strongly agree to strongly disagree scales) and *tabular* (tables or charts) scales.

In obtaining data from target groups the researcher should bear in mind that these are groups with shared interests and who would tend to answer questions similarly. Key informant questionnaires and interviews are data from people who have special knowledge (e.g. experts) that would not otherwise be available to the researcher. This group tends to be more educated, informed, and articulate about a particular topic that the general public is. Survey questionaires and interviews are those used to supplement data that have been collected by other methods. These include confirmation survey interviews which are structured interviews that produce evidence to confirm earlier findings, participant construct interviews which are used to learn how informants structure their physical and social world, and projective techniques which use ambiguous stimuli to elicit subconscious perceptions. Focus group questionnaires and interviews are group interviews addressing questions to a group of individuals who have been assembled for this purpose or interviewing groups that have a shared goal.

Below are some examples of multiple choice closed form items in Direct Democracy: the Politics of Initiative, Referendum, and Recall (1999) by Thomas Cronin:

1. To be realistic about it, our elected officials:

-- know more about an issue and should be trusted to make the right decisions
-- should be carefully watched in case they misuse their power and go against the will of the people
-- undecided

2. When making laws, government should pay attention to:

-- mostly to experts
-- opinions of ordinary people
-- undecided

3. In government, should people with more intelligence and character have greater influence than other people

-- Yes, they have more to offer
-- No, because all the citizens should decide on an issue
-- undecided

 (questions from McClosky, 1978). Civil Liberties Survey. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

The below core questions are in the form of open-ended questions and can be answered with essay type answers:

How has direct democracy been practiced in other countries and institutions and how effective has it been?
How can the educational system participate in the implementation of a direct democracy utilizing Internet and computer technology?
How can direct democracy be introduced and taught in Social Studies and Political Science courses?
How can a constitutional amendment be proposed?
How can the reliability of Internet voting be assessed?
How can the privacy and security of voters be assured?
How can the public be informed of issues to be voted on?
How can the voters register their votes via the Internet or computer?
How can the public be made aware of the safety and limitations of direct democracy?
How can the public be made aware of the roles and duties of citizens in a democracy?
How can the public be made aware of the philosophy and history of democracy?

How can the concept of direct democracy be introduced and the procedures for its implementation and utilization be taught in Social Studies and Political Science courses?

Of the methods research design (descriptive, causal-comparative, correlational, and experimental) and methods of inquiry (surveys, opinion polls, statistical data, questionnaires, sampling procedures, data collection procedures, etc.), I think the best approach to answer this question would be a descriptive design utilizing a questionnaire sent to all of the Social Studies and Political Science teachers (that the researcher can locate) in public and private schools from the K-12 levels up through post-secondary and adult education. The questionnaire could contain closed and open ended questions in addition to a blank suggestion space at the end of the questionaire where the instructors can add any thoughts that they may have on the subject.

How can a Constitutional amendment be proposed?

Constitutional amendments are permanent additions to the Constitution, though they can be counter amended as was the case with the Prohibition amendment, that require a 2/3 vote from both houses of the Congress and therefore very difficult to obtain. There have been twenty seven Constitutional Amendments with the most recent being in 1992 which involved no Congressional self salary increases while the legislators are in their terms. The twelfth Amendment concerning changing the method of electing the president of the United States using the Electoral College was added in 1803 after the first ten Amendments, the Bill of Rights, were added in 1791.

I think this inquiry can be accomplished by doing a thorough historical and literature research of all of the previous 27 amendments and how they were done. Additionally, a questionnaire concerning procedures for obtaining an amendment could be sent out to focus groups related to the topic and eventually a petition could be circulated.

To make them into closed ended items they each be converted into statements that can be responded to with linear scale responses (strongly disagree to strongly agree, or don't know):

Direct democracy been practiced in other countries and institutions and has been effective

1 strongly disagree   2   3   4   strongly agree 5   Don't know

The educational system should participate in the implementation of a direct democracy utilizing Internet and computer technology.

1 strongly disagree   2   3   4   strongly agree 5   Don't know

Direct democracy should be introduced and taught in Social Studies and Political Science courses.

1 strongly disagree   2   3   4   strongly agree 5   Don't know

A Constitutional amendment be proposed created a system of direct democracy in the United States.

1 strongly disagree   2   3   4   strongly agree 5   Don't know

The Internet is a reliable method of voting.

1 strongly disagree   2   3   4   strongly agree 5   Don't know

The voters have complete privacy and security

1 strongly disagree   2   3   4   strongly agree 5   Don't know

.

The public can be informed of issues to be voted on.

1 strongly disagree   2   3   4   strongly agree 5   Don't know

The voters could easily register their votes via the Internet or computer.

1 strongly disagree   2   3   4   strongly agree 5   Don't know

The public should be made aware of the safety using the Internet for direct democracy.

1 strongly disagree   2   3   4   strongly agree 5   Don't know

The public should be made aware of the limitations of direct democracy.

1 strongly disagree   2   3   4   strongly agree 5   Don't know

The public should be made aware of the roles and duties of citizens in a democracy.

1 strongly disagree   2   3   4   strongly agree 5   Don't know

The public should be made aware of the philosophy and history of democracy.

1 strongly disagree   2   3   4   strongly agree 5   Don't know

Some other questions could be:

Do you think the United States is a democracy now?

Do you think Direct Democracy or people voting directly on legislative issues is a good idea?

Do you think adequate technology exists today for direct democracy?

Do you think adequate education, information, and training can be given to citizens for them to vote as legislators?

Do you think interest for direct democracy would be maintained by the public?

Do you think that eventually a new branch of Congress could be formed by the voting citizens?

Do you think the people's voting branch of Congress could be used first as an opinion collection device?

DATA ANALYSIS

Concerning the research topic of direct democracy and its present use and the methods of its implementation and ways of introducing and educating the public about the concept, the methods of collecting data would involve research in the history of these ideas by reviewing past research, experiments, and uses of direct democracy through a search of literature, studies, and experiments done on the topic. Also, another method would involve the collecting of information from interviews, surveys, and questionnaires conducted with the general public, focus groups, and politicians as well as social studies and political science teachers.

The information gathering instruments used would involve closed form and open form questions and the use of quantitative (in determining numbers, statistics, percentages, etc.) and qualitative (such as in eliciting opinions from the respondents for open form questions) forms of collecting and analyzing the data. The data could be collected and tabulated via Internet connections and the open-ended questions could be analyzed by readers, the number depending upon the scale of each survey or questionnaire.

PROJECTED FINDINGS

The findings from this particular study would be collected and analyzed mostly through responses to emailed questionnaires.

STRENGTHS:

There is a need for exploration and research in this topic.
There would be public interest and support of this idea.
This concept would satisfy the definition and requirements of democracy.

WEAKNESSES:

Some of this project might involve going into unexplored territory so there could be some sense of "feeling in the dark"

This idea depends on and requires the ethical use of the system and a security system to assure that.

A great deal of research in this area would be time consuming and labor intensive

IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE AND RESEARCH

This questionnaires can discover the level of interest of the public and the other groups and individuals contacted on this issue.

The questionnaires to the teachers can determine how this can become an integral part of the education of every citizen. For schools, the information could be contained in the textbooks and curricula and standardized computer tutorials could be developed for school, home, and institutional use.

CONCLUSION

Democracy was discussed by Socrates and written about by Plato in Republic, Aristotle in Politics, Machiavelli in The Prince, Locke in Essay Concerning Human Understanding and Two Treatises of Government, Montesquieu in The Spirit of Laws, Hobbes in Leviathan, Rousseau in The Social Contract, and Thomas Jefferson in his writings. Democracy was first used in Athens, Greece before500 B.C., where each citizen voted directly on all legislative issues, thereby being a true
democracy. It was considered impractical to have a direct democracy before now, primarily because there was no technology to supply it. Now, with computer and Internet technology, there is.

Computer and Internet technology can supply the forum for the voting of citizens to occur and schools and community and governmental organizations can supply the knowledge, information, and training for the implementation and continuing use of a direct democracy in the United States of America.
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Front matter
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Core questions and hypothesis
Research Methodology
Data analysis
Projected findings

Implications for practice and research
Back matter

Develop two research questions or problems that would lend themselves to resolution using a qualitative method of inquiry. Discuss which inquiry method would be appropriate for each question or topic.

1. How can the concept of direct democracy be introduced and the procedures for its implementation and utilization be taught in Social Studies and Political Science courses?

Of the methods research design (descriptive, causal-comparative, correlational, and experimental) and methods of inquiry (surveys, opinion polls, statistical data, questionnaires, sampling procedures, data collection procedures, etc.), I think the best approach to answer this question would be a descriptive design utilizing a questionnaire sent to all of the Social Studies and Political Science teachers (that the researcher can locate) in public and private schools from the K-12 levels up through post-secondary and adult education. The questionnaire could contain closed and open ended questions in addition to a blank suggestion space at the end of the questionnaire where the instructors can add any thoughts that they may have on the subject.

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2. How can a Constitutional amendment be proposed?

Constitutional amendments are permanent additions to the Constitution, though they can be counter amended as was the case with the Prohibition amendment, that require a 2/3 vote from both houses of the Congress and therefore very difficult to obtain. There have been twenty seven Constitutional Amendments with the most recent being in 1992 which involved no Congressional self salary increases while the legislators are in their terms. The twelfth Amendment concerning changing the method of electing the president of the United States using the Electoral College was added in 1803 after the first ten Amendments, the Bill of Rights, were added in 1791.

I think this inquiry can be accomplished by doing a thorough historical and literature research of all of the previous 27 amendments and how they were done. Additionally, a questionnaire concerning procedures for obtaining an amendment could be sent out to focus groups related to the topic and eventually a petition could be circulated.

Using the problem or research topic from your proposed study provide a rationale regarding the type of data your would collect, and how you think you would analyze it relative to the resolution of the problem or topic you have selected.

Concerning the research topic of direct democracy and its present use and the methods of its implementation and ways of introducing and educating the public about the concept, the methods of collecting data would involve doing research in the history of these ideas by reviewing past

research, experiments, and uses of direct democracy through a search of literature, studies, and experiments done on the topic. Also, another method would involve the use of interviews, surveys, and questionnaires conducted with the general public, focus groups, and politicians as well as social studies and political science teachers.

The information gathering instruments used would involve closed form and open form questions and the use of quantitative (in determining numbers, statistics, percentages, etc.) and qualitative (such as in eliciting opinions from the respondents for open form questions) forms of collecting and analyzing the data

STRENGTHS:
There is a need for exploration and research in this topic.
There would be public interest and support of this idea.
This concept would satisfy the definition and requirements of democracy.

WEAKNESSES:

Some of this project might involve going into unexplored territory so there could be some sense of "feeling in the dark" This idea depends on and requires the ethical use of the system and a security system to assure that. A great deal of research in this area would be time consuming and labor intensive

U6D1

Using the problem or research topic from your proposed study provide a rationale regarding the type of data your would collect, and how you think you would analyze it relative to the resolution of the problem or topic you have selected. Post early in the week, then return later and comment on the postings of your fellow classmates.

Concerning the research topic of direct democracy and its present use and the methods of its implementation and and ways of introducing and educating the public about the concept, the methods of collecting data would involve research in the history of these ideas by reviewing past research, experiments, and uses of direct democracy through a search of literature, studies, and experiments done on the topic. Also, another method would involve the use of interviews, surveys, and questionaires conducted with the general public, focus groups, and politicians as well as social studies and political science teachers.

The information gathering instruments used would involve closed form and open form questions and the use of quantitative (in determining numbers, statistics, percentages, etc.) and qualitative (such as in eliciting opinions from the respondents for open form questions) forms of collecting and analyzing the data.

U6D2: My part of the Three's Company triad:

QUESTIONNAIRES: (documents that ask the same questions of all individuals in a sample).

Advantages:

-- Used mostly in quantitative research since it is standardized and the results are statistical

-- Lower costs in sampling over a large geographical area than interviews

-- Time needed to collect data is less than with interviews

Disadvantages:

-- Can not probe as deeply into beliefs, attitudes, and inner experiences as interviews

-- Not possible to modify or clarify items after the questionaire is distributed

INTERVIEWS (oral questions by the interviewer and oral answers by the respondents):

Advantages:

-- Used mostly in qualitative research with open-ended questions

-- Adaptable

-- Interviewers can follow up to obtain more information or clarify misunderstood areas

-- Can build trust and rapport with respondents

-- Gives research a human voice or human "touch"

-- Can be used to obtain information not able to be obtained by other means

Disadvantages:

-- Difficult to standardize the interview situation so that the interviewer does not influence the respondent to respond in an expected way

-- Does not provide anonymity from the interviewer

-- To assure respondent's anonymity, the interviewer must report results without revealing the respondent's identity

TO CONSTRUCT THE RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE:

Define research objectives

Select a sample

Design the questionnaire format

Pretest the questionnaire (pilot surveys)

Pre-contact the sample

Write a cover letter and distribute the questionnaire

Follow-up on non-respondents

Analyze the data (Gall, 2003).

PILOT SURVEYS:

A pilot survey can be used to find out whether the survey is going to be successful and if it will achieve an acceptable response rate, and provide reliable data on the relevant topics. The pilot survey can determine the following information:

Are the correct number of questions being asked (too many or not enough)?

Are the questions going to yield the desired information? .

Is the survey wording clear and effective or is it misleading and confusing? Do the respondents answer the questions in the intended way and not leave any blank?

Are the instructions clear and unambiguous?

What is the optimum size for the pilot sample? .

The results of the pilot survey should not be used as if the results had been collected during the main survey.

Ask respondents to state in their own words what they think each question means.

The pilot response rate varies depending on who or what groups the questionnaires are sent to.

QUESTIONNAIRE DESIGN:

The design and construction of questionnaires is a predominantly subjective process that is mostly determined by the experience of the designer. Surveys can be from one to twenty pages or more. Adequate background information should be included in a cover letter so the intend respondent will be interested in responding to the questionnaire.

An important issue in the variety, number of, and sequencing of questions so as to get the intended information yet not overwhelm the respondent with a burdensome number of questions. The two main types of questions are open-ended and closed-ended questions, both of which can be asked in a formal or an informal tone, and can be used in an appropriate mix in both qualitative and quantitative research. A questionnaire should be kept as short as possible but a longer questionnaire should be broken into sections and usually numbered and the questionnaire should be as clear, detailed and unambiguous as possible.

QUESTIONNAIRE LAYOUT:

There should be a good use of whitespace which is the space between questions and sections with no writing to enhance readability.

The questionnaire needs to have a preamble that explains the purpose of the survey and this can be part of the cover letter or at the head of the questionnaire.

There should be instructions to the respondents at the beginning of each section.

Questions should be numbered questions and, if the questionnaire is divided into sections, the section should be indicated as part of the question numbering system.

There should be specific instructions associated with each question to aid in the correct completion of that questions.

To save everyone's time, the respondents should be able to bypass questions (or whole sections) that are not relevant to them by using filter questions, with instructions such as "If you answered YES to Question 8 please go to Question 12)".

Respondents who are unsure about answering a question should be able to respond with "Don't Know", "Undecided", or "Not Applicable", etc.

WORDING OF QUESTIONS IN A QUESTIONNAIRE:

Clear and unambiguous wording.

Word questions in such a way that the response is what the respondent really thinks about the topic.

Make questions as simple as possible: do not assume that the respondent knows difficult words or concepts

Be sure not to use double negatives, grammatical errors, slang, colloquialisms, or spelling mistakes

Be sure not to use a double yes and no question that could contain both yes and no answer. ("Are you a member of the _____ Party and did you vote for the party's candidate in the last election?") There are four possible answers to this question (Yes/Yes, Yes/No, No/Yes, No/No).

Be sure to be culturally sensitive while wording questions.

QUESTION TYPES:

CLOSED FORM: (the question permits only pre-specified responses such as in multiple choice or True/False questions) which can be assessed numerically and more objectively.

Advantages:

-- Makes quantification and analysis easier and more direct

-- Questions can be pilot-tested more easily

-- Can be used to calculate percentage of respondents who answered questions in a particular way

-- Disadvantages:

-- Can not express individual views

-- Can not express views non-conforming to the structure of the questionnaire

-- The respondent can not offer creative views or solutions

OPEN FORM: (respondents can make any response they wish such as in essay questions) which requires a more subjective assessment.

Advantages:

-- Can have interesting responses

-- Can have more in depth responses

-- Can use optional (can be answered or not) questions

-- For qualitative research results can be analyzed by a grounded-theory approach

Disadvantages:

-- Time consuming

-- Analysis requires development of a category system

-- Many readers are needed to analyze transcripts

-- More difficult and time-consuming to analyze

STRUCTURED FORM:

boxes: (e.g. check the box, including multiple choice and True/False questions)

scales: linear (e.g. from strongly agree to strongly disagree scales) and tabular (tables or charts)

DATA FROM TARGET GROUPS:

Key informant questionnaires and interviews are data from people who have special knowledge (e.g. experts) that would not otherwise be available to the researcher. This group tends to be more educated, informed, and articulate about a particular topic that the general public is.

Survey questionnaires and interviews are those used to supplement data that have been collected by other methods. These include confirmation survey interviews which are structured interviews that produce evidence to confirm earlier findings, participant construct interviews which are used to learn how informants structure their physical and social world, and projective techniques which use ambiguous stimuli to elicit subconscious perceptions.

Focus group questionnaires and interviews are group interviews addressing questions to a group of individuals who have been assembled for this purpose or interviewing groups that share a

common goal.

Reference:

Gall, M.D., Borg, W., & Gall, J.P. (2003). Educational Research: An Introduction. 7th Ed. Boston: Pearson Education, Inc.

Goodman, A. Data Collection and Analysis. Retrieved on Nov 20, 2003 from <http://www.deakin.edu.au/~agoodman/sci101/index.php>

Surveys and questionnaires are an effective way of gathering information since they are documents that ask the same questions of all individuals in a sample so, for that reason, a great deal of time is saved by asking the same closed form questions. But to get individualized responses, open ended questions could be added in either surveyed interviews or questionnaires to elicit individualized opinions and responses.

COLLECTING RESEARCH DATA WITH Questionnaires AND INTERVIEWS:

In collecting research data, two methods that can be used are questionnaires and interviews. Below are descriptions as well as advantages and disadvantages of each:

Questionnaires (documents that ask the same questions of all individuals in a sample):

Advantages:

-- Used mostly in quantitative research since it is standardized and the results are statistical

-- Lower costs in sampling over a large geographical area than interviews

-- Time needed to collect data is less than with interviews

Disadvantages:

-- Can not probe as deeply into beliefs, attitudes, and inner experiences as interviews

-- Not possible to modify or clarify items after the questionnaire is distributed

Interviews (oral questions by the interviewer and oral answers by the respondents):

Advantages:

-- Used mostly in qualitative research with open-ended questions

-- Adaptable

-- Interviewers can follow up to obtain more information or clarify misunderstood areas

-- Can build trust and rapport with respondents

-- Gives research a human voice or human "touch"

-- Can be used to obtain information not able to be obtained by other means

Disadvantages:

-- Difficult to standardize the interview situation so that the interviewer does not influence the respondent to respond in an expected way

-- Does not provide anonymity from the interviewer

-- To assure respondent's anonymity, the interviewer must report results without revealing the respondent's identity

Steps in Constructing the Research Questionnaire:

Define research objectives

Select a sample

Design the questionnaire format

Pretest the questionnaire (pilot surveys)

Precontact the sample

Write a cover letter and distribute the questionnaire

Follow-up on non-respondents

Analyze the data (Gall, 2003).

Pilot Surveys:

A pilot survey can be used to find out whether the survey is going to be successful and if it will achieve an acceptable response rate, and provide reliable data on the relevant topics. The pilot survey can determine the following information:

Are the correct number of questions being asked (too many or not enough)?

Are the questions going to yield the desired information? .

Is the survey wording clear and effective or is it misleading and confusing? Do the respondents answer the questions in the intended way and not leave any blank?

Are the instructions clear and unambiguous?

What is the optimum size for the pilot sample? .

The results of the pilot survey should not be used as if the results had been collected during the main survey.

Ask respondents to state in their own words what they think each question means.

The pilot response rate varies depending on who or what groups the questionnaires are sent to.

Questionnaire Design:

The design and construction of questionnaires is a predominantly subjective process that is mostly determined by the experience of the designer. Surveys can be from one to twenty pages or more. Adequate background information should be included in a cover letter so the intende respondent will be interested in responding to the questionnaire.

An important issue in the variety, number of, and sequencing of questions so as to get the intended information yet not overwhelm the respondent with a burdensome number of questions. The two main types of questions are open-ended and closed-ended questions, both of which can be asked in a formal or an informal tone, and can be used in an appropriate mix in both qualitative and quantitative research. A questionnaire should be kept as short as possible but a longer questionnaire should be broken into sections and usually numbered and the questionnaire should be as clear, detailed and unambiguous as possible.

Questionnaire Layout:

There should be a good use of whitespace, which is the space between questions and sections with no writing, to enhance readability.

The questionnaire needs to have a preamble that explains the purpose of the survey and this can be part of the cover letter or at the head of the questionnaire.

There should be instructions to the respondents at the beginning of each section.

Questions should be numbered questions and, if the questionnaire is divided into sections, the section should be indicated as part of the question numbering system.

There should be specific instructions associated with each question to aid in the correct completion of that questions.

To save everyone's time, the respondents should be able to bypass questions (or whole sections) that are not relevant to them by using filter questions, with instructions such as "If you answered YES to Question 8 please go to Question 12)".

Respondents who are unsure about answering a question should be able to respond with "Don't Know", "Undecided", or "Not Applicable", etc.

Wording of Questions in a Questionnaire:

Clear and unambiguous wording.

Word questions in such a way that the response is what the respondent really thinks about the topic.

Make questions as simple as possible: do not assume that the respondent knows difficult words or concepts

Be sure not to use double negatives, grammatical errors, slang, colloquialisms, or spelling mistakes

Be sure not to use a double yes and no question that could contain both yes and no answer. ("Are you a member of the _____ Party and did you vote for the party's candidate in the last election?") There are four possible answers to this question (Yes/Yes, Yes/No, No/Yes, No/No).

Be sure to be culturally sensitive while wording questions.

Question Types:

Closed Form: (the question permits only prespecified responses such as in multiple choice or True/False questions) which can be assessed numerically and more objectively.

Advantages:

-- Makes quantification and analysis easier and more direct

-- Questions can be pilot-tested more easily

-- Can be used to calculate percentage of respondents who answered questions in a particular way

Disadvantages:

-- Can not express individual views

-- Can not express views non-conforming to the structure of the questionnaire

-- The respondent can not offer creative views or solutions

Open Form: (respondents can make any responses they wish such as in essay questions, which require a more subjective assessment):

Advantages:

-- Can have interesting responses

-- Can have more in depth responses

-- Can use optional (can be answered or not) questions

-- For qualitative research results can be analyzed by a grounded-theory approach

Disadvantages:

-- Time consuming

-- Analysis requires development of a category system

-- Many readers are needed to analyze transcripts

-- More difficult and time-consuming to analyze

Structured Form

boxes: (e.g. check the box, including multiple choice and True/False questions)

scales: linear (e.g. from strongly agree to strongly disagree scales) and tabular (tables or charts)

Data from Target Groups

Key informant questionnaires and interviews are data from people who have special knowledge (e.g. experts) that would not otherwise be available to the researcher. This group tends to be more educated, informed, and articulate about a particular topic that the general public is.

Survey questionnaires and interviews are those used to supplement data that have been collected by other methods. These include confirmation survey interviews which are structured interviews that produce evidence to confirm earlier findings, participant construct interviews which are used to learn how informants structure their physical and social world, and projective techniques which use ambiguous stimuli to elicit subconscious perceptions.

Focus group questionnaires and interviews are group interviews addressing questions to a group of individuals who have been assembled for this purpose or interviewing groups that have a shared goal.

Outline for my paper:

(all in APA Format)

FRONT MATTER: Title page, Table of contents, List of tables, List of figures

INTRODUCTION How has direct democracy, utililizing computer and Internet technology, been implemented and used in various countries and institutions and what has been and could be the role of educational systems in the implementation and continuing use of direct democracy?

CORE QUESTIONS AND HYPOTHESIS

How has direct democracy been practiced in other countries and institutions and how effective has it been?

How can the educational system participate in the implementation of a direct democracy utilizing Internet and computer technology?

How can direct democracy be introduced and taught in Social Studies and Political Science courses?

How can a constitutional amendment be proposed?

How can the reliability of Internet voting be assessed?

How can the privacy and security of voters be assured?

How can the public be informed of issues to be voted on?

How can the voters register their votes via the Internet or computer?

How can the public be made aware of the safety and limitations of direct democracy?

How can the public be made aware of the roles and duties of citizens in a democracy?

How can the public be made aware of the philosophy and history of democracy?

LITERATURE REVIEW (on the subject of direct democracy from publications and Internet sources)

review of preliminary, primary and secondary sources concerning the topic of direct democracy.

A. Research literature (on the subject of direct democracy from publications and Internet sources)

B. Theory-based research (a discussion of the concept and history of democracy)

C. Extending or replicating existing research studies (check to see how many of these exist)

1. Check finds of a breakthrough study (look for breakthrough studies)

2. Check validity of research findings across different populations (France, Estonia, Switzerland, etc.)

3. Check trends or change over time (for Internet voting since from about 1990)

4. Check findings using different methodology (control studies and random sampling)

5. Develop more effective interventions (check what has been done before)

PROJECTED FINDINGS

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

INTRODUCTION

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

DATA COLLECTION PLAN

DATA ANALYSIS

EXPERIMENTATION

PILOT TEST

RESULTS

DATA ANALYSIS
it will be quantitative because it is reproducible, flexible and scalable.

DISCUSSION

IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE AND RESEARCH

CONCLUSION

RECOMMENDATIONS

LIMITATIONS

Strengths:

There is a need for explanation and research in this topic.

There would be public interest and support of this idea.

This concept would satisfy the definition and requirements of democracy.

Weaknesses:

Some of this project might involve going into unexplored territory so there could be some sense of "feeling in the dark"

This idea depends on and requires the ethical use of the system and a security system to assure that.

A great deal of research in this area would be time consuming and labor intensive

IMPLICATIONS

BACK MATTER: Bibliography, Footnotes, Appendixes

Reference:

Gall, M.D., Borg, W., & Gall, J.P. (2003). Educational Research: An Introduction. 7th Ed. Boston: Pearson Education, Inc

Many of the ethical issues mentioned here are economic in nature; some of them are concerns related to all topics and others are more specific to the topic I am writing about.

Some of the ethical abuses are:

-- Manipulating, skewing, or creating data to achieve a desired outcome.

-- Bribery to officials for the purpose of obtaining a contract.

-- Kickbacks or promising part of any project rewards to the project's participants.

-- Plagiarism from either the experimenter's or research writer's part of the research project.

-- Buying votes or opinions.

-- Paying the participant to behave in a certain way or to say what the researcher wants them to say.

-- Giving the research participants the answers to questions the researcher wants them to give in return for payment.

VVVVVVVVVVVVVVVVVVVVVVVVVV

d. Your evaluation of how this course can be improved, including the features you would keep and amplify and those you would like to see different. This evaluation should assist you in completing the official course evaluation at the end of the course. At the end of this course carry out the summary activities and fill out the online course evaluation form. Submission of the form is automatic.

Gall, M.D., Borg, W., & Gall, J.P. (2003). Educational Research: An Introduction. 7th Ed. Boston: Pearson Education, Inc.

How I think this course, ED5006, can be improved

I think learning the following information was helpful:

1. Differentiating between preliminary, primary, and secondary sources.

2. Qualitative research (variables, qualitative analysis, interpretative, naturalistic, subjective, localized)

3. Quantitative research (constants, quantitative analysis, statistical, fixed, objective, universal)

4. Research methods (sampling procedures, data-collection, experimention, questionnaires, reviewing literature, narrative review,vote counting, chi-square method, meta-analysis).

Some difficulties that some students might encounter while taking the course are:

1. Time (and geographical, since not all are in the United States) constraints in completing the assignments and the time involved in analyzing the anticipated collected data.

2. Completion of a thorough literature review and collecting the necessary books to read

3. Sufficient questionnaire response or pilot survey response

The dyad or triad activities are helpful and worthwhile but I think they require one week for finding partners and communicating information and the information could be posted the next week. Of course, other projects could occur concurrently with the dyad activities but I think two weeks should be allowed for the results.

One idea I have for the course concerns the following outline for research papers:

Front matter (Title page, etc.)
Introduction
Literature review
Core questions and hypothesis
Research Methodology
Data analysis
Projected findings
Implications for practice and research
Back matter (Bibliography)

Each week the learners would write one of the above sections based on their research topic, such as the title page the first week (they can change the topic later if they want), Introduction the second week, then Bibliography, etc. with Methodology toward the end of the course. That way, at the end of the course, the learners could basically assemble their compositions and make any necessary, changes, additions, deletions, corrections, etc. I don't think that would be making it too easy for the learners since that is the way books are written anyway. And also, as I said, it would be in addition to the assignments and readings that they presently have each week.

I think everyone can relate to the time constraints and scheduling problems since we all have lives beyond the course(s) with personal and professional, etc. involvements so trying to schedule, accommodate, and complete all of our tasks can be a daunting task in itself.

Outline for my paper:

(all in APA Format)

FRONT MATTER: Title page, Table of contents, List of tables, List of figures

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How can a constitutional amendment be proposed?
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How can the privacy and security of voters be assured?
How can the public be informed of issues to be voted on?
How can the voters register their votes via the Internet or computer?
How can the public be made aware of the safety and limitations of direct democracy?
How can the public be made aware of the roles and duties of citizens in a democracy?
How can the public be made aware of the philosophy and history of democracy?

LITERATURE REVIEW (on the subject of direct democracy from publications and Internet sources)
review of preliminary, primary and secondary sources concerning the topic of direct democracy.

A. Research literature (on the subject of direct democracy from publications and Internet sources)
B. Theory-based research (a discussion of the concept and history of democracy)
C. Extending or replicating existing research studies (check to see how many of these exist)
1. Check finds of a breakthrough study (look for breakthrough studies)
2. Check validity of research findings across different populations (France, Estonia, Switzerland, etc.)
3. Check trends or change over time (for Internet voting since from about 1990)
4. Check findings using different methodology (control studies and random sampling)
5. Develop more effective interventions (check what has been done before)

PROJECTED FINDINGS

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Introduction
Research questions
Data collection plan
Data analysis
Experimentation
Pilot test

RESULTS

DATA ANALYSIS
this part will be quantitative because it is reproducible, flexible and scalable.

DISCUSSION

IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE AND RESEARCH

CONCLUSION
Recommendations
Limitations
Implications

BACK MATTER: Bibliography, Footnotes, Appendixes

Now is the time to utilize modern technology to allow the public to vote directly via the Internet, thus creating a
government closer to a pure democracy. This could be accomplished by an amendment to the United States
Constitution, if necessary. The implementation of this plan would unfold, develop, and occur in an evolutionary
rather than a revolutionary way creating the 3rd House of the United States Congress, the Public Assembly.

The real possibility of a direct democracy, through direct voting, on the local, state, and national level now
exists with the advent of Internet technology. This review of literature discusses the possibility and explores
philosophical concepts of democracy and reviews the books "Democracy, Real and Ideal" by Ricardo Blaug,
"Democracy in America" by Alexis de Tocqueville, "Strategies of Change" by Steven Vago, as well as some
websites devoted to the subject.

1. Describe to your classmates one of the problems you selected about which you intended to carry out a research or action project. Share with them what your purpose is:

One problem with the educational system, and society in general, involves political philosophy: if most societies are called democratic then why don't the people govern by voting directly and democratically (as is done in Switzerland, for example) on issues rather than voting only for representatives? When educating post-secondary or adult students (or even K-12 students to prepare them for being adults), how can the concepts of democratically controlled governments be conveyed and transferred to the learners and how can they become directly involved in the implementation of democratically determined plans? My project involves exploring what

methods have been used previously to establish direct democracies which are basically systems whereby the public votes directly on issues rather than through elected representatives who can, after elected, vote any way they choose.

In Adult Education for Social Change: From Center Stage to the Wings and Back Again, Thomas Heaney views adult education as participatory and as a tool for social change and where educational progressivism is the contemporay approach to educating the public. " 'Adult education turns out to be the most reliable instrument for social actionists' since it assures that any action undertaken would be authentically democratic" (Brookfield, 1984). Eduard Lindeman, as influenced by John Dewey, considers education to be inexorably connected with democracy, social action, and control by people over their day to day existences. To Lindeman, adult education equals social change, a method to create good and productive citizens. The concept of using the educational system to implement a direct democracy is closely connected with the ideas expressed by Heaney, Miles Horton, Paulo Freire, and Jack Mezirow since their approach is to empower the populace through education in order to create a democratic society. Since it is necessary to have an educated public in order to have democracy function efficiently, democracy is dependent on the educational system to survive.

Research question:

How has direct democracy, utililizing computer and Internet technology, been implemented and used in various countries and institutions and what has been and could be the role of educational systems in the implementation and continuing use of direct democracy?

2. Is it research or is it action?

As I view them, simply stated, a research project looks into the past whereas an action plan looks toward the future. The research project delves into previous studies and statistics on the researched topic while the action project is a particular plan and a projected time schedule for implementing the proposed plan. Since my first project was an action plan with a plan for the future, this project will be more research based to look into what has been done before concerning the topic of direct democracy and its place in the educational system.

1. Discuss the differences between research designed to find out something and research designed to bring about change.

Research (to find out something) is researching past achievements, experiments, statistics, observations, and data by studying literature and past events and past studies. Examples of this type of research are historical and statistical research. This type of research requires, deliberation, thinking, examining, analyzing, rationalizing, and collecting and evaluating data.

Action research (to bring about change) is planning ahead for change and implementing the procedures to secure that change. Examples of this type of research are social impact (action) and theoretical research. (Action planning research and preparation can be "looking before you leap" by seeing what has been done before, learning from past experiences and mistakes, and looking

at any "maps" or plans that might have been developed in the past). The execution of action research is being in the middle of an activity as it is happening. In action research most of the in-depth thinking has occurred prior to the execution of the action plan but once the process has begun then it usually gains momentum and there is no turning back. To use a sports analogy, a platform high diver does not need to start thinking in the middle of a flip that he wished he had not jumped or that he had turned another direction -- at that point it is too late since the process has already begun; all of the thinking has been done in the training and preparation but not during the actual execution of the activity. Or to put it another way, whereas historical research is like studying the events in the calm after a storm, action research is like studying the events while the storm is happening.

2. Is it a good idea to try to do both in your research project? Why or why not? How about in your professional life?

Since a research project is a look into the past and an action plan is a look toward the future and for the same reason that someone can not be in two places at the same time or go in two directions simultaneously, one can not expect to explore the past and the future on the same trip (this holds true in professional life as well as in academic life). Likewise, one can not expect to do a research project and an action plan at the same time or in the same project. However, I think someone can, in two separate projects, do a research project and an action plan both on the same topic, with one complementing the other.

Assignment: draw up an outline of your course project and share it with the rest of the class.

Planning and developing the research study:

Here is a general outline derived from chapter 2 of Educational Research: An Introduction (Gall, 2003):

I. THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

A. Research literature

B. Theory-based research

C. Extending or replicating existing research studies:

1. Check finds of a breakthrough study
2. Check validity of research findings across different populations
3. Check trends or change over time
4. Check findings using different methodology
5. Develop more effective interventions

D. Team projects

II. THE RESEARCH PROPOSAL

A. Introduction (problem, potential contribution, literature foundation, research hypothesis --
e.g., null or directional)

B. Review of the literature (topic studies, methods critique, previous conclusions, practical applications)

C. Research design (descriptive, causal-comparative, correlational, or experimental)

D. Research methods (e.g., sampling procedures, data-collection procedures)

E. Data analysis (develop a plan for this)

F. Human subjects protection (to insure the safety of the participants of a research project)

G. Time line (projected schedule of implementation)

III. PILOT STUDY (small scale testing of procedures to be studied)

IV. THE MAIN STUDY or dissertation (APA format, front matter, introductory chapter,
literature review, methods, results, discussion, back matter)

V. THE JOURNAL REPORT (e.g., a referreed journal)

****

Here is the outline based on my topic:

I. THE RESEARCH PROBLEM: How has direct democracy, utililizing computer and Internet
technology, been implemented and used in various countries and institutions and what has been
and could be the role of educational systems in the implementation and continuing use of direct democracy?

A. Research literature (on the subject of direct democracy from publications and Internet sources)

B. Theory-based research (a brief discussion of the concept and history of democracy and
methods of its implementation)

C. Extending or replicating existing research studies (I can check to see how many of these exist):

1. Check finds of a breakthrough study (look for breakthrough studies)
2. Check validity of research findings across different populations (France, Estonia, Switzerland, etc.)
3. Check trends or change over time (for Internet voting since from about 1990)
4. Check findings using different methodology (control studies and random sampling)
5. Develop more effective interventions (check what has been done before)

D. Team projects (community, government, and school projects)

II. THE RESEARCH PROPOSAL

A. Introduction (problem, potential contribution, literature foundation, directional research hypothesis)

B. Review of the literature (topic studies, methods critique, previous conclusions, practical applications)

C. Research design (descriptive, causal-comparative, correlational, or experimental)

D. Research methods (e.g., sampling procedures, data-collection procedures, researching literature, I am contemplating sending out questionnaires to people including politicians and Congress members)

E. Data analysis (develop a plan for this, by reading research data)

F. Human subjects protection (to insure the safety of the participants of a research project, privacy issues)

G. Time line (projected schedule of implementation -- only for the action plan)

III. PILOT STUDY (check studies made in France, Estonia, Switzerland, etc. and perhaps propose local pilot studies at universities, etc.)

IV. THE MAIN STUDY or dissertation (APA format, front matter, introductory chapter, literature review, methods, results, discussion, back matter -- this is the actual structure of the paper which would contain the information within this outline)

V. THE JOURNAL REPORT (e.g., a referreed journal)

The paper will use, with the above information, the following organizational structure:

Front matter
Introduction
Literature review
Core questions and hypothesis
Research Methodology
Data analyasis
Projected findings
Implications for practice and research
Back matter

According to the statement below the future of education will be in online or e-learning:

Cisco Systems president and CEO, John Chambers has reportedly
said that "the next big killer application for the Internet is
going to be education. Education over the Internet is going to
be so big it is going to make e-mail look like a rounding
error." (MacNamara, O'Donnell, 2003)

I. The research problem: How has direct democracy, utililizing computer and Internet technology, been implemented and used in various countries and institutions and what has been and could be the role of educational systems in the implementation and continuing use of direct democracy?

A. Research literature (on the subject of direct democracy from publications and Internet sources)

B. Theory-based research (a discussion of the concept and history of democracy)

C. Extending or replicating existing research studies (I can check to see how many of these exist)

1. Check finds of a breakthrough study (look for breakthrough studies)
2. Check validity of research findings across different populations (France, Estonia, Switzerland, etc.)
3. Check trends or change over time (for Internet voting since from about 1990)
4. Check findings using different methodology (control studies and random sampling)
5. Develop more effective interventions (check what has been done before)

D. Team projects (community and school projects)

II. The research proposal

A. Introduction (problem, potential contribution, literature foundation, research hypothesis --
e.g., null or directional)

B. Review of the literature (topic studies, methods critique, previous conclusions, practical applications)

C. Research design (descriptive, causal-comparative, correlational, or experimental)

D. Research methods (e.g., sampling procedures, data-collection procedures, researching

literature, I am contemplating sending out questionnaires to people including politicians and Congress members.

E. Data analysis (develop a plan for this, by reading research data)

F. Human subjects protection (to insure the safety of the participants of a research project, privacy issues)

G. Time line (projected schedule of implementation -- only for the action plan)

III. Pilot study (check studies made in France, Estonia, Switzerland, etc. and perhaps propose local pilot studies at universities, etc.)

IV. The main study or dissertation (APA format, front matter, introductory chapter, literature review, methods, results, discussion, back matter -- this is the actual structure of the paper which would contain the information within this outline)

V. The journal report (e.g. a referreed journal)

Below is a simplified version of the form that the proposal will take:

Front matter
Introduction
Literature review
Core questions and hypothesis
Research Methodology
Data analysis
Projected findings
Implications for practice and research
Back matter

Outline for my paper:

(all in APA Format)

FRONT MATTER: Title page, Preface and Acknowledgements, Table of contents, List of tables, List of figures

INTRODUCTION How has direct democracy, utililizing computer and Internet technology, been implemented and used in various countries and institutions and what has been and could be the

role of educational systems in the implementation and continuing use of direct democracy?

CORE QUESTIONS AND HYPOTHESIS

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3. Check trends or change over time (for Internet voting since from about 1990)
4. Check findings using different methodology (control studies and random sampling)
5. Develop more effective interventions (check what has been done before)

PROJECTED FINDINGS

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY
At this point I am considering sending out a questioaire to people including politicians and Congress members and researching previous studies and perhaps suggesting some local studies to be done at universities and in communities and local governments. Pilot study (check studies made in France, Estonia, Switzerland, etc. and perhaps propose local pilot studies at universities, communities, etc.)

RESULTS

DATA ANALYSIS
this part will be quantitative because it is reproducible, flexible and scalable.

DISCUSSION

IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE AND RESEARCH
CONCLUSION

BACK MATTER: Bibliography, Footnotes, Endnotes, Appendixes

What are some advantages and disadvantages of qualitative and quantitative methods of inquiry?

Qualitative research (postpositivist research). Inquiry that is grounded in the assumption that individuals construct social reality in the form of meanings and interpretations, and that these constructions tend to be transitory and situational. The dominant methodology is to discover these meanings and interpretations by subjecting the resulting data to analytic induction. (Gall, 2003).

Qualitative research characteristics: variables, selective sampling of smaller populations, qualitative analysis, interpretive, transitory, naturalistic, subjective, localized.

ADVANTAGES:

Can flow with the requirements of the research methodology

Has an emergent quality

People can identify with this type of research more easily than to dry statistics

Can bring cases and examples to life or application

Can adapt to and account for execeptions to the general trends

Flexible and adaptive to new data collecting methods

Can frame new research questions

Needs smaller researched populations

Forward-looking

DISADVANTAGES:

Subjective

Can be inclined toward being biased

Varying

Ethical problems including disguising the identities of researched groups

Requires highly developed language skills

Labor intensive research

More difficult to detect patterns

Quantitative research (positivist research). Inquiry that is grounded in the assumption that features of the social environment constitute an objective reality that is relatively constant across time and settings. The dominant methodology is to describe and explain features of this reality by collecting numerical data on observable behaviors of samples and by subjecting these data to statistical analysis. (Gall, 2003).

Quantitative research characteristics: constants, random samplings of larger populations, quantitative analysis, statistical, stationary, analytical, objective, universal.

ADVANTAGES:

Objective

Factual

Analytical

Numerical

Universal

Reliable

Constant

Formula based

Mathematically describable

DISADVANTAGES:

Rigid, inflexible

Dry, factual

Detached, uninteresting, colorless, dull

Difficult for people to relate to

Research process is difficult to change once begun

Difficult to generalize to other situations

Requires larger sized researched populations

Backward-looking

Possible ethical problems including "inventing" data

Develop two research questions or problems that would lend themselves to resolution using a qualitative method of inquiry. Discuss which inquiry method would be appropriate for each question or topic.

1. How can the concept of direct democracy be introduced and the procedures for its implementation and utilization be taught in Social Studies and Political Science courses?

Of the methods research design (descriptive, causal-comparative, correlational, and experimental) and methods of inquiry (surveys, opinion polls, statistical data, questionnaires, sampling procedures, data collection procedures, etc.), I think the best approach to answer this question would be a descriptive design utilizing a questionnaire sent to all of the Social Studies and Political Science teachers (that the researcher can locate) in public and private schools from the K-12 levels up through post-secondary and adult education. The questionnaire could contain closed and open ended questions in addition to a blank suggestion space at the end of the questionnaire where the instructors can add any thoughts that they may have on the subject.

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2. How can a Constiutional amendment be proposed?

Constitutional amendments are permanent additions to the Contitution, though they can be counter amended as was the case with the Prohibition amendment, that require a 2/3 vote from both houses of the Congress and therefore very difficult to obtain. There have been twenty seven Constitutional Amendments with the most recent being in 1992 which involved no Congressional self salary increases while the legislators are in their terms. The twelfth Amendment concerning changing the method of electing the president of the United States using the Electoral College was added in 1803 after the first ten Amendments, the Bill of Rights, were added in 1791.

I think this inquiry can be accomplished by doing a thorough historical and literature research of all of the previous 27 amendments and how they were done. Additionally, a questionnaire concerning procedures for obtaining an amendment could be sent out to focus groups related to the topic and eventually a petition could be circulated.

Using the problem or research topic from your proposed study provide a rationale regarding the type of data your would collect, and how you think you would analyze it relative to the resolution of the problem or topic you have selected.

Concerning the research topic of direct democracy and its present use and the methods of its implementation and and ways of introducing and educating the public about the concept, the methods of collecting data would involve doing research in the history of these ideas by reviewing past research, experiments, and uses of direct democracy through a search of literature, studies, and experiments done on the topic. Also, another method would involve the use of interviews, surveys, and questionnaires conducted with the general public, focus groups, and politicians as well as social studies and political science teachers.

The information gathering instruments used would involve closed form and open form questions and the use of quantitative (in determining numbers, statistics, percentages, etc.) and qualitative

(such as in eliciting opinions from the respondents for open form questions) forms of collecting and analyzing the data

STRENGTHS:

There is a need for exploration and research in this topic.

There would be public interest and support of this idea.

This concept would satisfy the definition and requirements of democracy.

WEAKNESSES:

Some of this project might involve going into unexplored territory so there could be some sense of "feeling in the dark"

This idea depends on and requires the ethical use of the system and a security system to assure that.

A great deal of research in this area would be time consuming and labor intensive

COLLECTING RESEARCH DATA WITH TESTS

Administering tests and evaluating the results is a common method of collecting data for research. The quality of this research data, however, is dependent on the quality of the tests. There are five common criteria against which the quality of a test is determined. These include 1) objectivity, 2) standard conditions of administration and scoring, 3) standards for interpretation, 4) fairness, 5) validity and 6) reliability. Validity and reliability are both multifaceted and will be discussed further. Along with these five criteria, the construction of a test, and more specifically each item on a test, is a complex effort. One theory that is used in the approach to test construction is item response theory.

Content Validity

One important measure of the validity of a test is obtained by looking at the content validity. Content validity is defined as "the extent to which inferences from a test's scores adequately represent the content or conceptual domain that the test is claimed to measure" (Gall, Gall, Borg, 2003). Or as Messick describes, "content-related validity refers to the extent to which the test questions represent the skills in the specified subject area" (Messick, 1989). Content validity is determined by comparing the content of a test with the construct that it claims to measure. In a classroom setting, this construct can be equated with the course content that was presented by the teacher. Thus, a test with high content validity will have questions that cover the material presented by the teacher to the students. While it is not necessary or feasible for a test to cover every piece of information covered in the course, it is important that a representative sample of the content domain be covered by the test.

When selecting a test for research purposes, it is always essential that the validity of the test be considered. It is especially important, however, when the research involves the effect of instructional methods on achievement. In such a case, the significance of the findings will be of no use if the tests were not aligned with the course content.

The importance of content validity is also extremely pronounced in an environment of standardized testing. It is not reasonable to expect children to perform successfully on tests when they have not been exposed to the constructs being measured by the test.

Test Reliability

Test reliability is "the extent to which there is measurement error present in the scores yielded by a test" (Gall, Gall, Borg, 2003). To understand test reliability, one must first understand that there is a difference between a tester's "true score" on a test and the scores that he actually obtains on the test. A "true score" is a measurement of the tester's actual ability (knowledge of content or ability to perform) and can vary greatly from the score received from a test.

When defining the reliability of a test, two variables are identified; reliability coefficient and standard deviation. A reliability coefficient of 1 is a perfectly reliable test, while a test that has a coefficient of 0 has no reliability. The standard deviation describes the amount of deviation that is present when comparing all of the scores to the mean score. There are numerous methods used to calculate these values depending on the circumstances surrounding the tests and available resources of time, money and expertise.

Several factors contribute to measurement error and a test reliability of less than 1. 1) Every test contains only a sampling of the content that it covers. The appropriateness of the chosen content and the ability for it to measure the construct affect the reliability. 2) Those who administer the test can create measurement error if their procedures do not follow the standards. 3) Those who score the test can create measurement error if they do not follow consistent scoring procedures. 4) Testing conditions can have adverse effects on the test-takers. 5) The condition (health, motivation) of the tester can affect the way he performs on the test (Gall, Gall, Borg, 2003).

Item Response Theory

Item response theory (IRT) is an approach to test construction based on the assumptions that 1) and individual's performance on a test item reflects a single ability, 2) individuals with different amounts of that ability will perform differently on the item, and 3) the relationship between the variables of ability and item performance can be represented by a mathematical function (Gall, Gall, Borg, 2003).

When constructing a test with this method, items of varying difficulty are created to enable the scorer to more accurately measure the ability of a test-taker, and items that are either too easy or too hard are not given to the test-taker. Thus, constructing a test using IRT allows the test to be fashioned for test-takers with varying abilities and still to provide accurate scores for all test-takers.

Advantages of IRT include 1) test can be customized for students of varying abilities, 2) construction of parallel tests of equivalent difficulty is possible, and 3) a reduction in measurement error is possible with the construction of test with more items that are consistent with the ability of the test-taker.

Although the complexity of creating a test with this method, IRT is routinely used in the construction of standards-based tests. Anyone using the results of such tests should be aware of the underlying theory.

Norm-Referenced Mesurement

Norm-Referenced Measurement interprets a person's test score in relation to the scores of others who have taken the same test. Norm-referenced tests yield information regarding the student's performance in comparison to a norm or average of performance by similar students (Rodríguez, 1997). The resulting score is generally a percentile ranking that details what percentage of people in the norming sample (sample of test population used to create a table of scores and percentiles) scored at the same level or below the person being evaluated.

This approach to measurement is very useful to evaluate the broad abilities of test-takers, but the greatest problem with norm-referenced measurements is the inability to use the results to measure specific abilities of test-takers. It is also very possible for the norming table to become "polluted" if the norming sample is not routinely updated, because over time the results of test-takers can vary greatly. For this reason, it is imperative that great care be taken when establishing the norming sample (Rodríguez, 1997).

COLLECTING RESEARCH DATA WITH Questionnaires AND INTERVIEWS:

In collecting research data, two methods that can be used are questionnaires and interviews. Below are descriptions as well as advantages and disadvantages of each:

Questionnaires (documents that ask the same questions of all individuals in a sample):

Advantages:

-- Used mostly in quantitative research since it is standardized and the results are statistical

-- Lower costs in sampling over a large geographical area than interviews

-- Time needed to collect data is less than with interviews

Disadvantages:

-- Can not probe as deeply into beliefs, attitudes, and inner experiences as interviews

-- Not possible to modify or clarify items after the questionnaire is distributed

Interviews (oral questions by the interviewer and oral answers by the respondents):

Advantages:

-- Used mostly in qualitative research with open-ended questions

-- Adaptable

-- Interviewers can follow up to obtain more information or clarify misunderstood areas

-- Can build trust and rapport with respondents

-- Gives research a human voice or human "touch"

-- Can be used to obtain information not able to be obtained by other means

Disadvantages:

-- Difficult to standardize the interview situation so that the interviewer does not influence the respondent to respond in an expected way

-- Does not provide anonymity from the interviewer

-- To assure respondent's anonymity, the interviewer must report results without revealing the respondent's identity

Steps in Constructing the Research Questionnaire:

Define research objectives

Select a sample

Design the questionnaire format

Pretest the questionnaire (pilot surveys)

Precontact the sample

Write a cover letter and distribute the questionnaire

Follow-up on non-respondents

Analyze the data (Gall, Gall & Borg, 2003).

Pilot Surveys:

A pilot survey can be used to find out whether the survey is going to be successful and if it will achieve an acceptable response rate, and provide reliable data on the relevant topics. The pilot survey can determine the following information:

Are the correct number of questions being asked (too many or not enough)?

Are the questions going to yield the desired information? .

Is the survey wording clear and effective or is it misleading and confusing? Do the respondents answer the questions in the intended way and not leave any blank?

Are the instructions clear and unambiguous?

What is the optimum size for the pilot sample? .

The results of the pilot survey should not be used as if the results had been collected during the main survey.

Ask respondents to state in their own words what they think each question means.

The pilot response rate varies depending on who or what groups the questionnaires are sent to.

Questionnaire Design:

The design and construction of questionnaires is a predominantly subjective process that is mostly determined by the experience of the designer. Surveys can be from one to twenty pages or more. Adequate background information should be included in a cover letter so the intende respondent will be interested in responding to the questionnaire.

An important issue in the variety, number of, and sequencing of questions so as to get the intended information yet not overwhelm the respondent with a burdensome number of questions. The two main types of questions are open-ended and closed-ended questions, both of which can be asked in a formal or an informal tone, and can be used in an appropriate mix in both qualitative and quantitative research. A questionnaire should be kept as short as possible but a longer questionnaire should be broken into sections and usually numbered and the questionnaire should be as clear, detailed and unambiguous as possible.

Questionnaire Layout:

There should be a good use of whitespace, which is the space between questions and sections with no writing, to enhance readability.

The questionnaire needs to have a preamble that explains the purpose of the survey and this can be part of the cover letter or at the head of the questionnaire.

There should be instructions to the respondents at the beginning of each section.

Questions should be numbered questions and, if the questionnaire is divided into sections, the section should be indicated as part of the question numbering system.

There should be specific instructions associated with each question to aid in the correct completion of that questions.

To save everyone's time, the respondents should be able to bypass questions (or whole sections) that are not relevant to them by using filter questions, with instructions such as "If you answered YES to Question 8 please go to Question 12)".

Respondents who are unsure about answering a question should be able to respond with "Don't Know", "Undecided", or "Not Applicable", etc.

Wording of Questions in a Questionnaire:

Clear and unambiguous wording.

Word questions in such a way that the response is what the respondent really thinks about the topic.

Make questions as simple as possible: do not assume that the respondent knows difficult words or concepts

Be sure not to use double negatives, grammatical errors, slang, colloquialisms, or spelling mistakes

Be sure not to use a double yes and no question that could contain both yes and no answer. ("Are you a member of the _____ Party and did you vote for the party's candidate in the last election?") There are four possible answers to this question (Yes/Yes, Yes/No, No/Yes, No/No).

Be sure to be culturally sensitive while wording questions.

Question Types:

Closed Form: (the question permits only prespecified responses such as in multiple choice or True/False questions) which can be assessed numerically and more objectively.

Advantages:

-- Makes quantification and analysis easier and more direct

-- Questions can be pilot-tested more easily

-- Can be used to calculate percentage of respondents who answered questions in a particular way

Disadvantages:

-- Can not express individual views

-- Can not express views non-conforming to the structure of the questionnaire

-- The respondent can not offer creative views or solutions

Open Form: (respondents can make any responses they wish such as in essay questions, which require a more subjective assessment):

Advantages:

-- Can have interesting responses

-- Can have more in depth responses

-- Can use optional (can be answered or not) questions

-- For qualitative research results can be analyzed by a grounded-theory approach

Disadvantages:

-- Time consuming

-- Analysis requires development of a category system

-- Many readers are needed to analyze transcripts

-- More difficult and time-consuming to analyze

Structured Form

boxes: (e.g. check the box, including multiple choice and True/False questions)

scales: linear (e.g. from strongly agree to strongly disagree scales) and tabular (tables or charts)

Data from Target Groups

Key informant questionnaires and interviews are data from people who have special knowledge (e.g. experts) that would not otherwise be available to the researcher. This group tends to be more educated, informed, and articulate about a particular topic that the general public is.

Survey questionnaires and interviews are those used to supplement data that have been collected by other methods. These include confirmation survey interviews which are structured interviews that produce evidence to confirm earlier findings, participant construct interviews which are used to learn how informants structure their physical and social world, and projective techniques which use ambiguous stimuli to elicit subconscious perceptions.

Focus group questionnaires and interviews are group interviews addressing questions to a group of individuals who have been assembled for this purpose or interviewing groups that have a shared goal.

COLLECTING RESEARCH DATA THROUGH OBSERVATION

Observations in Quantitative Research

These observations are sometimes known as structured observations because what is to be observed is specifically defined beforehand. This type of observation is "useful when the evaluator desires to observe specific behaviors or characteristics" (Worthen, Sanders & Fitzpatrick, 1997, p. 376). These specific behaviors or characteristics are defined as variables. Defining the variables to be observed is the first step in conducting this type of observation.

These variables can be classified into three types: descriptive, inferential, and evaluative. "Descriptive observational variables require no inference making on the part of the researcher. You see something and write it down" (Brown, p.1). This type of variable usually yields reliable data. "Inferential observational variables require the researcher to make inferences about what is observed and the underlying emotion" (Brown, p. 1). These variables are not as reliable as descriptive variables. "Evaluative observational variables require the researcher to make an inference and a judgment from the behavior" (Brown, p. 1). Evaluative variables are the least reliable of the three.

After defining the variables to be observed the next step is choosing how the information should

be recorded. "Structured methods of observation typically involve using checklists or forms for recording observations. These are often called observation schedules" (Worthen, Sanders & Fitzpatrick, 1997, p. 377). Many standard observation schedules or forms are already available. These not only save the researcher time because they don't have to make their own, but since they have been used in previous studies they are valid and reliable and allow the researcher to compare their results to previous ones. If there are no existing observation forms that include all the variables to be studied the researcher may construct their own. Most schedules basically include a description of the variable, a place to record the variable, and sometimes a rating scale.

Now the observations actually need to be recorded onto the forms. If multiple observers are going to be used it is important to train all observers in the specific procedures to be used so that all data is consistent. There are four types of recording procedures that define how the observations are recorded: duration, frequency-count, interval, and continuous. "Duration recording monitors the percent of time or the total time that a behavior occurs in a specified time period" (McIntyre, p.1).This is best used when observing one variable or variables that do not occur simultaneously. "In frequency-count recording the observer records each time a target behavior occurs" (Gall, Gall & Borg, 2003, p. 258). Tallies are usually used for this. This is best when observing behaviors that are do not last for a long time. "Interval recording involves observing the behavior of an individual at given intervals" (Gall, Gall & Borg). This can be used to estimate the duration of a behavior. The data from these 3 types of recording procedures is numerical in nature and can be analyzed with a variety of statistical techniques. The last type, continuous recording, is more narrative in nature. It "involves recording all the behavior of the target individual of individuals for a specified observation interval" (Gall, Gall & Borg, p. 259). The observer focuses on specific behaviors that have been defined in the research study and then does a content analysis of the data.

Observations in Qualitative Research

This type of observation is sometimes referred to as unstructured observation. Unlike quantitative observations these observations do not specify specific variables to focus on at the beginning. The focus emerges out of the observation itself and the researcher is free to change or shift their focus at any time. In addition, these observations are more holistic in nature, taking note of the entire context in which behaviors occur.

This change in focus can occur in 3 stages. The first is descriptive where the observations are very general and unfocused in nature. The next is the focused stage where the researcher begins to focus on specific behaviors of interest. The last is the selected stage where the actual research problems or statements start to emerge and the researcher begins to analyze and define these statements.

"Qualitative observation depends less on available instruments and more on the evaluator or observer" (Worthen, Sanders & Fitzpatrick, 1997, p. 377). It allows the researchers to describe what is happening in their own words and use their own feelings and interpretations in these descriptions. There are 4 different roles the observer can take in qualitative observations. These roles explain how involved the researcher decides to become in the program being observed. The first is the complete observer where the researcher makes "no effort to blend in with the group

but instead focuses on carefully observing the verbal and nonverbal cues of the participants" (Worthen, Sanders & Fitzpatrick). The opposite of this is the complete participant role where the researcher becomes an actual member of the group. The next two roles fall in between these two extremes. The observer-participant role is where the researcher is mainly an observer and only interacts with individuals on a casual basis as in conversations. The participant-observer role is where the researcher interacts with and has a meaningful relationship with the individuals but "does not engage in activities that are at the core of the group's identity" (Gall, Gall & Borg, 2003, p. 268).

Qualitative observations are usually recorded with field notes. These notes contain a description of the events, environment, behaviors, participants, etc. as well as the researcher's own reflections. Field notes should be as detailed as possible and can include visual details such as sketches, pictures, videotapes, etc.

Worthen, Sanders & Fitzpatrick note certain steps that qualitative observation usually takes:

thorough preparation through reading documents and records or

chatting with informants or stakeholders

articulating the purpose of your observations (unstructured)

looking at (not for) what occurs

listening to what occurs

asking questions (after listening and observing)

assimilating and synthesizing information

checking working hypotheses with other data

triangulating, confirming, and cross-checking

Unobtrusive Measurements in Quantitative Research

Sometimes the validity and reliability of a study can be affected when individuals change their typical behavior when they know they are being observed or information is being collected about them. A way of avoiding these effects can be to use unobtrusive measurements. "Unobtrusive measures are characterized by the fact that the data are collected in a natural setting, and the individuals are unaware that they are being observed" (Gall, Gall & Borg, 2003, p. 275). Worthen, Sanders & Fitzpatrick offer several examples of unobtrusive data sources:

physical traces - physical evidence left from some past behavior

archival records - the ongoing, continuing records of society

private records - those not ordinarily left open to the public

contrived observation - the use of hardware devices for observation (videotape, audiotape)

Quantitative researchers analyze these sources using preconceived concepts or theories about the data and record them with numerical or statistical data. These results should be used in conjunction with other measurement methods.

Unobtrusive Measures in Qualitative Research

Qualitative researchers can use the unobtrusive data sources stated above for quantitative research as well as the following. Disguised field observations where "the researcher pretends to join or actually is a member of a group and records data about that group. The group does not know they are being observed for research purposes" (Brown, p. 1). The researcher can take on the complete-participant, observer-participant, or participant-observer roles. They can also study material culture and practice-oriented material culture using a holistic approach and trying to gain insights into a group's social context or reality. Material culture refers to "the various objects created by different groups throughout history" (Gall, Gall & Borg, 2003, p. 277). Practice-oriented material culture "is distinguished by its association with particular practices and meanings" (Gall, Gall & Borg).

Unobtrusive measures can offer valuable data but they all have limitations, the biggest being validity and reliability. It is hard to get a representative sample and replicating these types of situations is difficult. And of course there are ethical considerations, mainly informed consent and invasion of privacy. Institutional review boards may waive informed consent if the following conditions exist:

The individuals being studied will incur no risk; the anonymity of the participants will be maintained; it is impossible to conduct the study under the condition of informed consent; and the study promises to produce significant benefits (Gall, Gall & Borg, 2003, p. 277).

Many of the ethical issues mentioned here are economic in nature; some of them are concerns related to all topics and others are more specific to the topic I am writing about.

Some of the ethical abuses are:

-- Manipulating, skewing, or creating data to achieve a desired outcome.

-- Bribery to officials for the purpose of obtaining a contract.

-- Kickbacks or promising part of any project rewards to the project's participants.

-- Plagiarism from either the experimenter's or research writer's part of the research project.

-- Buying votes or opinions.

-- Paying the participant to behave in a certain way or to say what the researcher wants them to say.

-- Giving the research participants the answers to questions the researcher wants them to give in return for payment.

Of course, I don't think any of these would occur in any of this course's research papers , just as I don't expect an automobile accident while riding in a car, but they are all possible ethical abuses that can occur in research procedures

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http://www.democracy-online.org/ (another list of related links and sources)

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