***Dissertation Explorations**

Due the first class session (please bring two hard copies to class)

The major assignment for this course is to develop a dissertation research proposal. This assignment will not be the research proposal you will submit to your dissertation committee; however, it will provide you with substantial preparation for preparing an acceptable dissertation proposal at a later point in your graduate studies. Assignment one is designed to get you thinking about possible dissertation topics and approaches and to help you consider the complexities of planning education research studies.

The purpose of this assignment is to create a simple draft of two different studies (quantitative and qualitative) that could be used to explore aspects of the same topic. You will have to identify a broad dissertation topic for this assignment that could be studied from both a quantitative and qualitative approach (Almost any topic will do. Examples might include professional development for administrators, students' use of texting, perceptions of cheating on standardized tests, influence of parenthood on sue of social media, etc.). Be sure to read Creswell chapter 2 and Mertler and Charles chapter 3 before identifying a topic.

Please use the following headings in your paper. Instructions for the information that should be included under each heading are listed below.

Topic Statement:
Imagine that you are getting your mail when a neighbor whom you haven't seen in a few months walks up and asks, "What have you been up to?" You respond, "Oh, I am working on my doctoral dissertation." He/she then asks, "Really, what is it about?"

Think carefully about the next sentence you are about to utter. Because your neighbor is not an educator, but an accountant (police officer, nurse, etc.), he/she is not familiar with the jargon and terminology or with the concepts related to your study. You don't want to bore him/her with a lot of educational jargon, so you answer in a concise, easy-to-understand fashion. Your next utterance is only a sentence or two.
Write down this response!! Please edit it for clarity and brevity.

Problem Statement:
Your neighbor might want to know what is problematic about that topic or want more clarification. He/she might ask, "so exactly what about that topic are you studying?"
Write down this response!! Please edit it for clarity and brevity.

Justification or Relevance Statement:
If your neighbor wants more information, he/she will probably say something like, "Why is that important?" Again, think carefully about the next sentence you are about to utter, and again compose a response of only a sentence or two.
Write down this response!! Please edit it for clarity and brevity.

Quantitative Research Question:
Develop and list one question about this topic that would require you to collect and analyze data using a quantitative approach. Review the relevant sections of Creswell chapter 1 and Mertler and Charles chapters 2 – 3 if necessary.

Quantitative Data Collection:
Identify the data (test scores, age, attitude survey, etc.) you need to collect to answer your question and briefly describe how you will collect these data. Please see the data sources section of Mertler and Charles chapters 2 and 6.

Quantitative Sampling Technique:

Describe your sample for this study. See the sampling sections of Mertler and Charles chapters 2 and 6. Remember to select a quantitative sampling method and please identify the following:

- Type of Sample (Probability or Nonprobability)
- Sampling technique (i.e. random sample, stratified sample, cluster, convenience, quota, etc.)
- Characteristics of the sample (you may need to make some estimates here)

Qualitative Question:
Develop and list one question about this topic that would require you to collect and analyze data using a qualitative approach. Review the relevant sections of Creswell chapter 1 and Mertler and Charles chapters 2 – 3 if necessary.

Qualitative Sampling Technique:
Describe your sample for this study. See the sampling sections of Mertler and Charles chapters 2 and 6. Remember to select a qualitative sampling method and please identify the following:

- Sampling technique (i.e. purposive, snowball, convenience, etc.)
- Characteristics of the sample
- Method for determining sample size (representation of range of participants, data saturation)
- Any other characteristics of interest (if applicable)

Qualitative Data Collection:
Identify the data (personal experiences, interactions between peers during competitive sports, etc.) you need to collect to answer your question and briefly describe how you will collect these data. Please identify at least two data sources (i.e. interviews, observations, artifacts such as newsletters or meeting minutes, video recordings, etc.). See the data sources section of Mertler and Charles chapters 2 and 6.

*Adapted from Dr. George Bieger and from *Educational Research: Competencies for Analysis and Applications, 9th Edition,*