Research Design and Methodology I

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Professor

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Assignment #4 – Course Learning Journal

The journal is a written reflection of your learning journey while working in each course. The Learning Journal integrates the essential elements of the course within your professional field of interest. The objective of the course journal is to produce a degree of acculturation, integrating new ideas into your existing knowledge of each course. This is also an opportunity to

communicate with your professor insights gained as a result of the course. The course

learning journal should be 3-5 pages in length and should include the following sections:

1. Introduction –Summarize the intent of the course, how it fits into the graduate

program as a whole, and the relevance of its position in the curricular sequence.

2. Personal Growth - Describe your personal growth–how the course stretched or

challenged you– and your progress in mastery of course content and skills during

the week and through subsequent readings – what new insights or skills you gained.

3. Reflective Entry - Add a reflective entry that describes the contextualization (or

adaptation and relevant application) of new learning in your professional field.

What questions or concerns have surfaced about your professional field as a result

of your study?

4. Conclusion – Evaluate the effectiveness of the course in meeting your professional,

religious, and educational goals.

**Introduction**

The intent of the course is to secure an understanding of research design methodologies. The student should have increased their vocabulary in the context of research design complementing vocabulary learned in statistics for social research. This vocabulary would come from articles, books, and other literature that feature research studies within the student's social research of interest. In my case, studies would be in the field of affordable housing and the culture of low-income families. Independent and dependent variables are heavily discussed so that the student can distinguish between the two along with the goal of being able to formulate dependent variables.

From reading the syllabus, the student should receive an introduction to various validated instruments and make a choice based on their research goal. Another objective is for the student to formulate a hypothetical hypothesis and identify independent and dependent variables within this hypothesis. Last but not least, an informed consent form was to be constructed. In working with low-income families which would include children, this is a necessary task.

**Personal Growth**

Due to receiving live instruction during the residency and independently watching relevant videos, I am now able to distinguish between quantitative and qualitative research methodologies, and a tentative problem and purpose statement was formulated. It seems that inductive analysis/reasoning (reading through data and allowing a theme or theory to emerge after patterns and relationships are discovered) can be conducted for both qualitative and quantitative research but is mainly applied to qualitative. Deductive (beginning with a theory and then testing it) seems to be more appropriate for quantitative. For my research on families living in subsidized housing, I have composed research questions based on my problem and purpose statements, but they do need strengthening. As far as methodologies go, dissecting a dissertation in CORE 3 and reviewing one for this class, I was able to gain a better understanding of the difference between If I were to assess my understanding of the differences between an independent and an independent variable, I would say I have a moderate understanding of the two.

A formal hypothesis for my chosen population still needs to be formulated. Although I did come across a few validated instruments in my readings, none were officially chosen, and no informed consent form was constructed. More familiarity with the sections of a dissertation was gained by the ones available in ProQuest. An introduction to dissertations was offered in CORE 3 through the Dissertation Foundations course which is a companion to Research Design and Methodology.

**Reflective Entry**

As stated in my journal for Statistics for Social Research II, I began the OGS program, not wanting to conduct quantitative research. To be honest, my preference would be to do a mixed method, but OGS does not allow this. There are some contexts in which I am totally comfortable with numbers such as completing budgets, which I have to do for my job, or basic accounting functions. When it comes to formulas, calculus, or geometry, count me out.

My decision was based mainly on fear and not facts or research. There has, however, always been a willingness to consider the quantitative method. It has been a goal of mine to become a Ph.D. student for years now so I was prepared to conquer my fears if in my best interest. There is only one chance of getting a Ph.D. so I need to make it count. By learning new statistical terminology and becoming more familiar with various parametric and non-parametric procedures as well as scales and tools for gathering data, my fear has lessened. Qualitative research would allow my population sample to express what is in their hearts and give me acute insight into their socialization histories, financial knowledge, traumas, and successes which I truly want to know. Charts, graphs, and percentages, however, speak loud enough to impact policy, non-profit executives, and decision-makers in both financial and educational institutions.

**Conclusion**

Much appreciation for Professor Taladay, who was always flexible and available. It is necessary for me to again stress the necessity of live instruction on Zoom in order to give the student the proper foundation for the course essentials. This should always include a PowerPoint presentation as well as preparation videos for students to watch before the course. It seems this has always been the tradition at OGS, and this tradition should not be lost. Structure and consistency are desperately needed. It is unfortunate that I was not formally introduced to a validated research instrument, nor did I get an opportunity, with the aid of the instructor, to construct an informed consent form. It is my belief that strictly adhering to the syllabus gives the student an advantage and leg up for CORE 5.

It is also unfortunate that there was not another student in the course along with me. With at least two students in the course together, they can support each other, gain a different research perspective from their own, and feed off of each other during instruction. I do realize that this cannot be helped because of the student population size at OGS. Something else that I recommend for this course as well as Statistics for Social Research is for the student to pick an article in their chosen field and review it with the professor on the screen during one of the meetups. The student could send it to the professor and other students ahead of time and this way, the student can go over difficult areas encountered when he or she first read the article and tried to dissect and interpret the data. If there are multiple students in the class, it would be good practice for everyone, even if their respective article was not chosen to review.