Assignment 2: Creating your Instrumentation (Due Noon, 3/30/15)

Overview

Using literature from the annotated bibliography you compiled during the fall semester, identify the key concepts you will need to study your problem of practice within your professional context. The literature you have collected should be a guide to help you operationalize your concepts, and begin to consider appropriate this assignment will require students to design their own instrumentation for the purposes of original data collection. As you review the literature, in particular the methodologies, consider if there is existing instruments, scales or subscales, or interview questions that would be appropriate for your data collection. The goal of this assignment is for each of you to have your methodology and instrumentation designed by the end of Session 3. Once this instrumentation is approved by your instructor, you will be able to begin your data collection.

Over the next two sessions, you will design the appropriate quantitative and qualitative instrumentation, as well as the necessary letter of consent that will be provided to all research participants. Everyone is going to have a different data collection methodology. Your individual research questions will determine the methods you will use rather than the other way around. Some research questions are more aligned with survey methods that may be administered via paper or online, and others are more conducive for interviews or focus. Many of you will need to use both methods as the qualitative data may help you to understand survey results.

You must first consider the type of data you need to collect followed by the population/sample that is the best source for these data. Once these first two considerations are clear, you can draw on the literature to operationalize the key variables for your study, identify possible existing instrumentation, and the most appropriate instrumentation(s) for your study. Refer to the O’Leary text pages 86-87 for a review of how to use literature to inform your methodology and to Chapter 4 in the Schutt text for a review of concepts and measurement.

Following the general guidelines for social science research discussed in the Sessions 2 and 3 lecture presentations, you must adhere to best practices in designing an instrument that is:

- appropriate for the target respondents,
- considers content validity for the instrument as well as each question,
- has mutually exclusive response categories if employing a survey design, and
- remains focused on the goals and objectives of the needs assessment study.

NOTE: Interview and survey questions cannot be the same as research questions. Interview questions are more open ended (what, why, how) than survey questions. Plan to ask probing questions as well as
follow-up questions. Survey questions are closed ended, and Likert-type questions are most commonly used. Always ask demographic questions—think through age-income related questions as participants may not be willing to share those freely.

You will work within teams to provide peer-reviews of each other’s work before turning in the final assignment.

Directions:

Session 2 (Week 6): Identified population and constructs

1. Describe your target population(s). Who are the potential respondents you want to recruit as participants in your study? How will you recruit? Will different populations complete different types of data collection methods or just one? Do you already have access to the population or will you need to reach out to your executive sponsor or others to gain access? Are there any special considerations you will need to address before recruiting your target population(s)?
2. By the middle of week 6, post your description of your population to your team space for feedback.
3. Based on the literature you are reviewing regarding your POP and the concepts or constructs you have identified, operationalize the key variables for your study. Refer to Schutt Chapter 4 and O’Leary, Chapter 11 (pp 208-210) for an example of operationalizing concepts.
4. By the end of week 6, post a description of your variables to your team space for feedback.
5. Make sure to provide feedback to one or more members of your team on their description of the population, variables, AND their draft questions by the middle of week 7.

Session 3 (Weeks 7-8): Produce a draft of instrumentation and letter of consent.

1. Consider your teammates’ comments regarding the operationalization of your variables carefully. Decide the most effective way to collect these primary data using the variables you have identified. Will you design a questionnaire or are these data more appropriately collected through interviews or a focus group? Will you need to use different methods to answer different questions?
2. For each variable you plan to study, draft a question that will accurately measure a variable, or series of questions that you believe will accurately measure the construct.
3. Post these questions to your team space by Friday for feedback from your team. Make sure you provide feedback to one or more members of your team by Wednesday of week 8.
4. Next, draft a letter of informed consent to each population (e.g., teachers, parents vs. students—consent and assent forms) you plan to study. Use the example titled Letter of Consent - Example provided in the Resources callout box as a guide.
5. Submit these letters of consent to your instructor via email for feedback.

Session 3 (Week 9): Deliver final needs assessment instrumentation

6. Consider the feedback you have received from your instructor and team members on your questions and letter of consent. Make any necessary changes and consider the following:
   a. If you are developing a questionnaire, review Box 11.2 in the O’Leary text (p. 206) to ensure that you have explored existing survey instruments for use in your study, drafted
questions with appropriate response categories, and an introductory paragraph to contextualize your study.

b. If you are planning to interview respondents, review Box 11.11 in O’Leary text (p. 222-223) to ensure that you have addressed all the necessary components of a good interview schedule.

7. Construct the instrument(s) in a final format. Include a title, letter of informed consent, instructions to the respondent on how to answer the questions (if designing a survey), and finally the survey and/or interview questions with a plan for recording the dialogue.

8. Submit your instrumentation and letter of consent (as 1 file) to the Gradebook by Noon, 3/30.

**NOTE: YOU CANNOT PROCEED WITH DATA COLLECTION WITHOUT THE APPROVAL OF YOUR INSTRUCTOR**