



SW386: Writing Research Methodology: An Example

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Purpose

The purpose of this study is to seek to understand and identify the satisfaction levels of parents' of children in second grade who attend the Lewiston School District to inform practice. The results of this study will be used for second grade program evaluation and best practice recommendations in 2008.



Paradigm

- My personal philosophical grounding of paradigms in research includes taking a constructivist and emancipatory approach to affect positive social change through liberation, emancipation, critiques, and taking political action. I am a social worker educator and practitioner, and I adhere to the National Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics. One key principal in the code is to advocate for social justice through advocacy, research, evaluation, and social action (National Association of Social Workers, 1999). The goal of this study is to inform and positively impact best educational practices.

Study Design

- Due to the emancipatory paradigm of this researcher, this study is a mixed-methods survey design employing quantitative and qualitative analysis. The goal of this study is to inform and positively impact best educational practices.

Population & Sample

The participants in this study are parents of children who are enrolled in second grade at the four elementary schools in the Lewiston, Idaho school district in 2006. A simple-random convenience sample of 400 students, (100 students from each school) will be selected and satisfaction surveys sent to each parent with the attached informed consent.



Investigative Techniques, Instrumentation, Data Collection, & Data Analysis Plan

- This study is a mixed-methods survey design employing quantitative and qualitative analysis. The instrument administered in this study is a self reporting satisfaction survey consisting of three demographic questions, 26 educational/school related questions using a five point LIKERT scale (1-Strongly Agree; 2- Agree; 3-Unsure; 4-Disagree; and 5-Strongly Disagree), and one open-ended question pertaining to school improvement. Participants will be provided an informed consent and asked not to put their names on the surveys to maintain anonymity.
- The survey will be mailed to families who are selected through the simple random sampling procedures at each school. The participants will receive the appropriate informed consent (see attached) with the survey. Participants will be asked not to write their names on the survey and to return the survey in the self-addressed stamped envelope provided. By completing and returning the surveys participants acknowledge the informed consent provided.
- Upon survey completion, data will be compiled, descriptive statistics will be analyzed and reported to school administrators, teachers, and related staff for program evaluation.



Ethical Considerations

- The Institutional Review Board at Lewis-Clark State College will review and approve this study prior to implementation. Anonymity of participants will be maintained by asking them not to disclose their name on the survey. In the event that a participant writes their name on a survey, the researcher will redact the name immediately from the survey. A letter of informed consent will be included with every survey mailed to participants. Participation is voluntary and participants may discontinue the survey at any time. If participants have questions, concerns, or complaints regarding their participation or rights, they may contact this researcher, Professor Brian L. Christenson, Social Sciences Division of Lewis-Clark State College at (208) 792-2476, or the Institutional Review Board of Lewis-Clark State College at (208) 792-.



Bias

- We all have biases; the most insidious are those of which we are unaware or unacknowledged. What makes you different from your subjects? Is it race, ethnicity, social class, education, work experience, physical or mental ability, gender identity, sexual orientation, etc? How might these differences impede your investigation (invisibility, insensitivity, overgeneralization, double standards, dichotomization)?

Assumptions

- What do you need to take for granted to answer your question or test your hypothesis? (e.g. honest responses from participants, typical population, heuristic value of a certain theory, normal distribution, etc.)

Limitations

- Now that you have an idea (from your literature review) how broad your topic could be, tell the reader what it is that you are deliberately not going to study. What aspects of the problem are outside your interests at this point (or for this paper)? Then share what could be improved with your design, sample, analysis, etc (If you had 3 years and \$1,000,000).

Informed Consent

Study Name Here
State the general purpose of the study here

Your participation in this research is extremely valuable in making a difference in the quality of education your children are receiving and should take approximately 10 minutes of your time to complete. Participation in this study is voluntary and choosing to not participate will not affect you in any way. This survey is completely anonymous and confidential and you, your family, and your child will in no way be linked to your completed survey. By completing the survey and sending it back you are giving consent to participate in this research study. You understand that if you have questions, concerns, or complaints regarding your participation or rights, you may contact this researcher, Professor Brian L. Christenson at (208) 792-2476, Social Sciences Division, Lewis-Clark State College, or the Institutional Review Board of Lewis-Clark State College at (208) 792- . If you choose to participate please complete the survey and return it in the self-addressed stamped envelope provided by

Please do not put your name on the survey or envelope.
Thank you for your participation.
Sincerely,
Your signature, name, and contact information here

References

- Dr. Christenson's Research
Website:<http://www.lcsc.edu/bchristenson/Research%20Methods.htm>
- Paradigms in research:
<http://www.lcsc.edu/bchristenson/paradigms.pdf>
