

Psychology 393 - Fall 2005
Research Methods in Developmental Psychology
How to Develop a Community-University Research Study
Monday & Wednesday, 12:30-2:20, PAS 4288

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Library/Information Consultant to *Research Works!* Amy Bihari

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Required Text

Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (5th ed.). (2001). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Readings and Other Materials

Please reserve, for photocopying, overheads, printing, and so forth, the amount you would have expected to spend on a normal text (approximately \$75+).

e-Community URL: www.login.icohere.com/research-works

GOALS OF 393

The purpose of 393 is to learn and use scientific methods to ask and answer research questions that matter to child development specialists, children, and parents.

You will be assisted by:

- Lecture materials
- Published research articles
- Consultation with researchers
- Consultation with practitioners
- Online discussions with group members and consultants
- Developing a research proposal

This is a “hands-on,” active learning course in which goals are achieved through cooperative group work and consultation. Students share their mutual interests in child development, and solve the problems of developing a research proposal in the *real world* by working together in small groups. They are assisted by research consultants (Julie and me) and by practitioners who work in the area of the students’ research topics. In this way, students benefit from each other’s knowledge, experiences, ideas, skills, and shared efforts, from the expertise of child development specialists

working in the field, and from the expertise of researchers. If you have the time and interest this term to learn how to apply research methods to child development practice by working together with others in a joint project, this is the course for you!

During the term, groups will work together in class, outside of class, and online. *Be certain that you have each other's phone numbers and e-mail addresses on the first day of class. Please be flexible in arranging face-to-face meeting times to fit the course schedules of group members. Remember that you can also meet together online using discussion boards and instant messaging.* Work together by setting weekly goals, dividing up the labour, and reporting back to the group weekly. To do this you must attend all group meetings, classes, and participate in online group discussions. Each student brings materials and ideas to the group meetings from your individual weekly work. We will help you achieve your individual and group goals.

Students present their work in written and oral progress reports at three critical research stages during the term: **Introduction, Method, and Results & Discussion**. Students obtain guidance through materials presented in lecture and through feedback and suggestions from the class as a whole, and from comments on written work from Julie and me. At the end of the term you will have created a comprehensive research proposal (some students use them as a basis for a research apprenticeship course or Honours thesis), and will have first-hand experience proposing a study, conducting a study, analysing data, and writing reports of the results. Writing style and effectiveness is a significant learning feature of this course. The best part is that you will have created a feasible research proposal that matters to a community organisation dedicated to helping children and families.

Evaluation

Oral and written progress reports of the research project

3 reports @ 15 points each = **45 pts**

3 oral presentations @ 10 pts each = **30 pts**

Final written research proposal = 25 pts

GUIDELINES FOR ASSIGNMENTS

Please read these guidelines carefully, ask questions about them in class, and refer to them ***before passing in your work***. (Students often forget to use this help when they are busily writing their assignment, so a group member might be assigned at the start to remind the others.) Additional guidelines will be given in class lectures.

Oral Progress Report of Research Project:

The purpose of class presentations is to communicate your research ideas, and to describe your group's proposal. There will be 4 presentations but only 3 of them will be marked. The first presentation will be an informal 10-minute discussion of the topic that your group is interested in pursuing. This presentation will allow you to receive feedback on your preliminary plans. The remaining 3 presentations will relate to your proposal as follows: **Introduction** with purpose, literature review, and hypothesis; the **Method**; the **Results & Discussion**. Thirty minutes are provided for each of these presentations for each group. Presentations should be directed at informing the class about your progress and should *not consist of reading written material* to the

class. Use Power Point or overheads of outlines, key words, flow charts, graphs, diagrams, and so forth, to remind yourself and the audience of the points you wish to make. Presentations **are planned and organized by the entire group**, with each member participating during group meetings. **All members should be very familiar with each other's portion of the presentation.** Divide the components of the presentation, and the time allotted for each presentation, amongst the group members so that each member plays a relatively equal part in the effort. Clearly state your plans, ideas, and any difficulties you have encountered. Use the presentation as a time to receive advice from your classmates, and from Julie and me. The group will be marked on group presentation factors of: organization, distribution of participation across the group, cohesiveness of knowledge amongst group members (e.g., are all members playing a role? do all members know all of the material being presented?), completeness of strategies relative to guidelines given in lectures and APA manual, and materials including handouts. The individual group members will be marked on knowledge and clarity of presentation, audience appeal, and abilities to anticipate and answer questions (taking audience perspective). Finally, the Oral Progress Reports provide an opportunity for classmates to learn and for you to get feedback about scientific strategies and methods required by each proposal. **Please provide each member of the class with a copy of your overheads/slides before you begin your presentation.**

General Instructions for All Written Assignments

Progress reports can be submitted as a group or individually. Even if you choose to submit a report individually, consult with classmates or group members for advice and proof-reading, and share ideas. Follow the APA Manual for guidelines in punctuation, grammar, style, and so forth. For example, use double spacing, Times New Roman 12pt font, proper abbreviation, and reference format. **Staple (no paper clips!)** all written work. The Manual has valuable advice regarding the material to be included in each section of a report. Course marks will reflect in part your ability to follow the APA Manual's guidelines, as well as the guidelines given below. Without a medical excuse, late work is penalized as follows: 2 points/day for Proposal final reports; 1 point/day for written progress reports.

Written Progress Reports of Proposal

There will be three progress reports: Introduction, Method, and Results & Discussion. Each report should include a **title page and an updated Reference list**. Reports will be evaluated in terms of content, format, **grammar, punctuation**, and so forth, according to the guidelines of the APA Publication Manual and those given in class. (Is the word "data" singular or plural? Which words need hyphens and which do not? How do you abbreviate metric units? How do you reference a book chapter or a web citation? and so forth.) The reports will be marked on overall quality of content, effort at completeness, and format. The reports will measure your ability to use the instructional material given in lecture. Try to master the stylistic details early in the term so that we can give you more substantive advice on the content and ideas expressed in the report, beyond punctuation and grammar. Ask group members and others in the class including Julie for help.

Final Research Proposal

Revise progress reports and include the following sections: **Abstract, Introduction, Method, Proposed Results, Discussion, References, and Appendices where applicable**. Use the APA Manual to determine whether you have met the objectives of each section. As a group, you create a data set of results for your study, and analyse the data and report them. Include the statistical analyses and a table or graph(s) to describe the results. Use the Discussion section to **relate your findings back to the literature and theory**, and to **state possible practical**

significance or application of the research. You might discuss any insurmountable problems in the study, but do not focus on negative aspects of the work; focus on the positive contributions inherent in your project. The Final Research Proposal may be a joint group paper, or you may submit individual reports.

Practical Consultation

Groups have the opportunity of consulting with practitioners who represent organizations dedicated to children's development. They are: TVOKids, Read to Me!, the Butterfly Learning Centre, Frontier College, and a teacher of children with autism. The practitioners offer advice online regarding the development of your research questions, the feasibility and practicality of your research methods, and the implications of your results. Practitioners are a resource for learning about the 'real world' issues surrounding your research proposals, and the practical factors encountered when conducting research relating to child development. Practitioner consultants receive information about the development of the research and a copy of the final research proposals.

Research Consultation

Think of Julie and me as your "research consultants" for the project. We help groups with all phases of their presentations and papers, in and outside of class. Students generally find group research advisory meetings, held in our laboratory (Room 3269) significantly useful and enjoyable. They can save you a lot of time when you are struggling with a theoretical or methodological stumbling block. See us as soon as possible if you have any questions about your project plans, or simply want to review your plans with us. Please contact me by e-mail first if possible. I may be able to answer your question immediately, or we can arrange a time to meet. Don't delay. It's best to meet with the entire group, when possible, for consulting on the research proposals, but we can meet individually as well.

UW's Policy #71

Below is a copy of the policy on plagiarism that is attached to the syllabus of every course at UW. Please note that the Policy is not meant to restrict *group work* of Psych 393 in which you *together* discuss, create, share, and report ideas and materials.

It is assumed by the instructor that all the work that you submit will be your own work. No plagiarism will be tolerated. The Undergraduate Calendar defines plagiarism as "the act of presenting the ideas, words or other intellectual property of another as one's own". As a result, you are expected to reference any material used in written reports and/or presentations that is not your own. Copying someone else's work, submitting someone else's work, and cheating in any way is not tolerated. A full text version of Policy #71 is available at: <http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy71.pdf>