**Requirements for Winter Intersession 2015**

**Lab of Practice, Cohort 2**

**Critical Review of a Dissertation**

To complete this assignment, please complete the following steps.

# Step 1: Read about critiquing quantitative or qualitative research.

# Before you select a dissertation to review, read at least ONE of the following articles. They are available to download in PDF format here:

# <http://medical.coe.uh.edu/download>

# If you have selected a quantitative study to review, please read: Coughlan, M., Cronin, P., & Ryan, F. (2007). Step-by-step guide to critiquing research. Part 1: Quantitative research. *British Journal of Nursing, 16*(11), 658-663.

# If you have selected a quantitative study to review, please read: Ryan, F., Coughlan, M., & Cronin, P.. (2007). Step-by-step guide to critiquing research. Part 2: Qualitative research. *British Journal of Nursing, 16*(12), 738-744.

# Step 2: Select and download a published dissertation in your topic area.

# Access the ProQuest Dissertation Database and locate an appropriate, published dissertation in your field that has relevance to you and your selected topic.

# Go to <http://info.lib.uh.edu>

# Click on Databases

# Click on D

# Click on Dissertations & Theses (ProQuest only)

# Enter your CougarNet username and password when requested.

# Enter search terms that are relevant to your topic. Select in Abstract.

# Select a suitable dissertation from the search results to review or continue to search with different terms until you find an appropriate one to review.

# Download the full text PDF of the dissertation to your computer.

# Step 3: Complete a critical review of the dissertation you selected using the questions on the following pages as your guide and send your review to your advisor as an email attachment by January 20, 2015.

# Please note that these questions are meant to guide your review of a dissertation in your topic area. Your response should be more than a simple “yes” or “no” answer. The questions should inspire you to critically examine the dissertation and consider both the form and substance.

# Critical Review of a Dissertation

**By**

**Your Name**

# CITATION

# Cite the dissertation you reviewed.

This is how to cite a dissertation in APA format:

Author last name, author initial of first name. Title of dissertation (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from name of the database. (accession number).

*This ensures that another person could easily retrieve the same article.*

Example:

Henkin, K. (2013). *Understanding interprofessional education: A multiple-case study of students, faculty, and administrators* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Full Text. (3617308).

# GENERAL WRITING STYLE

# Comment on the writing style in general.

# *Research reports, such as dissertations, should be well-written, clear and understandable even if the reader is not familiar with the topic. Jargon should not be used. You should also consider grammar and spelling as well as content.*

# ABSTRACT

# Does the abstract provide a succinct overview of the research?

# Was it coherent and readable?

# Does it include?

# Purpose of the study

# Method

# Sample size and selection

# Main findings

# Conclusions

# Recommendations

# STUDY PURPOSE

# Generally, the purpose of the study is presented as trying to solve an important problem.

1. Was there a clear statement of the purpose and aims of the research?  
   *The purpose is usually stated briefly in the abstract of the article, and again in more detail in the introduction. It may be phrased as a research question. A clear statement helps you determine if the topic is important, relevant, and of interest to you.*
2. Is the methodology chosen (quantitative, qualitative or mixed method) appropriate for this study?

**LITERATURE REVIEW**

“The primary purpose of the literature review is to define or develop the research question while also identifying an appropriate method of data collection… It should also help to identify any gaps in the literature relating to the problem and to suggest how those gaps might be filled” (Coughlan, Cronin and Ryan, p. 660).

1. Was relevant background literature reviewed?  
   *A* *review of the literature should be included in an article describing research to provide some background to the study. It should provide a synthesis of relevant information such as previous work/research, and discussion of the importance of the topic. It identifies gaps in current knowledge and research about the topic of interest, and thus justifies the need for the study being reported.*
2. Is the review of the literature logically organized?
3. Does it offer a balanced critical review of the literature?
4. Is the majority of the literature of recent origin?  
   *Normally, the majority of studies included in the literature review should be less 5 years old unless an older reference would provide historical context.*
5. Is the literature mainly from primary sources?  
   *Secondary sources should only be used in cases where the original source material is not available/accessible. Opinions or unsupported anecdotal information should not be included.*

# STUDY DESIGN and RESEARCH QUESTION

# “The purpose of the aims and objectives of the study, the research question and the research hypothesis is to form a link between the initially stated purpose of the study or research problem and how the study will be undertaken (Coughlan, Cronin and Ryan, p. 660).”

1. Were the research question or hypothesis identified? If so are they clearly stated? Do they reflect the information presented in the literature review?
2. Were the aims and objectives of the study identified?
3. Is the study design appropriate for the research question and objectives?

# METHODS

1. Does the study describe the methods used to generate data?  
   *A variety of different methods are used by researchers to answer the research question.*
2. Was the method chosen appropriate for the study design type?

**SAMPLING**

1. Were participants who were selected relevant to the research question and was their selection well-reasoned?   
   *Sampling in research is purposeful and the process used to select participants should be clearly described. Purposeful sampling selects participants for a specific reason (e.g., age, culture, experience), not randomly.   
   There are numerous sampling methods in qualitative and quantitative research: the sampling strategies used by the researcher should be explained and should relate to the purpose of the study. For example, if the purpose of the study is to learn about the impact of a new treatment program from the perspective of all clients involved in the program and their families, the purposeful sampling method should be broad to include maximum variation in perspectives and views. On the other hand, if the purpose is to explore an issue in depth, such as the numerous factors and interactions that are involved in a family deciding when and where to place an elderly member in a nursing home, an individual, ‘key informant’ approach may be appropriate.*
2. Was informed consent obtained and is it clear why some individuals chose not to participate?   
   *The authors should describe ethics procedure, including how informed consent was obtained, and confidentiality issues.*

# DATA COLLECTION

1. Is there a clear and complete description of the site, participants and researcher's credentials? Is the role of the researcher and his/her relationship with participants and identification of the researchers assumptions clearly described?  
   *The reader should have a sense of personally experiencing the event or phenomenon being studied. This requires a clear and vivid description of the important elements of the study that are connected with the data, namely the participants, the site or setting, and the research.   
   The researcher includes relevant information about the participants, often in the form of background demographic data. The unique characteristics of key informants help to explain why they were selected. The credibility of the informants should be explored.*
2. If the study was quantitative, was the data collection instrument described?
   1. Is the instrument appropriate for the research design?
   2. How was it developed?
   3. Were reliability and validity testing undertaken and the results discussed?
3. Was a pilot study done?

# PROCEDURAL RIGOR

1. Were the data collection strategies comprehensive enough to support rich and robust descriptions of the observed events?  
   *The researcher should clearly describe the procedures used to ensure that data were recorded accurately and that data obtained is representative of the ‘whole’ picture. All source(s) of information used by the researcher should be described.*
2. Were the data collection methods appropriate for the research objectives and setting? *The reader should be able to describe the data-gathering process including data collection methods, the length of time spent gathering data, and the amount of data collected.*

# DATA ANALYSIS and FINDINGS

1. Was the data analysis inductive and the findings adequately corroborated?  
   *The researcher(s) should describe how the findings emerged from the data. The authors should report on the flexibility of the data collection process, as it responded to changes or trends in the data.  
   Different methods are used to analyze data - the reader should be able to identify and describe the methods used in the study of interest, and make a judgment as to whether the methods are appropriate given the purpose of the study.*
2. Were findings consistent with and reflective of data?  
   *The findings that were developed by the researcher(s) should be logically consistent and reflective of the data.*

# How did the researcher analyze the data and subsequently report it? *The reasoning process of the researcher during the analysis phase should be clearly described.* *These steps in auditing the analysis process provide evidence that the findings are representative of the data as a whole.*

# Were the findings significant?

# CONCLUSIONS

1. Were conclusions appropriate given the study findings?

*Conclusions should be consistent and congruent with the findings as reported by the researchers. All of the data and findings should be discussed and synthesized.*

# Did the findings contribute to theory development and future practice or research?

*The conclusions of the study should be meaningful to the reader, and should help the reader understand the theories developed. It should provide insight into important professional issues. The authors should relate the findings back to the existing literature and theoretical knowledge in practice.*

1. Were the strengths and limitations of the study discussed?
2. Was a recommendation included for further research?
3. Were implications included? Were they linked to practice?  
   *Implications and recommendations should be explicitly linked to practice situations and research directions*

**References**

Coughlan, M., Cronin, P., & Ryan, F. (2007). Step-by-step guide to critiquing quantitative research. Part 1: Quantitative research. *British Journal of Nursing, 16*(11), 658-663.

Ryan, F., Coughlan, M., & Cronin, P.. (2007). Step-by-step guide to critiquing quantitative research. Part 1: Quantitative research. *British Journal of Nursing, 16*(12), 738-744.