RESEARCH STUDY PROPOSAL.

The Research Study Proposal describes in detail the proposed investigation. It is divided into two essential parts. Each part is further divided into critical components. The completion of all critical components in both parts is required. The completion of Part II relies on the completion of Part I.

I. IRB Application/Registration + IRB Approval – The Application MUST be submitted to Mrs. Khirallah whose approval is required. Once she has approved the IRB Application, then SHE – NOT YOU -- will submit the approved application to the University of Dallas Institutional Review Board (IRB). To be approved, your IRB application must include the following required components:
   A. IRB Application
   B. (NIH) Certificate of Completion for “Protecting Human Research Participants”.
   C. Consent Letters
   D. Assent Forms
   E. UD IRB Letter of Approval – before data collection can begin

II. Theoretical Foundation – This part goes to B. Khirallah ONLY – more information about this portion of the proposal is available at http://dante.udallas.edu/edu3327/Research_Study/Proposal_Theoretical_Foundation.pdf
   A. Purpose of Research and Research Question(s) that drive the study.
   B. Partial Annotated Bibliography (minimum 5 entries)
   C. Preliminary List of Critical Terms – relevant to theoretical foundation with initial definitions
   D. Introduction to the Theoretical Foundation
   E. A Data Collection Instrument / Process – aligned with and using explicit conceptual information from theoretical foundation
   F. Analysis Criteria / Rating System / Rubric – aligned with and using explicit conceptual information from theoretical foundation

Both parts of the Research Study Proposal must be completed and approved by the necessary parties BEFORE data collection can begin. Individual appointments for proposal discussion/support/approval can be made with Mrs. Khirallah.

The information below is provided to help you complete Part II of the Research Study Proposal. Please read this information carefully so as to develop the Theoretical Foundation of your study that meets all required criteria. Historically, students who read more comprehensively and develop a better knowledge of their theorist/theorists develop more effective proposals. Historically, better theoretical foundations produce better papers which earn higher grades.

I. Theoretical Foundation: The Theoretical Foundation portion of the proposal is designed to provide preliminary – but not complete – evidence of the theory and/or research that drives and supports the Research Study. The Research Study Portfolio – submitted after the Research Study Presentation – is designed to provide complete evidence. The Theoretical Foundation portion of the Research Study Proposal consists of six critical components. Brief
a. **Purpose of Research / Research Question(s):** Each Research Study must be defined by its purpose and the research question(s) that drive it.

**Example**

The purpose of this research study is to investigate whether there is a correlation between children’s performances on specified Piagetian conservation tasks and their evaluated levels of moral development as determined by their responses to a Kohlberg dilemma. In particular, this research study seeks to answer the following questions:

1. Do conserving children achieve a higher level of moral development than non-conserving children as indicated on Kohlberg’s stage theory of moral development?

2. Do children who can conserve volume achieve a higher level of moral development than children who can only conserve number as indicated on Kohlberg’s stage theory of moral development?

3. Are there patterns of difference among conserving boys and conserving girls with respect to their stages of moral development?

b. **Partial Annotated Bibliography.** The Research Proposal must include a minimum of five authoritative sources with at least two primary texts and at least one relevant research study – a study involving the same theoretical background. The Annotated Bibliography ultimately must include a minimum of eight sources, including at least two primary texts and at least two relevant research studies, for researchers working alone, 10 for researchers working as a team of two, and 12 for three researchers working as a team.

1. Be sure that you know the difference between the "Annotated Bibliography" – a required and separate major element of the Research Study Portfolio and the "Works Cited" section of the Research Study paper. Both are required, and they have some relationship to one another. However, they are not identical, and they are found in different sections of the Research Study Portfolio.

2. Be sure to read the information about Course Reading and its relationship to the Annotated Bibliography. [Click here for more information.](#)

An excellent example of a Partial Annotated Bibliography can be found in the Montessori sample project proposal. Access the entire proposal at [http://dante.udallas.edu/concesmontessori/Research_Proposal1.pdf](http://dante.udallas.edu/concesmontessori/Research_Proposal1.pdf) Please remember that sample projects may reflect older course requirements. It is YOUR responsibility to know the course requirements during the semester that you take the course.

**C. A Preliminary List of Critical Terms**

1. You must create a preliminary list of vocabulary terms specific to the theorist and theory/concept(s) serving as the foundation for the research study. You will find these terms, especially, when reading, studying, and taking notes from the primary texts relevant to your research study. You may also find them in
secondary texts, research articles, or online; however, in those cases you will want to find the associated primary text references and then seek out more accurate or comprehensive information and/or definitions in the primary text(s).

2. Terms need to be defined – at least in a preliminary way -- at this point; however, the researcher(s) MUST update this list of terms and definitions based on continued research and reading. Be sure to eventually include all “concept” terms used in any part of the Research Study Portfolio submitted at the end of the course. In the Research Study Portfolio, the List of Critical Terms will appear as part of the Data Collection / Treatment section.

An excellent example of a Preliminary List of Critical Terms – but without definitions - can be found in the Montessori sample project proposal. Access the entire proposal at http://dante.udallas.edu/concesmontessori/Research_Proposal1.pdf Again, please remember that sample projects may reflect older course requirements.

D. An Introduction to the Theoretical Foundation for the study

1. The introduction should be two to three paragraphs (about one to one and a half word-processed pages) that clearly establish a theorist and the specific concepts that serve as the foundational framework for the research study.
2. The introduction is expected to briefly show evidence that the student has done some preliminary reading (in at least one primary text) and can situate the research within a broad theoretical framework and then identify the key concepts that drive the investigation.
3. The introduction is NOT intended to serve as a vehicle for simply developing a biographical sketch of the theorist although some biographical information may be appropriate. (For example, birth and death dates of the theorist, names of significant people who worked with or influenced the theorist, countries of origin and education that may have impacted the theorist’s work all help to situate a theorist in a context; however, this type of information should not be all that is included in the introduction. Important biographical information can be expanded, as needed for understanding, in the final paper.)

An excellent example of an Introduction to the Theoretical Foundation for a study can be found in the Kohlberg sample project proposal created by Cassie Fredendall and Debra Naukam. Access the entire proposal at http://dante.udallas.edu/fredendall/child_growth/ChildGrowth/CGDMoralityProposal.doc

E. Data Collection Instrument. A data collection instrument is any tool that you use to collect data. This instrument may be in any of a number of formats. It may be a survey, questionnaire, an observation inventory, a set of multiple choice questions/items, a list of interview questions and a tape recorder or video camera, a sheet of drawing paper, etc. It is the actual, ready-to-use tool that will be used to collect data from the study participants. The instrument may be developed by you or selected from reading/research. Whether it is developed or selected, it MUST provide explicit reference (YES, a citation) to the theoretical foundation of the study, preferably from a primary text.

1. Whatever materials the researcher(s) plans to use while working with study participants must be included here. For example, if you plan to orally interview students, please provide a list of the questions as well as the document that you
plan to use to record responses. If you plan to use a tape recorder to record responses, please provide the questions and indicate that responses will be collected in taped recordings. You will need to keep and submit the taped recordings as data – as part of your Research Study Portfolio. If you plan to use a video camera to collect data, provide a script of the questions and indicate that you will collect the answers on video recordings. If you plan to ask children to write answers to questions, then have the actual questionnaire developed – one that is ready to be given directly to the students with instructions, spaces for responses, lines for writing responses, etc.

2. This data collection instrument must be appropriate for collecting the data that you need. In addition, it MUST – and I cannot emphasize this point enough – be EXPLICITLY derived from the theoretical work that serves as the foundation of your study. **I recommend that you include citations from primary texts directly on your data collection instruments and rubrics – to show the explicit connection between your data collection process and evaluation and the theory/theorist upon which your research is based.**

3. During the reading phase of the research study, the researcher(s) may discover useful instruments that theorists or past researchers (including those whose research studies are used as Sample Research Studies) employed in their own research. If so, you are encouraged to evaluate those instruments for use in the study. The researcher(s) may decide to use them as is, or the instruments may be modified in some way to better suit the study. In cases where the researcher(s) modify the instruments, they must be able to justify the modifications – theoretically and/or practically.

An excellent example of a Data Collection Instrument used for a study can be found in the Kohlberg sample project proposal created by Cassie Fredendall and Debra Naukam. Access their questionnaire at [http://dante.udallas.edu/fredendall/child_growth/Kohlberg_dilemmas.htm](http://dante.udallas.edu/fredendall/child_growth/Kohlberg_dilemmas.htm)

[IMPORTANT NOTE ABOUT THIS EXAMPLE: This data collection instrument does not offer a citation to Kohlberg. Your data collection instrument should cite specific reference to the theoretical foundation.]

F. **Analysis Criteria / Rating System / Rubric.** This tool(s) will guide the analysis and evaluation of data collected – and will be based EXPLICITLY on the theoretical foundation. In other words, it MUST cite an authoritative source (preferably a primary text).

1. The researcher(s) will select and/or develop an analysis criteria, a rating system, a rubric or a scoring guide that will be used to determine the meaning (interpretation) of the data collected in terms of the theoretical foundation.

2. The system for treating the data collected must be based EXPLICITLY on the study’s theoretical foundation, and it MUST justify that connection by EXPLICITLY CITING the relevant source material in a primary text and/or a other authoritative source.

An excellent example of rubrics used to analyze data for a study can be found in the Kohlberg sample project proposal created by Stephanie Cain and Sylvia Tellez. Access their rubrics and all of their data and data analysis by clicking on the links below:
◆ Kohlberg Rubric --
http://dante.udallas.edu/cain/Child_growth_and_Development/ResearchStudy/Kohlberg_Rubric.doc

◆ Gilligan Rubric --
http://dante.udallas.edu/cain/Child_growth_and_Development/ResearchStudy/Gilligan_Rubric.doc

◆ Data – On this page, look for links to data that show how data was treated to get study results

For other Sample Research Studies, click here... The sample proposals found here provide excellent insight into the development of Part II of the Research Study Proposal, the Theoretical Foundation. It is important to note that the sample proposals do not offer specific samples of Part I: The IRB Application/Registration process for review by the University of Dallas IRB. Please be sure to note the differences. Prior to Spring 2010, proposals were not subject to IRB approval.