

**Research in Public Administration: A Content Analysis of
Applied Research Projects Completed from 1992-1996
at Southwest Texas State University in the
Master of Public Administration Program**

By

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Table of Contents

Page

List of Tables	v
Chapter 1 - Introduction	
Introduction	1
Statement of the Research Question or Problem	3
Purpose of the research project	5
Conceptual Framework	5
Elaboration of specific concepts and descriptive categories	6
Methodology	7
Chapter Summaries	7
Chapter 2 - Review of the Literature	
Introduction	9
Theory generation in public administration and its paradigms	10
Practitioner-oriented Research	14
Issue of methodology: Qualitative versus quantitative analysis	15
Meta-analyses of research in public administration	16
Evaluation of methodology used to conduct research for dissertations	17
Evaluation of methodology used to conduct research for articles published in journals	18
Evaluation of methodology used to conduct research for master's level research projects	19
Development of a Conceptual Framework	21
General Characteristics	21
Topic	21
Focus	22
Research Purpose	22
Relevance to Theory, to the Research Setting, and/or Beyond the Setting	23
Conclusion	24

Chapter 3 - Research Setting	26
Introduction	26
Academic Setting	26
Pragmatism: A process of inquiry	27
Conclusion	30
 Chapter 4 - Methodology	 31
Methodology	31
Inherent Weakness of Research Method	32
Modification of Carl Nall's Code Sheet	33
Specifics of the methodology--Statistical Analysis	36
 Chapter 5 - Results and Analysis	 37
General Characteristics of the ARPs	37
ARP Length and Gender of Author	38
Topical Categories	39
Level of Government	40
Research Focus of the ARPs	41
Research Purpose	42
Conceptual Framework	44
Type of Conceptual Framework	45
Type of Research Method	46
Triangulation	48
Statistical Techniques	49
Relevance of the Research to Theory, Setting, and Beyond the Setting	50
Comparative Analysis	52
Conclusion	56
 Chapter 6 Summary and Conclusions	 58
Purposes of the research	58
Debates surrounding the issue of practitioner-oriented research	58
Pragmatism as philosophy for grounding public administration	59
Trends noted from content analysis of ARPs	59
 Bibliography	 63

Appendix A - List of Applied Research Projects completed
from 1992-1996 68

Appendix B - Code Sheet for Content Analysis 77

Appendix C - Tables of the Percent Distributions for All
Years (1992-1996) 83

Appendix D - Interview of Patricia M. Shields, Ph.D. 93

Appendix E - “A System for Guiding Students in Research and
Writing Applied Research Projects and Master's Theses” 103

List of Tables

	<u>Page</u>
Table 4.1 - Operationalization of Concepts.....	35
Table 5.1 - Percent Distribution of Number of Pages in the ARPs and Gender of Author	39
Table 5.2 - Percent Distribution of Topical Categories of the ARPs	40
Table 5.3 - Percent Distribution of the Level of Government	41
Table 5.4 - Percent Distribution of the Research Focus of the ARPs	42
Table 5.5 - Percent Distribution of the Research Purpose of the ARPs	43
Table 5.6 - Percent Distribution of the Presence of a Conceptual Framework in the ARPs	44
Table 5.7 - Percent Distribution of Type of Conceptual Frameworks	45
Table 5.8 - Percent Distribution of Research Methods Used in ARPs	47
Table 5.9 - Percent Distribution of Case Studies	48
Table 5.10 - Percent Distribution of ARPs Using Triangulation	49
Table 5.11 - Percent Distribution of the Statistical Techniques in ARPs ..	50
Table 5.12 - Percent Distribution of ARPs in which the Research is Relevant to Theory	52
Table 5.13 - Comparison of Gender and Page Length	53
Table 5.14 - Level of Government Comparison	54
Table 5.15 - Comparison of Research Focus	55
Table 5.16 - Conceptual Framework - Comparison of Frequency	55
Table 5.17 - Comparison of Statistical Techniques Used in Research	56

<i>Tables of the Percent Distributions for All Years (1992-1996) of the:</i>	83
Number of Pages in the ARPs	84
Gender of the Authors	84
Topical Categories of ARPs	85
Level of Government	86
Research Focus of the ARPs	86
Different Types of Research Purposes of the ARPs	87
Presence of Conceptual Framework	88
Type of Conceptual Framework in the ARPs	88
ARPs that are Case Studies	88
Research Methods Used in ARPs	89
ARPs Using Triangulation -- All ARPs	90
Triangulation in Case Studies.....	90
Statistical Techniques Found in the ARPs	91
ARPs Demonstrating Relevance of the Research to Theory	91
ARPs Demonstrating Practical Relevance within the Setting	92
ARPs Demonstrating Practical Relevance of the Research Beyond Its Setting	92

Chapter 1

Introduction

This chapter introduces the topic as well as discusses the purposes for undertaking this project. Serving as an introduction, there is a brief review of the issues debated in regards to research in the field of public administration. There is also a brief mention of the basis for the conceptual framework.

Introduction

Herbert Simon and Robert Dahl greatly contributed to theory and research in the field of Public Administration (PA). They started a continuing debate, which was conducted mainly in *Public Administration Review*, about the appropriateness of quantitative or qualitative research methods in public administration. This debate has resulted in a lack of consensus, mainly between academics and practitioners, about what qualifies as proper research technique. Advocates of quantitative research are generally concerned with enhancing the rigor and generalizability of public administration research. They use mainstream social science as a standard of comparison. Recently, PA scholars have assessed dissertations and journals in public administration and have come away disturbed about the lack of quality and rigor in dissertations.

The great majority of these researchers question whether the applied-practitioner-focused research (qualitative) found in dissertations and journal articles really contributes to the field of PA. This type of research tends to rely

heavily on case studies. Case studies have been criticized for their lack of a conceptual framework. In addition, the results are seldom generalizable to a larger population because they lack external validity.

Another way of examining this issue is to contrast basic and applied research. The majority of analyses of the quality and type of research in the field seem to adhere to the following notion:

basic research...is intended to expand knowledge...Applied research, in contrast, strives to improve our understanding of a specific problem, with the intent of contributing to the solution of that problem (Hedrick et. al. 1993, 3).

Critics of PA research find its applied nature troubling because they do not believe that it can expand knowledge. On the other hand, practitioners question whether obscure research findings are relevant to the 'real world' of PA; they object "to the elaborate and unnecessary jargon of academic research"; and, they note "the apparent penchant of researchers for excessively detailed data analysis" (Denhardt 1989, 117). "After all, the ultimate test of the validity of any theory or practice is the pragmatic one: does it work? Who knows better than a manager?" (Blankenship 1967, 263).

The fact that academics and practitioners do not easily communicate in regards to research, results in "an apparent gap between theory and practice" (Denhardt 1989, 117). This project examines the research that was performed from 1992-1996 in the Southwest Texas State University Master of Public Administration Program to evaluate the quality and type of research performed in the field of PA by practitioners.

Statement of the Research Question or Problem:

The majority (about 89%) of students enrolled in the Master of Public Administration (MPA) program at Southwest Texas State University (SWT) are practitioners (Garofalo 1996, 1). The Applied Research Project (ARP) is the capstone project completed in a two-course sequence: the first course is a formal class that prepares the students for data collection; the second course is an independent study during which the actual research is conducted and a paper is written in which the results are reported (Shields 1996a, 5).

This research project is a replication and extension of a larger research tradition which includes an examination of Public Administration (PA) articles, dissertations, and master's works. Within this tradition, issues about the scope and nature of research in PA emerge. The often heated debates were examined in an attempt to view them from the perspective of the practitioner because this is a perspective that has been underdeveloped.¹ Also, the practitioner point of view is a natural for an applied "practitioner oriented" master's level research project. Additionally, there is an introduction to the "practitioner oriented" philosophy of pragmatism. Pragmatism is relevant to the discussion because it has been recently advanced as a useful tool for viewing the research debates in public administration (Shields 1996b; Wamsley 1996).

As mentioned earlier, another theme that has arisen from the literature is the poor quality of research in public administration (McCurdy and Cleary, 1984; Adams and White, 1994). Many SWT Applied Research Projects (ARPs) have

¹As mentioned previously, these debates are about the relative importance of quantitative and qualitative research; and, about the role of theory and the importance of applied research.

received recognition as quality research.² An examination of the pedagogy surrounding the applied research projects may provide insights into improving the quality of research in public administration. The ARP two course sequence represents a departure from a more traditional method used in universities to supervise capstone, master's level writing/research projects. A discussion of the philosophy of pragmatism is included because it is also the philosophy of science used to guide the SWT applied research projects (Shields 1996a).

This study, a content analysis of the SWT ARPs, is a replication and extension of the work done by Terry Beck (1993) and Carl Nall (1994). The criteria used to examine the project is developed from the literature and has been used to assess the quality of research in public administration. Beck (1993) analyzed SWT ARPs between 1987 and 1991. This study will enable a comparison over time to see if there has been any change in the quality of SWT's MPA research projects. Carl Nall (1994) analyzed the quality of the methodology of professional reports (PRs) in the master's program of the LBJ School of Public Affairs. It was also very interesting comparing the LBJ school research projects with the SWT research projects. This research project was undertaken in order to assess the SWT projects for quality and to make recommendations. An examination of this type may shed light on the larger

² *PA Times* (November 1, 1995 issue) identified Jeff Kaufman's "Strategic Planning and Implementation" as Cutting Edge. Jeff presented his paper at the 1995 San Antonio National Conference of the American Society for Public Administration (ASPA). Jane McFarlan's "Between a Rock and a Hard Place: Downsizing in a TQM Environment" was also identified as Cutting Edge. Only 21 papers at the National ASPA Conference were so designated by *PA Times*.

debates in PA. Where possible, connections to the larger literature are developed.

Purpose of the research project

Thus, the purposes of this research project are: (1) to review the literature that addresses the quality of research performed in public administration and the debates surrounding the issue of practitioner-oriented research; (2) to examine the educational methodology used to supervise the ARPs; and, finally, (3) to examine the ARPs themselves to describe the type of research conducted in the SWT MPA program during the last five years.

Conceptual Framework

The purpose of this research is descriptive, it seeks to describe an existing series of ARPs and an educational methodology for teaching practitioner-students to conduct empirical research and report the results. The conceptual framework used to aid in addressing the purpose of this research consists of a set of descriptive categories. This framework is used to organize the inquiry and assess the relevance of research findings. The criteria for development of these categories is arrived at through an extensive review of the literature.

Elaboration of specific concepts and descriptive categories

Most of the concepts and the criteria developed from the review of literature are based on those accepted by the mainstream social sciences. These include rigor of the methodology (presence of conceptual framework, statistical technique, research methods, validity); topic (whether there is a difference in emphasis or interest between academics and practitioners); the distinction between a basic and applied research project is indicated by its focus, research relevance to theory, to practice and beyond the setting of the research project (the majority of authors that reviewed the dissertations in PA state that an applied research project does not contribute knowledge to the field)³.

The majority of the criticisms of applied, practitioner-oriented research projects are that they are not methodologically sound. The reason given is that they are primarily case studies. Robert Yin (1994) and Mary Timney Bailey (1992) provide criteria to assess a case study that is methodologically sound . The criteria used to assess case studies/practitioner-oriented research were the following: focus of the project, topic addressed, level of government studied, the presence of a conceptual framework, the type of conceptual framework, research method, triangulation--whether there are several sources and methods to corroborate findings, statistical technique, relevance to theory and practical relevance, and, the research purpose.⁴

³ For example, White, Adams and Forrester, 1996; Adams and White, 1994; McCurdy and Cleary, 1984.

⁴ This is where a discussion or use of Pragmatism will explain the different basis for doing research between a practitioner and a theoretician.

Methodology

The technique chosen to address the third purpose of this research--a description of the ARPs--is document analysis, specifically, content analysis (manifest and latent). Content analysis was used because an accurate description of the ARPs is best found through the direct examination of the documents themselves. Ole Holsti (1969, 14) defines content analysis as "any technique for making inferences by objectively and systematically identifying specified characteristics of messages" (1969, 14). Earl Babbie (1995, 306) refers to it as unobtrusive methodology that uses the direct observation of documents. Content analysis combines quantitative and qualitative techniques, which are used to supplement each other (Holsti 1969, 11).

A structured interview is the technique used to aid in addressing the second purpose of this project--the examination of the educational methodology. A summary of an interview with Patricia M. Shields, Ph.D., is presented. She is the Program Director for the MPA Program at SWT and the professor that has supervised the majority of the ARPs for the last seven years.

Chapter Summaries

Chapter Two provides an in-depth review of the literature relevant to research methodology and theory in the field of public administration. The conceptual framework is developed and presented from the review of the literature.

Chapter Three provides background information on the research setting. It also examines the pedagogy or educational methodology, employed by the professor, Patricia M. Shields, Ph.D., responsible for preparing students to write their ARP. Dr. Shields' teaching methods have been deeply influenced by the philosophy of pragmatism, therefore, there is also a presentation of pragmatism and a discussion of how it relates to the public administration field and discipline.

Chapter Four explains the methodology used to conduct an assessment of the ARPs. The strengths and weaknesses of the chosen methodology are discussed. The concepts and descriptive categories are operationalized in this chapter.

Chapter Five provides the results and analysis of the manifest and latent content analysis of the ARPs. Percent distribution and raw data are used to present the results and to compare the results with those of the meta-analyses including those of the master's level work. Chapter Six concludes the research project and provides a summary of the major findings and conclusions.

Chapter 2

Review of the Literature

This chapter provides a highlight of the theories and paradigms on which public administration has operated. Additionally, there is a discussion presented of the research issues and how they influence the assessment of the status of public administration as an academic discipline and as a profession. As well, there is a review of the meta-analyses that have been used to construct the conceptual framework used in this study.

Introduction

What is public administration? Dwight Waldo (1955, 281) wrote that it was both “(1) an area of intellectual inquiry, a discipline or study, and (2) a process or activity of administering public affairs.” Problems of identity have resulted from the subordination of either part of the definition to the other. Mark Rutgers (1994, 395) writes that the question of identity for public administration (PA) is a continuing topic of debate and discussion in the 1990’s for practitioners and theorists. A manifestation of the identity crisis can be observed in the debate over the issue of “...how scholars come to know what they claim to know (epistemology) and techniques they use to gather knowledge (methodology)” (O’Toole 1995, 294). Herbert Simon (1947, 200) distinguished pure science from applied science by defining pure science as

concerned with discovering and verifying correct empirical propositions about some area of human knowledge, while the latter

[the applied scientist] is concerned with reaching decisions based in part (but not exclusively) upon scientific knowledge.

Much of the criticism and debate in PA has to do with (1) the type of methodology used by researchers and, (2) the general practitioner-orientation of PA research (or as Simon would label it--applied science research).⁵

Theory generation in public administration and its paradigms

Woodrow Wilson, Herbert Simon, Robert Dahl, and Dwight Waldo are scholars whose ideas have had a strong impact on PA. These scholars have deeply influenced the theory and scholarship of PA by setting the parameters for the field and establishing its paradigms. Woodrow Wilson is credited as being the founder of the discipline of PA.⁶ In an 1887 address, he noted that

It is the object of administrative study to discover. . . what government can properly and successfully do, and. . . how it can do these. . . things with the utmost possible efficiency and at the least possible cost either of money or energy (Wilson 1887, 197).

Furthermore, Wilson (1887, 209) called for a separation between politics and administration. He pointed out that administration was a business field and was removed from the "hurry and strife" of politics. Through this influential presentation, Wilson articulated what has subsequently become known as the politics/administration dichotomy. Wilson's definition of the politics/

⁵ See for example, White, Adams and Forrester, 1996; Adams and White, 1994; McCurdy and Cleary, 1984.

⁶ The address to the American Political Science Association was also published in *Political Science Quarterly*. At that time, Wilson held the position of instructor at Bryn Mawr College for Women (Shafritz and Hyde 1987, 1). In this essay, Wilson established public administration as a specific field of study.

administration dichotomy limited PA to the implementation of policies established by legislators (Whicker et. al. 1993, 531). This dichotomy conceptualized “governmental organizations as hierarchically coordinated sets of position...best filled by neutral, expert, career civil servants” (Mainzer 1994, 361). Furthermore, the goal of administration was efficiency (Lynn 1996, 29).

Wilson (1887, 210) also suggested that the science of administration should be based on fundamental principles. Luther Gulick (1925, 400) is credited with formalizing these principles which he defined as “immutable laws” that were to be derived from experience and stripped to its simplest form for practical application.

In his 1947 work, *Administrative Behavior*, Herbert Simon (1957, 20) addressed the problems of basing the science of PA on principles by stating that “for almost every principle one can find an equally plausible and acceptable contradictory principle.” Simon believed that the science of administration should not be based on principles, which were derived from values. Instead, he wrote, there must be a “reordering” of the intellectual map. There should be a distinction between fact and value (Simon 1957, 249).⁷ Through his work in *Administrative Behavior*, Simon articulated what was subsequently called the fact/value dichotomy.⁸

⁷A debate between Herbert Simon and Robert Dahl began in 1947. Dahl (1947, 1) argued that the primary difficulty in constructing a science out of PA resulted from the frequent impossibility of excluding what would be called normative considerations from the problems of PA. In commenting on the study of PA without the consideration of man, Dahl stated “...his exclusion is certain to make the study of PA sterile, unrewarding, and essentially unreal” (1947, 7).

⁸The fact/value dichotomy linked PA to logical positivism. Simon (1957, 45) held that the positivist theory, adopted by Alfred J. Ayer in *Language, Truth, and Logic*, established that facts were statements made about the observable world and the way in which it operated.

Simon (1947, 201) believed that PA research consisted of applied science (which had to take ethical issues into consideration, in other words, that concerned itself with values) and pure science (which concerned itself strictly with facts). He wrote that the task of the pure scientist was to discover and verify empirical propositions about an area of human knowledge and that the task of the applied scientist was to make decisions based partly, but not exclusively, on scientific knowledge (Simon 1947, 200). Simon (1947, 201) was concerned that concentration on applied science would result in PA losing its identity as a separate field. He affirmed that the pure science of PA could contribute new knowledge to the other social sciences instead of passively accepting the concepts generated by these fields and applying their conclusions (or theories) to find solutions to problems in PA (Simon 1947, 203).⁹

The fact/value dichotomy eliminated ethical consideration from the “pure science” of PA. However, Frederick Mosher (1956, 174) noted that the other social sciences were becoming “increasingly concerned with social problems and action research.” In 1968, Dwight Waldo (1971, xiii) sponsored the Minnowbrook conference because he felt that PA was not responding appropriately to the increasing turbulence and critical problems in American society. The result of the Minnowbrook conference was the birth of “new public administration” or “postpositivism”. Directly challenging the facts/value dichotomy established by Simon, the conference participants insisted that PA achieve relevance to the

⁹ In some ways, Simon called for the methods of social science to be applied to administrative behavior. Specifically, Simon viewed administration as a “decision science (1957, 109).”

times¹⁰ and to practitioners through "normative introspection, and [by being] openly wed to the consideration of fundamental values as well as factual or analytical premises" (Marini 1971, 349).

Gary Wamsley¹¹ (1996, 365) describes what has been the problem with the paradigms suggested by previous contributors to the field [the term he uses is "theorizing"] and the problems inherent in the field of PA:

(a) that the complexity of it all limits the value of the positivist conception of theory; (b) that the participants are in desperate need of normative support in the form of professional values; and (c) that a single theory that seeks to explain it all will be of less value than a variety of perspectives and approaches with inquiry guided by a shared normative grounding.

Wamsley (1996, 360) calls for a common normative grounding for PA to "help frame and prioritize questions and efforts in a way that is especially important to an applied interdisciplinary field." He wants academics in PA to engage in a social science whose direction and meaning is derived from "the values expressed and emergent in ongoing theorizing that in turn is grounded in a public philosophy" (Wamsley 1996, 360).

Patricia Shields (1996b, 398) maintains that pragmatism should be the public philosophy on which PA should be grounded. She believes that pragmatism is useful because it unites all of the concepts that have been dichotomized in PA (Shields 1996b, 394). Holding a position contrary to Simon's about the potential loss of identity for the field if it uses theories other than it's own, she uses William James' hotel corridor metaphor to make this point:

¹⁰ e.g., minority issues, gender equality, and the Vietnam War
¹¹ Wamsley is the Editor of *Administration & Society* which is considered a prestigious journal in the field of PA.

Using pragmatic logic, one would not expect a unifying PA theory. Rather, PA is organized around the principle that theories are useful and should be judged by their usefulness in solving problems. The theories of politics, psychology, sociology, economics, and so forth are in the rooms. Unity is achieved because the pragmatic administrator owns the corridor, walking from room to room using the theories that address ongoing problems. Ownership of the corridor joins theory and practice. PA can find unity in the ownership. It is the sense of ownership that provides an organizing principle (Shields 1996b, 399).

Practitioner-oriented Research

In the area of PA, the issue of theory 's usefulness to practice is of particular significance because "an important test of the value of theory is its ability to help in both understanding and shaping real-world action" (Box 1992, 65). Research in PA must not be "divorced from the reality of practice"; it cannot afford to use language which "makes it inaccessible to practitioners"; and, it cannot become "the province of a few insiders who handle 'data sets' instead of studying real people as they do real work" (Box 1992, 66).

David Rosenblum and Melvin Dubnick (1996, 503) write that authors and readers are attracted to public administration because of its applied focus and that "[a]cademics, as well as practitioners, often seek to explain what works or frustrates and why." There are some critics that would state the issue from a different perspective "...public administration has 'clung self-consciously' to an emphasis on practice, thereby hindering its intellectual development" (Houston and Delevan 1990, 679). Mary Timney Bailey (1992, 51) points out that information owned by practitioners is needed by scholars in order to develop and test theories; these theories would then be applied by the practitioners to

improve their practice and by scholars to do further theory development and also to teach public managers. Ironically, Bailey is describing the pragmatic method of inquiry. Hence, grounding PA in pragmatic philosophy would eliminate these two existing sources of tension around the theory-practice connection (Shields 1996b, 398). Not surprisingly, a related debate about methodology has paralleled the theory/practice issue.

Issue of methodology: Qualitative versus quantitative analysis

Methodology directs how empirical research will be conducted and allows for the approach to a discovery of reality by inquiring or observing. That is, methodology serves as the tool for public administrators to discover the world around them. As discussed previously, there is much debate about the nature and role of research in PA. There is complementary debate over which methodologies are “valid” and contribute to the acquisition of knowledge in the field.

Generally, authors frustrated by PA’s applied focus advocate the use of quantitative methods similar to those used by social science. If the methodology used is qualitative in nature, many PA scholars consider it lacking rigor and validity. Two advocates of quantification, Kenneth Kraemer and James Perry (1989, 9) state “...the field has yet to find a strategy for linking important research questions with the techniques for answering them.” Much of the debate then, centers around whether the “answers” arrived at are valid because of the methodology used, and whether there is so much focus on using a certain type

of methodology that the questions asked are trivial. Guy Adams (1992, 364) also addresses this issue:

In spite of considerable historical research, the field of public administration continues to echo themes of technical rationality in repeated calls for professionalism and for more 'rigorous' and 'scientific' research. The identity question of public administration is linked to the culture at large as comprising both a political dimension and an epistemological dimension.

Howard McCurdy and Robert Cleary (1984) exhibit their bias when they acknowledge that the major issues in the field are those which cannot be resolved with any certainty, that is, quantitatively. Their recommendation is that, although these unresolvable issues are important--since they cannot be resolved, their debate will probably not contribute "much to the development of the field at this time" (McCurdy and Cleary 1984, 53).

Mary Bailey (1992, 53) warns of the danger of this bias creating a hierarchy for research and scholarship by focusing on narrowly defined positivist (quantitative) social science. She states that reducing the field to numbers results in the risk of "losing the substance of public administration and reinforcing the barriers between academicians and practitioners" (Bailey 1992, 53).

Meta-analyses of research in public administration

The debate has yet to end about the value of quantitative or qualitative research methods. These debates have led scholars in PA to systematically evaluate important research in PA. The most visible example is a series of articles published in *Public Administration Review* which used meta-analysis to

assess dissertations and journal article in PA.¹² The articles revealed that the majority of research being performed was applied--practitioner-focused. Many of the authors concluded by questioning whether research in PA makes a contribution to knowledge in the field.

Lewis Mainzer (1994, 360) argues that the academics' challenge is to strengthen the theory of the discipline. Are academics meeting this challenge? Advocates of pragmatism would argue that this is the challenge for practitioners as well. The following is an overview of the results of meta-analyses that have been performed in an attempt to answer this question.

Evaluation of methodology used to conduct research for dissertations

McCurdy and Cleary (1984, 51) examined PA dissertations, they found that the majority lacked a central focus on the field, addressed questions that were relatively unimportant, and the methodology did not meet the standards of mainstream social science research. Jay D. White (1986, 229) replicated McCurdy and Cleary's research using slightly different criteria--his results supported their findings. White (1986, 232) maintained that the main issues needing attention were the number of practitioner dissertations, the lack of basic research, and the lack of balance of the use of alternative and mainstream

¹²The authors of the articles which have assessed doctoral research in PA are: Adams and White, 1994; Cleary, 1992; McCurdy and Cleary, 1984; and White, 1986. The authors of the articles which have assessed the kinds of research found in journal articles in PA are: Bingham and Bowen, 1994; Houston and Delevan, 1990; Perry and Kraemer, 1986; and Stallings and Ferris, 1988.

methodologies. His concern with the use of alternative research methods is that they lacked a conceptual framework (White 1986, 228).

Cleary (1992, 61) replicated his previous research with McCurdy and concluded that there had been some improvement in the quality of dissertations. Guy Adams and Jay White (1994, 565) replicated White's 1986 research; they compared research done by PA graduates with that of graduates from other practice-related fields. The problem that Adams and White (1994, 573) believe exists with practice research is that it asks "How?" and not "Why?"; thus, failing to "seek the causes or ask the root questions." The overall analysis of dissertations done in PA is that they "lacked a theoretical framework, were methodologically unsound, and tended to address questions of moderate to low interest to the field" (White et. al. 1996, 442).

Evaluation of methodology used to conduct research for articles published in journals

There has also been a series of articles critiquing the methodology of published research articles in the journal *Public Administration Review (PAR)*. Stallings and Ferris (1988) focused on methodological change over time. Their results indicated a decrease in the amount of case studies and an increase in the use of multivariate techniques (Stallings and Ferris 1988). Houston and Delevan (1990) examined the methodology of articles published in six PA-related journals to see if they would get results similar to the PAR analyses. The results of these three reviews were consistent. Each study found that "the field is

characterized by applied research which was atheoretical and noncumulative” (Houston and Delevan 1990, 680).

Robert Denhardt (1989) offers a possible explanation for the results of the meta-analyses of articles published in PA journals. He maintains that the communication of the findings by the researchers has resulted in difficulties

“...practitioners have questioned the relevance of obscure research findings to the ‘real world’ of PA; they have objected to the elaborate and unnecessary jargon of academic research; and they have noted the apparent penchant of researchers for excessively detailed data analysis” (Denhardt 1989, 117).

Denhardt (1989, 117) goes on to point out that practitioners might be too hasty and short-sighted in not “dismissing findings that might be of real value” and in failing to note the “long-term implications of research for practice.” The fact that academics and practitioners do not easily communicate in regards to research results in “an apparent gap between theory and practice” (Denhardt 1989, 117).

Evaluation of methodology used to conduct research for master’s level research projects

Following in the tradition of meta analyses found in PA, scholars have also examined master’s level research. Terry Beck (1993) assessed the ARPs completed at SWT from 1987-1991. Carl Than Nall, Jr. (1994) assessed the Professional Reports completed by the students from 1988 through 1990 in the master’s program at the LBJ School of Public Affairs at the University of Texas at Austin.

Terry Beck (1993) performed a content analysis of applied research projects (ARPs) completed for the master's level program in public administration at Southwest Texas State University. Beck borrowed from the *PAR* articles to develop a conceptual framework. The variables that Beck (1993) used to code the ARPs were (1) general characteristics of the projects and authors, (2) topical areas, (3) methodologies, (4) statistical methods, and (5) levels of government. Her findings were that the majority of the projects focused on management issues at the local and state levels of government. Although the majority of projects were descriptive, she noted that for the period for which she coded, 1987-1991, there was a trend toward more empirical analysis (Beck, 1993).

Carl Nall (1994) performed a content analysis to assess the quality of the methodology of professional reports (PRs) in the master's program of the LBJ School of Public Affairs. Nall also borrowed from the *PAR* articles to develop a conceptual framework. The variables that Nall (1994) used to examine the PRs were (1) general characteristics, (2) areas of focus and topic, (3) research purpose, (4) relevance to theory and practice, (5) topical areas, and (6) impact of research findings in and beyond the setting of the research. His findings were that the PRs had little theoretical intent or impact; the majority of PRs focused on policy issues instead of problem resolution, consequently, they lacked usefulness to the majority of scholars and practitioners; the research designs were mostly preexperimental and the research purpose was either conceptual or evaluation, hence, they lacked a sophisticated research technique (Nall, 1994).

Development of a Conceptual Framework

Most of the concepts and the criteria developed from the review of the literature are based on those accepted by the mainstream social sciences. These include the rigor of the methodology, topic (whether there is a difference in emphasis or interest between academics and practitioners), and the distinction between a basic and applied research project (the majority of authors that reviewed the dissertations in PA state that an applied research project does not contribute knowledge to the field)¹³. The conceptual framework used for the empirical portion of this study is described below. It is composed of concepts and categories derived from the literature.

General Characteristics

All of the meta-level studies mentioned previously examined the surface or manifest content of the unit of analysis. Perry and Kraemer (1986) considered the year, title, and author. Houston and Delevan (1990) included the number of authors, the academic affiliation and the level of funding support. Beck (1993) and Nall (1994) also noted gender, length of the report, and level of government.

Topic

The topic of research has been analyzed by the authors to derive information about the research. White (1986) used the topic of the research to infer the research purpose whereas Perry and Kraemer (1986) used it to decide

¹³ For example, White, Adams and Forrester, 1996; Adams and White, 1994; McCurdy and Cleary, 1984.

whether the research topic was related to administrative theory, policy analysis or evaluation; what level of government was studied; and, which specific functions of public administration were being studied (such as personnel, finance, planning, etc.) Nall (1994) also made similar inferences to those of Perry and Kraemer from the research topic. Richard Bingham and William M. Bowen (1994) performed a topical content analysis of articles in *Public Administration Review* over a fifty year period to see whether the definition of “mainstream” PA had changed and if so, how.

Focus

The research focus and purpose address the question of whether the research is practice-oriented or theoretical. Perry and Kraemer (1986) and Nall (1994) use the concept of focus to classify the research along the lines of the theory-practice dichotomy and to make a distinction between pure and applied science.

Research Purpose

Earl Babbie (1995, 84) states that the most common and useful categories of research purpose are descriptive, exploratory, and explanatory. Exploratory research is conducted to gain familiarity with a topic. However, Babbie notes that its biggest shortcoming is that it seldom provides satisfactory answers because it does not represent the real population (1995, 84). According to Babbie (1995), a major portion of the studies that are conducted in the social

sciences are performed to describe situations and events. When descriptive studies rely on quantitative research methods, the observations tend to be more precise and accurate (Babbie 1995, 86). Shields (1997) states that pragmatism allows for both qualitative and quantitative research methods which increase the relevancy and meaning of the investigation. Explanatory research is employed to determine if there is a causal connection or relationship between two variables (Shields 1996a, 12). Shields (1997) elaborates that one can have more than one purpose for doing the research, that is, it can be for contribution to knowledge or to resolve a practitioner-related problem¹⁴. Finally, Babbie states that most social science studies will have elements of all three research categories.

Relevance to Theory, to the Research Setting, and/or Beyond the Setting

The majority of the literature is very critical of research that is conceptual, atheoretical and noncumulative. Stallings and Ferris (1988) in assessing the presence of theoretical rigor excluded work that did not perform empirical testing of a theory or that did not examine the relationship between variables.

Research design falls under the concept of research relevant to theory. The categories used to examine the rigor of a research design, and thus, whether the reader can have confidence in the research findings was determined by McCurdy and Cleary (1984), White (1986), Houston and Delevan (1990), Cleary (1992), and Nall (1994) were: conceptual framework, research method,

¹⁴ As discussed previously, use of Pragmatism explains the different basis for doing research between a practitioner and a theoretician.

and statistical technique used. The majority of criticism of applied, practitioner-oriented research projects is that they are not methodologically sound. The reason given is that they are mostly case studies.

Both Bailey (1992) and Yin (1994) stress that case studies can be methodologically sound and can use quantitative as well as qualitative research methods. Yin (1994, 92) states that in order to achieve methodological soundness in a case study there should be every attempt to attain triangulation, which is defined as the use of several sources and methods to corroborate the same findings. Beck (1993) assessed the rigor of case studies/practitioner-oriented research by noting the presence of triangulation.

Conclusion

The debates over the state of research in PA, according to John Gargan, become formalized in journal articles and textbooks. As a result, these debates, affect the education and training of new professionals, and may result in a redefinition of role of the public administrator (Gargan 1989, 992). Thus, these debates should be taken seriously.

Apparently, the methodology debate has existed in the U.S. PA field since its formal birth in the 1880s and will probably continue for a long time. What is being debated is not the nature of important questions in the field of PA, but rather, how to study them. Robert Behn (1995) suggests that the emphasis on methods results in non-products. Scholars of PA need to focus on the big questions; not to emphasize methodology and the manipulation of data. "A

reverence for methodology is not...what makes an endeavor scientific. It is an effort to answer major, important questions in a systematic way” (Behn 1995, 315).

From the review of literature the concepts and descriptive categories were derived to form the basis for an analysis of Applied Research Projects produced by SWT's Master of Public Administration program. The next chapter discusses the setting in which this research took place. A description of the teaching methodology used in the classes which prepare and assist the students to write their ARPs is also provided. In order to understand the basis for the teaching methodology, there is a brief discussion of pragmatism as to how it relates to the process of inquiry.

Chapter 3

Research Setting

Introduction

Many SWT Applied Research Projects (ARPs) have received recognition as quality research.¹⁵ An examination of the pedagogy surrounding the applied research projects may provide insights into improving the quality of research in public administration. The Applied Research Project, two course sequence, represents a departure from a more traditional method used in universities to supervise capstone, master's level writing/research projects. A discussion of pragmatism is included because it is also the philosophy of science used to guide the SWT applied research projects (Shields, 1996a). Some of the information used to write this chapter was obtained from a structured interview of Dr. Patricia M. Shields. She is the Program Director for the MPA Program at SWT and the professor that has taught the two course sequence for the last seven years. A transcript of the interview is included in Appendix D.

Academic Setting

The MPA Program resides in the Department of Political Science of Southwest Texas State University in San Marcos, Texas. The majority (about

¹⁵ As mentioned previously, *PA Times* (November 1, 1995 issue) identified Jeff Kaufman's "Strategic Planning and Implementation" and Jane McFarlan's "Between a Rock and a Hard Place: Downsizing in a TQM Environment" as Cutting Edge. Only 21 papers at the National ASPA Conference were so designated by *PA Times*.

89%) of students enrolled in MPA program are practitioners in the public sector and attend evening classes (Garofalo 1996, 1). In a manner much like the field of public administration, the students do not easily fit into a homogeneous profile (Beck 1993, 20).

The Applied Research Project (ARP) is the capstone project completed in a two-course sequence: the first course (POSI 5304B) is a formal class that prepares the students for data collection; the second course (POSI 5397) is an independent study course during which the actual research is conducted and the results are reported (Shields 1996a, 5). The ARPs are similar to master's theses; they are defended before a faculty committee and end up in the university library (Shields 1996a, 2). Following, is a brief discussion of how pragmatism has become the philosophy of science used to teach the two-course sequence of the capstone project.

Pragmatism: A process of inquiry

Pragmatism, the philosophy of common sense, was formulated at the turn of the last century by Americans--most notably were William James and John Dewey (Shields 1996b, 393). It is a method of learning that focuses on the process. Pragmatism "[P]osits that . . . people learn by using experience in combination with a loosely defined experimental model" (Shields 1996b, 396).

After having read and studied John Dewey's (1938) *Logic: A Theory of Inquiry*, Dr. Shields was able to see that she herself is supervising many "individual inquiry projects" (Shields 1996a, 2). Pragmatism is applicable

because MPA students possess a “rich experiential context” and must deal with “indeterminate” situations in their work environment that puzzle them (Shields 1996a, 3).¹⁶ A key student objective of POSI 5304B (the first course) is to identify the research question. This objective is achieved through a review of the literature. Research questions emerge as students learn about their topic.

In preparation of the review of literature for the POSI 5304B class, Dr. Shields has students use her Notebook Method to take notes on the relevant articles and books.¹⁷ Professor Shields encourages the students to READ-WRITE-THINK-CONNECT TO EXPERIENCE in order to connect the readings on the topic with their personal experiences and vice versa (Shields 1997). Professor Shields notes that this exercise produces a state of confusion in the students which she terms the “doubt stage” (Shields 1996a, 3); and, that if a student is willing to live with doubt and continue in good faith, that the final product is much better for having endured the doubt because only in that stage can new learning take place (Shields 1997). Through systematic study of the research topic, a narrower research question emerges. A literature review paper using the Notebook Method is required for POSI 5304B.

The greatest challenge to the MPA students is to identify their research question and link the question to a conceptual framework (Shields 1996a, 3). A conceptual framework “specifies the variables of interest and the expected relationships among them” (Hedrick, Bickman, and Rog 1993, 19). Dr. Shields

¹⁶ These two elements were identified by J. Dewey (1938) in *Logic: The theory of inquiry*.

¹⁷ See Appendix E (pp. 16-18) which includes the handout provided to the 5304B students on the Notebook Method.

(1996a, 4) frames the conceptual framework as a "labor saving contrivance because it helps to organize both the methodology section (operationalization of theory) and the results."

The POSI 5304B students learn the cycle of empirical research through the constant review in class of the elements of the cycle and they are evaluated through the completion of three structural analyses of research papers based on deductive reasoning.¹⁸ They are taught that there are basically five purposes for doing research (which connect to the purpose of the research or the research question)--exploratory, descriptive, understanding, explanatory, and predictive (Shields 1996a, 12--included as Appendix E). Furthermore, the students learn that each of these purposes have specific conceptual frameworks which can be used to aid them in answering the question or in addressing the purpose (working hypotheses, conceptual categories, ideal types or standards, formal hypotheses, and models). For example, students are taught that an exploratory research question will require the use of "working hypotheses"¹⁹ to serve as their conceptual organizing device. Working hypotheses have proved to be very useful because they are "focused, yet flexible" (Shields 1996a, 3). Students also learn the various research methods and the statistical techniques that are appropriate for answering the research question. Learning the empirical cycle in this manner helps the students to make the connection between theory and

¹⁸ See Appendix E, the three pages following page 15 list the criteria for the structural analyses. The concept of working hypotheses is a core component that is associated with Dewey's pragmatism (Shields 1996a, 3).

method. Because theories and methods are discussed in everyday language, the students are able to perceive that theory can be a tool for their use.

Professor Shields requires that students submit a research prospectus the semester prior to enrolling in POSI 5397 (the applied research project class). The student must receive written consent from Dr. Shields, stating that she has approved the research prospectus, before being allowed to enroll in this class. The research prospectus must include a descriptive project title, a statement of the research question, the conceptual framework, the methodology and a bibliography. Thus, the prospectus is the result of the application of material learned by the student in POSI 5304B.

Conclusion

Patricia Shields (1996b, 398) maintains that pragmatism should be the public philosophy on which PA should be grounded. She believes that pragmatism is useful because it unites all of the concepts that have been dichotomized in PA (Shields 1996b, 394). Professor Shields notes that the best students will leave the two course sequence (POSI 5304B/5397) with the understanding that theory is a tool and that this insight alone is probably worth the time and energy required to complete these two classes (Shields 1996a, 3).

The next chapter describes the research methodology, content analysis, that is employed in this research. There is a presentation of the strengths and weaknesses inherent in content analysis.

Chapter 4

Methodology

This content analysis of the SWT ARPs is, in a sense, a replication and extension of the work done by Beck (1993) and Nall (1994). The criteria used to examine the projects are developed from the literature and have been used to assess the quality of research in public administration. The operationalization of certain variables is discussed.

Methodology

The technique chosen to address the first purpose of this research--a description of the ARPs--is document analysis, specifically, content analysis (manifest and latent). Content analysis was used because an accurate description of the ARPs is best found through the direct examination of the documents themselves. Ole Holsti (1969, 14). defines content analysis as "any technique for making inferences by objectively and systematically identifying specified characteristics of messages." Earl Babbie (1995, 306) refers to it as unobtrusive methodology that uses the direct observation of documents. Content analysis combines quantitative and qualitative techniques, which are used to supplement each other (Holsti 1969, 11).

According to Holsti (1969, 3), there are three requirements in content analysis: objectivity, system, and generality. *Objectivity* refers to the explicit rules and procedures that must be followed when choosing the criteria that will

be included in each content category--in an attempt to eliminate the coder's subjectivity (Holsti 1969, 4). *System* refers to the decision whether to include or exclude a category, this decision must also be based on explicit rules (Holsti 1969, 4). *Generality* requires that the findings be theoretically relevant (Holsti 1969, 5). Categories and criteria for the content analysis have been developed from previous research in order to meet the three requirements of content analysis.

According to Babbie (1995, 311), "content analysis is essentially a coding operation." Manifest analysis refers to the "visible, surface content" of the document--the general characteristics and descriptive categories--and ensures reliability in coding (Babbie 1995, 312). Latent content analysis refers to the "underlying meaning"--this might include such categories as research purpose, relevance of research, and conceptual frameworks. When latent analysis is performed, it is at the expense of reliability and specificity, since it is highly dependent on the coder's definitions and standards. Therefore, when engaging in content analysis, it is best to use both methods--manifest and latent analysis (Babbie 1995, 312).

Inherent Weakness of Research Method

The potential disadvantage of content analysis is that it relies on a single researcher to construct categories that are mutually exclusive and for which there is empirical evidence of which items belong in that category and which do not (Holsti 1969, 136). There was a pre- and post-testing of the majority of the

coding scheme to ensure the objectivity of the categories and criteria (Nall 1994, 37). For this project the coding scheme used by Carl Nall (1994) was slightly modified; furthermore, this research project relied on the results of his pre- and post-test results to ensure objectivity. Manifest and latent content analysis were used to enhance the validity and reliability of the results as well (Babbie 1995, 320).

Modification of Carl Nall's Code Sheet

In an effort to more amply describe the topics of interest from a practitioner-oriented perspective, the variable "research topic" consisted of the following categories developed by Bingham and Bowen (1994, 205) in a topical content analysis: 'government and organizational behavior' indicated a focus on institutional arrangements, on changes in what people or organizations actually do over time, and on "theory" in PA; 'public management' focuses on internal and management aspects dealing with such things as management by objectives and total quality management; 'human resources' encompasses affirmative action, personnel systems, the merit system, labor unions; 'budgeting and finance' the focus is on role of the budget, taxation, and sources of revenue; 'program evaluation and planning' discusses the need for evaluation as well as results of an evaluation; 'introspection' discusses the quality of research in PA; 'testimonials' the focus is on persons who have made special contributions to the field; 'decision making' the focus is on some aspect of the relationship between actors; 'intergovernmental relations' deals with interagency relations; 'ethics';

'management science and technologies' focuses on systems theory or information storage and processing technology; 'public policy analysis'; 'implementation' whether the right people will be or are receiving services; and, 'administrative law' focuses on an explicitly legal concern or "the interface of law and management."

The variables "type of conceptual framework" and "research methods" are derived from Shields (1996a, 12). These two variables allow for the combination of quantitative and qualitative research methods in one project, whereas in Nall's (1994) and Beck's (1993) coding scheme, they would have been mutually exclusive.

The variables dealing with the relevance of research are examined from the viewpoint of Wamsley (1996) and Shields (1996b) rather than that of Adams and White (1994), for example. Table 4.1, in the adjacent page, graphically describes the operationalization of the concepts.

Table 4.1 - Operationalization of Concepts

Characteristics of project and information about author	Year, Number of Pages, Title, Author, Gender
Validity of research	Triangulation
Emphasis on topic placed by public administrators and academics	Topical Category
Distinction between basic and applied research project	Research Purpose
Confidence in research findings	Conceptual Framework, Type of Conceptual Framework, Research Method, Statistical Technique
Rigor of research--research guided by conceptual framework	Conceptual Framework; Type of Conceptual Framework
Knowledge acquisition and use in public administration	Research Purpose
Contribution of theory to theory development	Research Relevant to Theory
Research useful for improving or changing something in the setting	Practical Relevance Within Setting
Use research findings to inform practice in another agency	Practical Relevance Beyond Setting
Theory/practice dichotomy	Focus
The questions that are being addressed; trends in research attention to a specific level of government	Level of Government
The amount of quantitative analysis versus qualitative analysis present in the field	Research Method and Statistical Technique
Functions served by statistical techniques in social science research : description, inference, and control	Statistical Technique

Specifics of the methodology--Statistical Analysis

The unit of analysis is each individual ARP. From the Spring of 1992 through the Fall of 1996, 130 ARPs were completed in the MPA program at SWT. Each of these reports was analyzed using a code sheet. The code sheet used is a slightly-modified version of Carl Nall's (1994, pp. 67-68). The information obtained from each code sheet provided numerical data which is reported in the following chapter in the form of tables and narrative. The statistics are descriptive and report the frequency--absolute and relative--distributions of each variable. A copy of the code sheet is included in Appendix B.

The next chapter reports the results of the analysis. Comments are also included as to whether the findings are consistent with those of the meta-analyses that have been performed in the PA field.

Chapter 5

Results and Analysis

This chapter presents a narrative description of the applied research projects and descriptive statistics obtained from the document analysis. There is also a comparison of the findings of this research project with the statistics obtained from the dissertation, journal, and master's level research. The percent distributions of the variables for each year measured are found in tables in Appendix C.

General Characteristics of the ARPs

The population of ARPs consisted of those completed from 1992 through 1996 and available either at the Alkek Library, the MPA Program office, or in Dr. Shield's office (her personal copies). There were 131 ARPs completed between 1992 and the end of 1996. It was possible to locate 125 of the ARPs.²⁰ Hence, 95% of all the possible ARPs were examined. The average number of ARPs completed each year was 26--an increase by 4 ARPs from the time period studied by Beck (1993, 25).

Each ARP has a title page, the majority of the titles are very descriptive and provide the reader with a good idea of the research topic and a table of contents, which is also very specific and complete. The actual research project consists of at least six chapters: the first chapter provides an introduction to the

²⁰ The remaining six ARPs could have been checked out from the library or MPA office.

research problem or question and a summary of the other chapters of the ARP; the second chapter is the review of the literature and usually ends with the explicit development of the conceptual framework; the third chapter describes the research setting; the fourth chapter discusses the methodology, data, variable measurement and statistical techniques; the fifth chapter provides the reader with an analysis of the results; and, finally, the sixth chapter provides a summary and conclusions of the research project (Shields 1996a, 25).

ARP Length and Gender of Author

None of the ARPs were less than 50 pages in length, 60.8 percent exceeded 50 pages in length and 39.2 percent exceeded 100 pages. The median length of the ARPs was 90 pages. The longest ARP in the sample contained 183 pages and the shortest (2 ARPs) were 51 pages in length. The results of the content analysis show that there is almost a balance in the number of men and women authors, with 51.2 percent men, 46.4 percent women and 2.45% authors whose gender was not determinable from the title sheet (see Table 5.1).

**Table 5.1 - Percent Distribution of Number of Pages in the ARPs
and Gender of Author**

< 50	0		Male	51.2%
> 50 < 100	60.8%		Female	46.4%
> 100	39.2%		Not determined	2.4%
Total (N =)	100% 125		Total	100.0% 125
		96		
Median # of pp.		90		

Topical Categories

Since some of the topics are more practitioner-oriented than others, it should come as no surprise that the ARPs heavily emphasized the following topics: management (13.6 percent), human resources (22.4 percent), and implementation (26.4 percent) were the most prevalent topics. The topics least represented were introspection (1.6 percent)--these were Beck's and Nall's ARPs--and government and organizational behavior (.8 percent) and decision making (.8 percent). (See Table 5.2)

Table 5.2 - Percent Distribution of Topical Categories of the ARPs

Government and organizational behavior	.8%
Public management	13.6%
Human resources	22.4%
Budgeting and Finance	6.4%
Program evaluation	8.8%
Introspection	1.6%
Decision making	.8%
Ethics	4.0%
Management science & technologies	6.4%
Public policy analysis	8.8%
Implementation	26.4%
Total (N =)	100.0% 125

Level of Government

Almost eighty percent of SWT ARPs focused on state (46.4%) or local (31.2 percent) government. This is not surprising since most students are employed by either state or local governments. The percentage of ARPs not having these levels of government as their focus was 16.8 percent. (See Table 5.3)

Table 5.3 - Percent Distribution of the Level of Government

Local	31.2%
State	46.4%
Federal	5.6%
Other	16.8%
Total (N =)	100.0% 125

Research Focus of the ARPs

The research focus was assessed as it related to theoretical or practical considerations. The task of placing the ARP in a specific focus at times was time-consuming because it required reading the entire introductory chapter. Many practitioners decide on the topic of their research because of change in legislation which will affect their clients or themselves or because of a problem that keeps cropping up when attempting to implement legislation. Thus, it's not surprising that 59.2 percent of the ARPs used an issues orientation and 38.4 percent had a practical or problem resolution focus. Only 2.4 percent of the ARPs had a theory building or theoretical focus. These results are acutely divergent from those of Stallings and Ferris who report a noted decline in the interest of authors in state level concerns and an increase in federally focused research (1988, 583). (See Table 5.4)

Table 5.4 - Percent Distribution of the Research Focus of the ARPs

Theory building or theoretical	2.4%
Issues Orientation	59.2%
Practical/Problem Resolution	38.4%
Total (N =)	100.0% 125

Research Purpose

The purpose practitioners do research is mainly to resolve a problem and/or to facilitate the performance of their job (Shields 1997). Given this circumstance, it's not surprising that many ARPs had more than one research purpose. This variable measured all the combinations of purposes used in the ARPs. The findings were that 28 percent of the ARPs were descriptive, and exploratory research (51.4 percent) was the predominant research purpose. What is interesting is that there were combinations such as descriptive and explanatory (5.6 percent) and even such a combination of purposes as exploratory, descriptive, and explanatory. The existence of these combinations of purposes for doing research might indicate that practitioners are indeed viewing theory as a tool (Shields 1997). (See Table 5.5)

Table 5.5 - Percent Distribution of the Research Purpose of the ARPs

Exploratory	18.4%
Descriptive	28.0%
Explanatory	6.4%
Predictive	1.6%
Exploratory & Descriptive	28.0%
Exploratory & Explanatory	1.6%
Understanding & Explanatory	1.6%
Descriptive & Understanding	3.2%
Descriptive & Explanatory	5.6%
Explanatory & Predictive	1.6%
Exploratory & Understanding & Explanatory	.8%
Exploratory & Descriptive & Understanding	1.6%
Exploratory & Descriptive & Understanding & Explanatory	.8%
Exploratory & Descriptive & Explanatory	.8%
Total (N =)	100.0% 125

Conceptual Framework

The lack of conceptual framework has been identified by the majority of the authors of the meta-analyses series as disturbing about practitioner-oriented research. Even though grasping the concept of what a conceptual framework is can be the most difficult part of POSI 5304B (Shields 1996a), it seems that the majority of students have achieved this understanding. The results of coding for this variable indicate that fully 90.4 percent of all ARPs explicitly identify the conceptual framework driving the empirical research and 7.2 percent implicitly do so, only 2.4 percent of the ARPs failed to identify or refer to a conceptual framework. (See Table 5.6)

Table 5.6 - Percent Distribution of the Presence of a Conceptual Framework in the ARPs

Explicit	90.4%
Implicit	7.2%
None	2.4%
Total (N =)	100.0% 125

Type of Conceptual Framework

Theoretically, practitioner-oriented research would employ the use of working hypotheses quite often due to the flexibility provided and the notion that “truth” can change--due to legislation or the effect of judicial mandates (Shields 1996b). Also, considering the different combinations of purposes for performing research it was important to examine the different types of conceptual frameworks represented in the ARPs. Descriptive categories were used by 57.6 percent of all the authors, and working hypotheses were employed by 36.8 percent of the authors. Of note, was the increase in the use of working hypotheses from 28.6 percent of all ARPs in 1992 to 65.15 percent in 1996. (See Table 5.7)

Table 5.7 - Percent Distribution of Type of Conceptual Frameworks*

Descriptive Categories	57.6%
Working Hypothesis	37.6
Ideal Type ²¹	4.8%
Formal Hypothesis	12.8%
Models	5.6%
No Framework	2.4%

*It is possible to have different types of conceptual frameworks within the same research project, thus, percentages and total frequencies in the columns do not add up to 125 (total number of ARPs) nor to 100% of all the cases.

²¹ This conceptual framework was added as a possible choice for the students in 1995.

Type of Research Method

Methodology was operationalized through an examination of the first chapter and the methods chapter. Many of the ARP authors used more than one research method. Unlike Beck (1993) all of the different combinations of research methods were noted as mutually exclusive in order to achieve a true representation of the frequency of the types of research methods that are being utilized. Case studies were excluded from consideration and examined separately because a case study can and does employ all types of research methods. Considering case studies as a research method and therefore, as a different variable would not have improved the representation of the different research methods and would have complicated the tallying much more, resulting in a greater possibility of human error in tallying the numbers. A discussion of the result of the frequency of case studies follows.

Almost 40 percent of the research projects used surveys as the research method followed by a combination of document analysis and interview (10.4 percent) and a combination of document analysis and survey (8 percent). (See Table 5.8)

Table 5.8 - Percent Distribution of Research Methods Used in ARPs

Content Analysis	2.4%
Document Analysis	8.0%
Experimental	.8%
Focus Group	3.2%
Interview	.8%
Survey	39.2%
Quasi-Experimental	3.2%
Content Analysis + Document Analysis	1.6%
Content Analysis + Focus Group	.8%
Content Analysis + Interview	1.6%
Content Analysis + Survey	1.6%
Document Analysis + Interview	10.4%
Document Analysis + Quasiexperimental	1.6%
Document Analysis + Survey	8.0%
Experimental + Quasiexperimental	.8%
Experimental + Survey	.8%
Focus Group + Interview	.8%
Interview + Quasiexperimental	.8%
Interview + Survey	3.2%
Content Analysis + Document Analysis + Interview	.8%
Content Analysis + Document Analysis + Survey	.8%
Content Analysis + Interview + Survey	.8%
Document Analysis + Interview + Survey	4.0%
Document Analysis + Survey + Quasiexperimental	.8%
Experimental + Interview + Survey	.8%
Focus Group + Interview + Survey	.8%
Content Analysis + Document Analysis + Interview + Survey	1.6%
Total (N =)	100.0% 125

Adams and White (1994, 573) note that a case study "...might range from a single, small county agency to an entire state government, or even a policy area of the federal government." Using this admittedly broad definition of a case

study, it is not surprising that a majority, 59.2 percent, of all the ARPs were classified as such. Practitioner oriented research tends to rely heavily on case studies. Thus, it was important to note how many of the ARPs were case studies, which have been criticized for lacking a conceptual framework. This criticism cannot be applied to the ARP case studies, however, since the overwhelming majority do have a conceptual framework. (See Table 5.9)

Table 5.9 - Percent Distribution of Case Studies

Case Study	59.2%
Other	40.8%
Total (N =)	100.0% 125

Triangulation

As noted previously, Yin (1994, 92) states that in order to achieve methodological soundness in a case study there should be every attempt to attain triangulation, which is defined as the use of several sources and methods to corroborate the same findings. According to Babbie (1995, 106) triangulation can be very useful to the researcher to corroborate the findings and as a way to compensate for the inherent weakness of any one research method. However, triangulation might not be feasible due to constraints of time or finances. Beck

(1993) assessed the rigor of case studies/practitioner-oriented research by noting the presence of triangulation; however, she did not report her findings.

Considering all of the ARPs, 42.4 percent used triangulation. Of note is that the incidence of triangulation has increased on a yearly basis from 1992 at 32.1 percent to 1996 at 69 percent. Examining the 74 out of 125 ARPs that were case studies (59.2 percent of all ARPs), half achieved triangulation. Again, of note is the increasing incidence of triangulation from 37.5 percent in 1992 to 73.7 percent in 1996. (See Table 5.10)

Table 5.10 - Percent Distribution of ARPs Using Triangulation

All ARPs		Case studies	
Yes	42.4%	Yes	50.0%
No	57.6%	No	50.0%
Total (N =)	100.0% 125	Total (N =)	100.0% 74

Statistical Techniques

The results indicate a decrease in the lack of research technique in the ARPs from a high of 21.4 percent in 1992 to 10.3 percent in 1996 and an overall percentage of 12.8 percent. There has been a corresponding increase of univariate statistical techniques used to more than half of all ARPs. Of note is that the use of bivariate statistical techniques decreased from a high of 12.5

percent in 1993 to 0 percent in 1996 and an overall rate of 4.8 percent. The use of multiple regression also decreased notably from 14.3 percent in 1992 to 0 in 1996. (See Table 5.11)

Table 5.11 - Percent Distribution of the Statistical Techniques in ARPs

None	12.8%
Univariate	55.2%
Bivariate	12.0%
ANOVA	1.6%
Multiple regression	5.6%
Other	12.8%
Total (N =)	100.0% 125

Relevance of the Research to Theory, Setting, and Beyond the Setting

The coding for this variable was the most arduous task of the entire coding process. In order to assess relevancy, the entire first chapter of the ARP was read (and many times the last chapter was read as well). This researcher’s lack of familiarity with certain topics addressed by some ARPs could have introduced an element of error as to whether there was a contribution to knowledge by those specific projects.

The results of the analysis indicate that only 4.8 percent of all ARPs appear to produce research that is of relevant contribution to theory. The notion that theory can be “low-level” (Shields 1997) influenced the incidence of the possibility that the research could contribute to theory in 26.4 percent of the cases, fully 68.8 percent of the ARPs did not contribute to theory. These results were expected since explanatory research is closer to the social science notion of research that contributes to theory.

The findings with respect to relevance within the setting were expected to be high since a pragmatic administrator undertakes research to resolve a problem in his or her setting (Shields 1997). A great majority, 83.2 percent of the ARPs would have practical relevance to the setting; an additional 16.8 percent could possibly have relevance in the setting with zero of the ARPs not being relevant to the setting.

The results of the findings identifying an ARP as having relevance beyond the setting were that 13.6 percent definitely would, that 76.8 percent could, and that 9.6 percent of the ARPs would not have any relevance beyond the research setting. (See Table 5.12)

Table 5.12 - Percent Distribution of ARPs in which the Research is Relevant to Theory

Yes	4.8%	Yes	83.2%	Yes	13.6%
Possibly	26.4%	Possibly	16.8%	Possibly	76.8%
No	68.8%	No	0	No	9.6%
Total (N =)	100.0% 125	Total (N =)	100.0% 125	Total (N =)	100.0% 125

Comparative Analysis

In comparing the findings from the ARPs to those of similar studies in the PA field reveals that there are certain similarities and differences. Author gender is much more balanced in the master's level research projects than in doctoral dissertations in the PA field. The 1992-1996 ARPs reflect that there were approximately 51.2 percent males to 46.4 percent females as compared to the dissertations which represented a 72 percent male and 28 percent female presence (Adams and White, 1994). Terry Beck's (1993, 25) research findings were that 53 percent of the ARP authors were male and 47 percent female. Carl Nall (1994, 48) found that 51 percent of the LBJ reports were males and 49 percent were female.

Obviously, the scope of the dissertation inherently will result in a greater number of pages--only 5 percent of dissertations in PA are under 150 pages (Adams and White, 1994). The ARPs written from 1992-1997 had a median

page length of 90. Beck (1993, 25) found the median length to be 91 pages. Nall (1994, 49) found the median length of the LBJ reports to be 105 pages. (See Table 5.13)

Table 5.13 - Comparison of Gender and Page Length

Gender:				
Male	72%	53%	51%	51%
Female	24%	40%	49%	47%
Undetermined	5%	7%	0%	2%
Total (N =)	100% 201	100% 110	100% 70	100% 125
Page Length (mean)	> 200	91	111	96

The level of government orientation of the SWT 1992-1996 reports tends to be state and local (46.4 percent state and 31.2 percent local) with emphasis remarkably dissimilar to that of SWT 1987-1991 in which the emphasis is almost a complete reversal of state and local (22 percent state and 39 percent local) (Beck 1993, 27). The difference noted between the different analyses of the SWT ARPs could be due to a different make-up of students employed by local versus state government. The LBJ reports tended to focus on the state and federal government levels (38.7 percent state and 27.1 percent federal) (Nall 1994, 50). The difference between the LBJ reports and the SWT reports reflects a policy versus management focus and could be due to the fact that LBJ

students are not employed full time. Additionally, the national policy focus of the program would result in more interest in federal issues. (See Table 5.14)

Table 5.14 - Level of Government Comparison

Level of Government:			
Local	39%	23%	31%
State	22%	39%	46%
Federal	6%	27%	6%
Other	32%	11%	17%
Total (N =)	100% 110	100% 70	100% 125

For research focus of the SWT ARPs, a population largely dominated by the prevalence of practitioner-oriented individuals, the findings predictably reflect the orientation of the students (and, at some level, their reason for doing research) where 59.2 percent of the ARPs had a focus of issues orientation and 38.4 percent a practical or problem resolution focus. These results are different to those of a study on *PAR* articles (Box 1992) and the LBJ Reports (Nall 1994). (See Table 5.15)

Table 5.15 - Comparison of Research Focus

Research Focus:			
Theory building or theoretical	16%	9%	2.5%
Issues Orientation	67%	28%	59%
Practical/Problem Resolution	17%	63%	38.5%
Total (N =)	100% 230	100.0% 70	100.0% 125

As mentioned previously, the SWT ARPs are notable for the presence of an explicit (90.4 percent) or implicit (7.2 percent) conceptual framework. The presence of the framework in conjunction with the high level of triangulation demonstrate that they meet the criteria for methodological rigor. (See Table 5.16)

Table 5.16 - Conceptual Framework - Comparison of Frequency

Dissertations²²

Explicit	27%	40%	16%	20%	90.4%
Implicit	49%	50%	65%	40%	7.2%
None	24%	10%	19%	40%	2.4%
Total (N =)	100% 201	100% 88	100% 62	100% 70	100.0% 125

PA: Public Administration

CR: Criminology

WS: Women's Studies

²² Adams and White, 1994

A comparison of Beck's (1993, 40) research results indicate that the SWT ARPs 1992-1996 have improved, and are continuing to reflect a trend, noted by Beck toward an increased use of statistical techniques. The LBJ reports are clearly not as rigorous as the SWT ARPs, with 83% of the reports indicating the absence of statistical techniques in the research. (See Table 5.17)

Table 5.17 - Comparison of Statistical Techniques Used in Research

None	54%	83%	13%
Univariate	11%	3%	55%
Bivariate	4%	3%	5%
Other*	31%	11%	35%
Total (N =)	100% 110	100% 70	100% 125

* Multivariate, regression, etc.

Conclusion

The results of the content analysis support the concept of practitioner oriented research as being mostly exploratory and descriptive. Perhaps this is because these practitioners employ "low-level theories" as tools to apply to the situations that emerge in the work place. The need to resolve issues in a public arena, and in a timely fashion, may make it impossible to use experimental or quasiexperimental methods which stipulate controls that may not be feasible.

The SWT ARPs compare favorably to those of a five year period prior to this study (Beck, 1993). There has been an increase in the use of conceptual

frameworks to guide the research and of statistical techniques to support the findings. These ARPs also compare favorably with the LBJ professional reports. A comparison with research that has assessed dissertations also serves to illustrate the presence of methodological rigor in the majority of the ARPs. The following chapter serves to discuss the concepts that were operationalized and the trends noted from the findings.

Chapter 6

Summary and Conclusions

This chapter provides a summary of the major results from the research. It addresses the original purposes of the research project and discusses how each was accomplished and the implications of the findings.

Purposes of the research

This research project was conducted for several purposes. One of the purposes included a review of the literature that addresses the quality of research being performed in public administration and the debates surrounding the issue of practitioner-oriented research. Additionally, it provided an examination of the educational methodology used to supervise the ARPs. Finally, there was an examination of the ARPs themselves to describe the type of research conducted in the SWT MPA program during the last five years.

Debates surrounding the issue of practitioner-oriented research

The debates over the state of research in PA affect the education and training of new professionals, and may result in a redefinition of role of the public administrator (Gargan 1989, 992). Thus, these debates should be taken seriously. Apparently, the methodology debate has existed in the U.S. PA field since its formal birth in the 1880s and will probably continue for a long time. What is being debated is not the nature of important questions in the field of PA,

but rather, how to study them. Robert Behn (1995) suggests that the emphasis on methods results in non-products. Scholars of PA need to focus on the big questions; not to emphasize methodology and the manipulation of data. "A reverence for methodology is not...what makes an endeavor scientific. It is an effort to answer major, important questions in a systematic way" (Behn 1995, 315).

Pragmatism as philosophy for grounding public administration

Patricia Shields (1996b) and Gary Wamsley (1996) assert that the field of PA should acknowledge and reinforce the link that exists between practitioners and academics. Shields believes that pragmatism encompasses all the dualities which have separated practitioners from academics and that it serves to explain the imprint of the public administrator. Professor Shields notes that the best students will leave the two course sequence (POSI 5304B/5397) with the understanding that theory is a tool and that this insight alone is probably worth the time and energy required to complete these two classes (Shields 1996a, 3).

Trends noted from content analysis of ARPs

The general characteristics of the ARPs are that the median length of the ARPs was 90 pages, the results of the content analysis show that there is almost a balance in the number of men and women authors.

Since some of the topics are more practitioner-oriented than others, it should come as no surprise that the ARPs heavily emphasized the following

topics: management, human resources, and implementation. Implementation was the most prevalent topic. The topics least represented were introspection (these were Beck's and Nall's ARPs), and government and organizational behavior and decision making. Again, the choice of topics makes sense when examining the issue of practitioner-oriented research in the light of a pragmatic philosophy.

The reason or purpose that practitioners do research is to resolve a problem and/or to facilitate the performance of their jobs (Shields 1997). Given this circumstance, it's not surprising that many ARPs had more than one research purpose. This variable measured all the combinations of purposes used in the ARPs. The majority of the research purposes were: descriptive, both exploratory and descriptive, and solely exploratory in nature. What is interesting is that there were combinations such as descriptive and explanatory for research purposes and even such a combination of purposes as exploratory, descriptive, and explanatory. The existence of these combinations of research purposes might indicate that practitioners are indeed viewing theory as a tool (Shields 1997) and mixing and matching quantitative with qualitative research methods.

Of note was the fact that from 1994 through 1996 all the ARPs explicitly or implicitly stated the conceptual framework. Dr. Shields defines the conceptual framework as being a "labor saving contrivance because it helps to organize both the methodology section (operationalization of theory) and the results" (Shields 1996a, 4). Her students learn that each of the purposes for doing research have

specific conceptual frameworks which can be used to aid them in answering the research question or in addressing the purpose (working hypotheses, conceptual categories, ideal types or standards, formal hypotheses, and models). For example, the students are taught that an exploratory research question will require the use of "working hypotheses"²³ to serve as their conceptual organizing device. Working hypotheses have proved to be very useful because they are "focused, yet flexible" (Shields 1996a, 3).

Of the types of conceptual frameworks present in the ARPs, the most prevalent in use were descriptive categories and working hypotheses. Of note was the increase in the use of working hypotheses from 28.6 percent of all ARPs in 1992 to 65.15 percent in 1996.

Considering all of the ARPs, slightly less than half achieved triangulation. It is significant that the incidence of triangulation has increased on a yearly basis from 1992 at 32.1 percent to 1996 at 69 percent. Examining the 74 out of 125 ARPs that were case studies (59.2 percent of all ARPs), half achieved triangulation. Again, of note is the increasing incidence of triangulation from 37.5 percent in 1992 to 73.7 percent in 1996.

The results indicate a decrease in the lack of research technique in the ARPs. There has been a corresponding increase in univariate statistical techniques. Of note is the decrease in the use of bivariate statistical techniques and of multiple regression.

²³The concept of working hypotheses is a core component that is associated with Dewey's pragmatism (Shields 1996a, 3).

A comparison of Beck's 1993 research results indicate that the SWT 1992-1996 have improved, and are continuing to reflect a trend, noted by Beck (p. 40) toward an increased use of statistical techniques. The LBJ reports are clearly not as rigorous as the SWT ARPs, with 83% of the reports indicating the absence of statistical techniques. Future research analyzing SWT ARPs could include a survey to assess input from the practitioners' perspective as to what they found to be personally useful about the research project.

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Appendix A

List of Applied Research Projects completed from 1992-1996

Year	Last Name	First Name	Title of Applied Research Project
92 Spring	Coomer	Jason S.	The Influence of Economic, Political, and Demographic Variables on Public Sector Wages.
92 Spring	Corley	Allen	A Comparison of Program Evaluation Within the TEA and the AISD for the Period 1980-1990
92 Spring	Eng	James	The Tax Reform Act of 1986 and Municipal Bonds
92 Spring	Fincher	Anita	Breastfeeding: A Study of Selected WIC Participants and the Breast-feeding Decision in Travis County
92 Spring	Gomez	Jacqueline	State Government Infrastructures: Document Analysis of Information Resource Management in Texas.
92 Spring	Leal	Armando	The Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA): Assessing the Long-Term Impact of Performance Standards on JTPA Participants in the state of Texas.
92 Spring	McClenney	Mary	A Study of the Relationship Between Absenteeism and Job Satisfaction: Certain Personal Characteristics and Situational Factors
92 Spring	Miller	William	An Exploratory Study of Policy Coherency Model in a Texas State-Level Policy Setting
92 Spring	Mohajer	Kristine	Year Round Education in Texas: A Survey of Attitudes and Values of Selected Public Elementary School Principals
92 Spring	Ronson	Robert	The Impact of Computerization on Productivity-Measurement: A Study of One Application in Local Government
92 Spring	Waller	Frankie	An Analysis of the Impact of the Texas Department of Public Safety Motorcycle Operator Training Program Upon Motorcycle Related Traffic Accidents.
92 Spring	Welch	Eric	Judicial Reform and Selection in Texas: What About Single Member Districts for All Appellate Judges?
92 Summer	Jaluka	Shelia	Probation Officer Attitudes in the Assignment of Community Service Hours: A Survey of Attitudes
92 Fall	Alexander	Sonya	Employee Turnover in the City of Austin: A Study of the Factors that Influence Employees' Decisions to Quit
92 Fall	Bassion	Susan	Needs Assessment in AIDS Patients: An Evaluation of Health Resources. Services Administration Funded Pilot Needs Assessment
92 Fall	Berryhill	Rebecca	A Comparative Analysis of Selected Health Care Professional Regulatory Requirements in Texas and the Canadian Provinces: Professional Mobility and Free Trade.

92 Fall	Bishop	John	Privatization of Service Delivery in Texas: An examination of Private Sector Perceptions About Contracting with State and Local Government.
92 Fall	Carey	Alan	A Descriptive Analysis of Computer Security in Small Local Governments in Texas
92 Fall	Deming	Janaa	Assessing Student Achievement: Multiple-Choice Testing Versus Performance Assessment
92 Fall	Garcia	Esther	The Impact of the North American Free Trade Agreement on Texas State Agencies
92 Fall	Johnson	Kathryn	An Exploratory Examination of How Probation Officers Supervise Sex Offenders in Comparison to Other Criminal Offenders
92 Fall	Kiser	Don	A Location Quotient and Shift Share Analysis of Regional Economies in Texas
92 Fall	Lamm	Kathleen	Texas Hospitals: A Description and Assessment of Their Policies Toward Nurses Who Are Chemically Impaired
92 Fall	Martin-Whitaker	Douglas	The Demise of the German Democratic Republic: An Examination Employing the Relative Deprivation Theory of Revolution
92 Fall	Noble	Donna	The Impact of Subsidized Housing on Adjacent Property Values: A Study in Arlington, Virginia
92 Fall	Read, Jr.	Robert	Year Round Schools in Texas: A Survey of the Attitudes and Values of Selected Elementary School Teachers of the Northside Independent School District.
92 Fall	Salinas	Carlos	An Employment Shift-Share Analysis of the Austin Metropolitan Statistical Area
92 Fall	Short	Bob	Texas Department of Public Safety Highway Patrol Trooper's Perceptions of the Effectiveness of Intermediate Punishments.
93 Spring	Beck	Terry	A Content Analysis of Applied Research Projects Completed 1987-1991 in the MPA Program at Southwest Texas State University
93 Spring	Castillo	Rick	Police Civil Service in Texas: A Survey of Attitudes of Selected Police Officers.
93 Spring	Church	Rosanna	A Descriptive Analysis of Wellness Programs Within State Police Agencies and a Comparative Analysis of Other State Police Agencies' Wellness Programs and that of Texas.
93 Spring	Foutz	Kim	Local Government Use of Citizen Participation the Impact of Form of Government and Population Size.
93 Spring	Jones	Sheri	Computer Use Ethics in Public Administration
93 Spring	Massaquoi	Micah	Collier County Transportation Capital Projects Department Employees' Attitudes Towards Transportation Funding Techniques
93 Spring	Michie	Michael	Exploring the Keys to Educational Success for Black Males: A Comparison of Results from Focus Groups of Black Males to Focus Groups of Black Females and Suggestions from the Literature.

93 Spring	Morrison	G.E.	Texas Parole Office Safety Survey: A Description and Opinions Regarding Parole Officer Safety in Texas
93 Spring	Salinas	Marco	Water Conservation Practices in Texas Cities
93 Spring	Van Riper	George	Union Response to a Hostile Labor Environment: The Case of Austin, Texas 1993
93 Spring	Williams	Richard	An Evaluation of the Total Quality Management Initiative Within the Contracting Directorate at the San Antonio Air Logistics Center: A Case Study.
93 Spring	Withow	Brian	The Effectiveness of Fire Arm Conceal Carry Laws on the Incidence and Pattern of Violent Crime
93 Summer	Babb	Paul	Computer Change Management: A Case Study of Three State Agencies
93 Summer	Chinn	Ted	The Management Capacity of Texas Counties: A Survey of Current Management Techniques.
93 Summer	Kosika	Kent	An Investigation into Union Non-Membership by Texas Department of Human Services Employees
93 Summer	Mahon	James	Public Administration Journals as Sources of Knowledge Transference: A Content Analysis of Ethics Articles.
93 Summer	Weathersby	Linda	Factors of Attrition of African-American Students at SWTSU
93 Fall	Cowan	Tommy	A Cost Effectiveness Analysis of Two Alternatives for Serving Severely Disabled Students in Two School Districts
93 Fall	Goldapp, Jr.	Allen	An Analysis of the Coordinating Board, Texas College and University System's Campus Security Formula
93 Fall	Hale	Roy	The Construction and Evaluation of Behaviorally Anchored Rating Scales for Alcoholic Beverage Agents
93 Fall	Hill	Diane	Computer Use in State Child Protective Services Programs
93 Fall	Kaufmann	Jeff	Strategic Planning and Implementation
93 Fall	Rodriguez	Daniel	The Role of Nongovernmental Organizations in the International Development Process
93 Fall	Schmutz-Girling	Renee	A Study of the Relationship Between Job Satisfaction Certain Personal Characteristics, Educational Levels and Work Climate For Home Health Nurses in Bexar County
94 Spring	Autrey	Micky	Environmental Education: Review of A Solid Waste Education Program: A Survey of Teachers' Perceptions.
94 Spring	Boyles	Katherine	Comparative Smoking Policies and Motivating Factors Among Fortune 100 Companies

94 Spring	Ellers	Steven	An Analysis of Infant Mortality and Low Birth Weight Rates in Texas
94 Spring	Garza-Gonzales	Rita	National Welfare Initiatives and Texas' JOBS Program.
94 Spring	Hernandez	Juan	Perceived Effectiveness of Drinking Driving Sanctions: A Survey of MADD
94 Spring	McHale	Brian	A Comparative Analysis of Selected Licensure Requirements in the State of Texas for Assorted Types of Insurance Agent Licences.
94 Spring	Mears	Brent	Models of Government Growth: Explaining State Employment Growth in Texas
94 Spring	Meyer	Ralf	Video Recording in the Criminal Justice System. Is it An Effective Law Enforcement Tool: Trooper's Assessment.
94 Spring	Nail	Carl	Research in Public Administration Public Affairs: An Analysis of Professional Reports at the LBJ School of Public Affairs 1988-1990
94 Spring	Vega	Maria	Local and Regional Health Department Administrator's Perceptions of the Effectiveness of Select Management Strategies in Helping Organizations Realize Management Functions.
94 Spring	Wilburn	Randall	The Compatibility of Curbside Recycling Programs with a Beverage Container Deposit Law in Texas: A Survey of Texas Curbside Recycling Programs.
94 Summer	Gebhart	Blanca	Welfare to Work Programs: A Study of Welfare-to-Work Programs and the Ideal JOBS Program in Region 8 of the Texas Department of Human Services.
94 Summer	Guerrero	Yolanda	Cultural Diversity: A Study of Mexican American Women Managers in the City of Austin.
94 Summer	New	Mary Lou	A Comparative Study of Perceived Total Quality Management Implementation Within Two Department of Defense Entities
94 Summer	O'Hanlon	Mary Beth	Employer-Supported Child Care. A Survey of Austin, Texas Employers.
94 Fall	Comer	Shelia	Employee Discipline and Discharge at Southwest Texas State University: A Summary with Recommendations.
94 Fall	Dickey	Mike	The Relationship Between Selected Client Characteristics and the Use of Unscheduled Leave by Direct Contact Staff.
94 Fall	Ibezim, Jr.	Chidi F.	A Descriptive Study of the Perceptions of Supervisors on How Three Types of Supervisory Management Training Influence Employees' Job Satisfaction and Motivation in Texas Department of Health.
94 Fall	Murphy	Michael	Texas School Principals' Perceptions of the Effectiveness of the Texas Statewide Education Accountability System.

94 Fall	Pate	Laura	Implementation Problems of the Federal Government's Green Procurement Policy.
94 Fall	Phillips	Susan	An Assessment of the Region Seven Training Program for Client Self-Support Workers at the Texas State Department of Human Services
94 Fall	Reed	Cynthia D.	Training and Development Needs for Public Administrators in Eastern Europe.
94 Fall	Shelton	Ben	Municipal Solid Waste Management. An Analysis of the Liability Issues Pertaining to Municipal Solid Waste Land Fills.
94 Fall	Smith	Michael	Computer Technology in Local Government: Uses and Constraints. A Comparative Case Study in Glendale, Arizona and Peoria, Arizona.
94 Fall	Tharp	William A.	A Survey of the Attitudes and Opinions of Public Mental Health Administrators in Texas on the Subject of Managed Mental Health Care.
95 Spring	Durham	Deborah	School-Based Health Centers: The Attitudes and Perceptions of Austin Independent School District Principals and Area Superintendents
95 Spring	Holmes	Barbara	A Comparative Case Study of Three major Texas Metropolitan Areas Served by a Texas Health Maintenance Organization (HMO): San Antonio, Houston, and Dallas-Ft. Worth
95 Spring	Jones	Bryan	A Descriptive Study of Ethics Training Programs in Texas State Government
95 Spring	Lara	Jose D.	Forecasting the Cost of Pharmaceutical Service for the City of Austin Medical Assistance Program
95 Spring	Mendez	Omar	School Choice: A Survey of Perceptions and Attitudes of Texas School Principals
95 Spring	O'Leary	Dan	Municipal Revenue Sources for General Fund Expenditures: A Review of Texas Cities
95 Spring	Ortiz	Manuela	An Assessment of Factors Contributing to Environmental Racism: A Case Study of the East Austin Tank Farm
95 Spring	Parker	Darla	An Assessment of Geographic Information System Implementation in Texas Counties
95 Spring	Posey	Dan	Rulemaking: A Study of Classifications of Citizen Participation and Devices Used by Interest Groups to Influence the Rulemaking Process.
95 Spring	Rhoades	Lisa	Medically Fragile Children: A Comparison of Three States' Methods for Addressing Their Educational Needs
95 Summer	Eivens	Brenda	The Paradigm Shift from Personnel Administration to Human Resource Management: An Assessment of the Office of Human Resources and Its Changes at the University of Texas at Austin.
95 Summer	Stuber	Martha	A Comparison of Discipline and Discharge Procedures in the Agencies of the State of Texas

95 Summer	Treviño	David	Computer User Ethics: A Study of the Ethical Awareness of the Public Works and Transportation Department Employees of the City of Austin
95 Fall	Berghammer	Darlene	A Cost Benefit Analysis of an Automated Circulation System for A Small Public Library.
95 Fall	Peacock	Matthew	Cooperation of Church and State: Necessity and Opportunity
95 Fall	Richardson	Kerri	Supported Employment for Persons with Disabilities: A Survey of Austin Employers' Attitudes and Perceptions
95 Fall	Rogers	Victoria	Welfare to Work: Job Opportunities and Basic Skills Training Programs in Texas
95 Fall	Seiferman	Bobby	Texas Department of Public Safety Trooper's Perceptions on the Effectiveness of Intermediate Punishments - A follow-up Study.
95 Fall	Sherman	Mary	An Analysis of State Insurance Department Fraud Units and the Use of Model Laws As A Guideline for Statutory Construction.
96 Spring	Brimstein	Rennie	An Identification of Participants and Factors Contributing to Participation in Recycling Drop Off Centers: A Case Study of Ecology Action's Hancock Center Drop-Off Facility.
96 Spring	Cheatham	Timothy	Factors That Influence Participation in a Community Recycling Program.
96 Spring	Cobos	Dennis	A Historical Perspective of Federalism and Labor Legislation. A Study of 1985 FLSA Amendments and Its Effect on Various Cities in the State of Texas.
96 Spring	Conley (aka Veasey)	Terina	The Probable Impact of Affirmative Action on Employment Opportunities as Perceived by Spring 1996 SWTSU Students.
96 Spring	Darnall	Jerry	Centralized Justice in Middletown USA: A Study of Administrators' Experiences and Staff Members' Attitudes Who Work Within a Contemporary Justice Center
96 Spring	Gilley	Larry	Accountable Government: Use of Performance Measurement in Texas Cities
96 Spring	Lauleta, Jr.	John	The Privatization Process in the Republic of Latvia: A Country Study.
96 Spring	Moore	Dana	The Application of Total Quality Principles at SWTSU in Student Affairs: Is It A Lasting Management Change or Bust?
96 Spring	Phillips	Vivian	An Assessment of Management Participation in Level Three Training Evaluation at the Texas Department of Insurance
96 Spring	Revello	Ralph	A Descriptive Analysis of Computer Security Measures in Medium-Sized Texas Counties.
96 Spring	Rose	Donna	Fit to Fight Fires? An Assessment of Mandatory participation in Exercise Programs and Mandatory Fitness Standards of the San Marcos, Texas Fire Department
96 Spring	Sheridan	Laura	The Alliance Schools Project: A Case Study of Community Based School Reform in Austin, Texas
96 Spring	Stewart	Patricia	From the Heart: An Employee Based Corporate Model of Social Responsibility

96 Spring	Wallace	Kory	Environmental Protection vs. Private Property Rights: Seeking Balance
96 Summer	Coe	Gary	Computer Ethics: An Ethical Awareness Study of the Members of the Texas Association of State Systems for Computing and Communications, Inc.
96 Summer	Franklin	John	Assessing the Attitudes of Bus Drivers in the San Marcos Consolidated Independent School District Who May Be Facing Privatization
96 Summer	Grossenbacker	Jennifer	Analyzing Program Evaluations at the Texas Sunset Advisory Commission for the Period 1977-1995
96 Summer	McConnell	Kerry	An Assessment of Housing Affordability for Low Income Households in Texas
96 Summer	Stites	D'Anne	Does the Concept of Local Control Encourage Parental Involvement in Public Education?
96 Fall	Arnold	Adrienne	Examining Block Grant Programs in Texas: Role of Outcome Measures
96 Fall	Gatliff	Lisa	Administrative and Political Attitudes Regarding Public Library Financial Issues in Texas
96 Fall	Lacé	JuanCarlos	Public Access Information Systems in Local Governments: A Case Study of the City of San Marcos, Texas.
96 Fall	Mejia	Sulema	School-To-Work Transition for Youth: A Survey of Austin Employers' Attitudes and Perceptions
96 Fall	Owen	Bobbie	Women in Policing: Why They Leave, Why They Stay, Viewpoints of Female Officers in the Austin Police Department
96 Fall	Rayne	Selena	Analysis of the Perceptions of Physicians on the Communication Process as it Applies to the Utilization Management Process Within a Managed Care Organization
96 Fall	Sachtleben	Sheryl	The Sociological Theories of Juvenile Delinquency: A Comprehensive Approach to Delinquency Prevention
96 Fall	Saldaña-Godsley	Tamela	African American Women in Texas State Government: Surpassing the Glass Ceiling
96 Fall	Schuman	Denise	A Descriptive Analysis: Evaluating How Attorney and Legal Assistant Certification Programs Guarantee Legal Expertise.
96 Fall	Thompson	Jeffrey	A Review of the Attitudes and Expectations of Public Utility Managers With Regard to the Effects of Deregulation and Open Competition In the Electrical Power Industry

APPLIED RESEARCH PROJECTS UNABLE TO LOCATE WITHIN TIME FRAME OF 1/17/97-2/21/97				
93 Fall	Gutierrez	Daniel		Productivity Improvement Study: The City of Kingsville Commercial Sanitation Operation
93 Fall	Suarez	Pedro		An Analysis of a Local Small Business Development Initiative: The Small Business Coordinating Council
94 Fall	McFarland	Jane		Between a Rock and a Hard Place: Downsizing in a TQM Environment.
96 Summer	Bienko	Chad		A Descriptive Profile of Juvenile Justice Alternative Programs in Texas Which Have Been Awarded Federal Funding Through the Office of the Governor, Criminal Justice Division
96 Summer	Gutierrez	Art		Personal Futures Planning as Service Delivery Innovation: A Survey of State Agency Attitudes and Perceptions
96 Fall	Garza	Hervey		The Management Capacity of Texas Cities: A Survey of Current Management Techniques

Appendix B

Code Sheet for Content Analysis

Variable 1	Year	_____
Variable 2	Number of Pages	_____
Variable 3	Author	_____
Variable 4	Gender	_____
	1 Male	
	2 Female	
	8 Not determined	
Variable 5	Topical Categories	_____
	1 Government and organizational behavior	
	2 Public management	
	3 Human resources	
	4 Budgeting and Finance	
	5 Program evaluation and planning	
	6 Introspection	
	7 Testimonials	
	8 Decision making	
	9 Intergovernmental relations	
	10 Ethics	
	11 Management science and technologies	
	12 Public policy analysis	
	13 Implementation	
	14 Administrative law	
Variable 6	Level of Government	_____
	1 Local	
	2 State	
	3 Federal	
	8 Other	

Variable 7 Focus _____

1 Theory building or theoretical

2 Issues orientation

3 Problem resolution or mostly practical

8 Not determined

Variables 8-13 Describe the Research Purpose⁺ (0 - No; 1 - Yes)

Variable 8	Exploratory	0_____	1_____
Variable 9	Descriptive	0_____	1_____
Variable 10	Understanding	0_____	1_____
Variable 11	Explanatory	0_____	1_____
Variable 12	Predictive	0_____	1_____
Variable 13	Not determined	0_____	1_____

Variable 14 Conceptual Framework _____

1 Explicit

2 Implicit

8 None

Variables 15-20 Describe the Type of Conceptual Framework⁺ (0 - No; 1 -Yes)

Variable 15 - Descriptive categories	0_____	1_____
Variable 16 - Working hypotheses	0_____	1_____
Variable 17 - Ideal type or standard	0_____	1_____
Variable 18 - Formal hypotheses	0_____	1_____
Variable 19 - Models	0_____	1_____
Variable 20 - None	0_____	1_____

⁺It is possible to have more than one response in these categories--one can have more than one purpose for doing the research; one can choose more than one technique for answering the research question; one can utilize more than one type of conceptual framework (See Shields, Oct. 1996, p. 12).

Variables 21-28 Describe the Research Method/Technique* (0 - No; 1 - Yes)

Variable 21 - Case Study Research	0_____	1_____
Variable 22 - Content Analysis	0_____	1_____
Variable 23 - Document Analysis	0_____	1_____
Variable 24 - Experimental design	0_____	1_____
Variable 25 - Focus Group	0_____	1_____
Variable 26 - Structured Interviews	0_____	1_____
Variable 27 - Survey	0_____	1_____
Variable 28 - Quasi-experimental	0_____	1_____

Variable 29 * Triangulation _____

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 8 Not applicable

Variable 30 Statistical Technique _____

- 0 None
- 1 Univariate
- 2 Bivariate
- 3 Cross tabulations
- 4 Chi square
- 5 ANOVA
- 6 Bivariate regression
- 7 MANOVA
- 8 Other
- 9 Multiple Regression

Variable 31 Research Relevant to Theory _____

- 1 yes
- 2 possibly
- 8 no

* Used to assess a study that has used the following research methods/techniques: document analysis, field research, and case study (See Shields, Oct. 1996, p. 21)

Variable 32 Practical Relevance Within Setting _____

1 yes

2 possibly

8 no

Variable 33 Practical Relevance Beyond Setting _____

1 yes

2 possibly

8 no

Variable describing combinations of research purposes

The raw data were examined for the frequency of combinations or different types of research purposes. There was a new database created in SPSS in which the frequency of research purposes, including combinations, were entered per year. The new data do not correspond to individual ARPs, rather, they correspond to the frequency of occurrence, per year, of that specific type of research purpose.

Variable Name - Research Purpose--All Combinations Present from 1992-96

Value	Label
1	Exploratory
2	Descriptive
3	Explanatory
4	Predictive
5	Exploratory + Descriptive
6	Exploratory + Explanatory
7	Understanding + Explanatory
8	Descriptive + Understanding
9	Descriptive + Explanatory
10	Exploratory + Understanding + Explanatory
11	Exploratory + Descriptive + Understanding
12	Exploratory + Descriptive + Understanding + Explanatory
13	Exploratory + Descriptive + Explanatory
14	Explanatory + Predictive

Variable describing combinations of research methods—excluding consideration of whether the ARPs were case studies or not.

The raw data were examined for the frequency of combinations or different types of research methods. There was a new database created in SPSS in which the frequency of research methods, including combinations, were entered per year. The new data do not correspond to individual ARPs, instead, they correspond to the frequency of occurrence, per year, of that specific type of research method.

Variable Name - METHOD Research Methods/Techniques - All Combinations Present in ARPs from 1992-96

Value	Label
1	Content Analysis
2	Document Analysis
3	Experimental
4	Focus Group
5	Interview
6	Survey
7	Quasiexperimental
8	Content Analysis + Survey
9	Content Analysis + Document Analysis
10	Content Analysis + Focus Group
11	Content Analysis + Interview
12	Document Analysis + Interview
13	Document Analysis + Survey
14	Experimental + Quasiexperimental
15	Experimental + Survey
16	Focus Group + Interview
17	Interview + Survey
18	Document Analysis + Quasiexperimental
19	Content Analysis + Document Analysis + Interview
20	Content Analysis + Document Analysis + Interview + Survey
21	Content Analysis + Document Analysis + Survey
22	Content Analysis + Interview + Survey
23	Document Analysis + Interview + Survey
24	Document Analysis + Survey + Quasiexperimental
25	Experimental + Interview + Survey
26	Focus Group + Interview + Survey
27	Interview + Quasiexperimental

Appendix C

Tables of the Percent Distributions for All Years (1992-1996)

Note: All frequencies, percentages and totals are *verbatim* from the Output document produced by SPSS® 6.1 Windows Students Version. None of the numbers have been altered, some of the totals are not exactly 100% (they are 100 % \pm .1) due to SPSS itself “rounding” the numbers up or down to one decimal level of significance. Even though the totals may not be exactly 100%, SPSS lists them as being such.

Percent Distribution of the Number of Pages in the ARPs

< 50	0	0	0	0	0	0
> 50 < 100	64.3%	75.0%	56.0%	63.2%	48.3%	60.8%
> 100	35.7%	25.0%	44.0%	36.8%	51.7%	39.2%
Total (N =)	100.0% 28	100.0% 24	100.0% 25	100.0% 19	100.0% 29	100.0% 125
Mean no. of pp.	93	92	99	94	102	96
Median no. of pp.	87	84	90	92	100	90

Percent Distribution of the Gender of the Authors

Male	53.6%	66.7%	52.0%	42.1%	41.4%	51.2%
Female	46.4%	29.2%	44.0%	57.9%	55.2%	46.4%
Not determined	0	4.1%	4.0%	0	3.4%	2.4%
Total (N =)	100.0% 28	100.0% 24	100.0% 25	100.0% 19	100.0% 29	100.0% 125

Percent Distribution of the Topical Categories of ARPs

Government and org. behavior	0	0	0	5.3%	0	.8%
Public management	7.1%	25.0%	16.0%	0	17.2%	13.6%
Human resources	14.3%	33.3%	28.0%	10.5%	24.1%	22.4%
Budgeting and Finance	10.7%	4.2%	0	10.5%	6.9%	6.4%
Program evaluation	14.3%	8.3%	8.0%	10.5%	3.4%	8.8%
Introspection	0	4.2%	4.0%	0	0	1.6%
Decision making	0	0	0	5.3%	0	.8%
Ethics	0	8.3%	0	10.5%	3.4%	4.0%
Mgmt science & technologies	10.7%	8.3%	4.0%	0	6.9%	6.4%
Public policy analysis	17.9%	4.2%	4.0%	0	13.8%	8.8%
Implementation	25.0%	4.2%	36.0%	47.4%	24.1%	26.4%
Total (N =)	100.0% 28	100.0% 24	100.0% 25	100.0% 19	100.0% 29	100.0% 125

Percent Distribution of the Level of Government

Local	35.7%	29.2%	12.0%	42.1%	37.9%	31.2%
State	42.9%	41.7%	60.0%	52.6%	37.9%	46.4%
Federal	3.6%	8.3%	8.0%	0	6.9%	5.6%
Other	17.9%	20.8%	20.0%	5.3%	17.2%	16.8%
Total (N =)	100.0% 28	100.0% 24	100.0% 25	100.0% 19	100.0% 29	100.0% 125

Percent Distribution of the Research Focus of the ARPs

Theory building or theoretical	3.6%	4.2%	4.0%	0	0	2.4%
Issues Orientation	53.5%	66.7%	52.0%	63.2%	62.1%	59.2%
Practical/Problem Resolution	42.9%	29.2%	44.0%	36.8%	37.9%	38.4%
Total (N =)	100.0% 28	100.0% 24	100.0% 25	100.0% 19	100.0% 29	100.0% 125

**Percent Distribution of the Different Types of
Research Purposes of the ARPs**

Exploratory	7.1%	12.5%	16.0%	31.6%	27.6%	18.4%
Descriptive	25.0%	20.8%	32.0%	42.1%	24.1%	28.0%
Explanatory	3.6%	12.5%	4.0%	0	10.3%	6.4%
Predictive	0	0	4.0%	5.3%	0	1.6%
Exploratory & Descriptive	35.7%	41.7%	24.0%	10.5%	24.1%	28.0%
Exploratory & Explanatory	3.6%	4.2%	0	0	0	1.6%
Understanding & Explanatory	7.1%	0	0	0	0	1.6%
Descriptive & Understanding	7.1%	0	4.0%	0	3.4%	3.2%
Descriptive & Explanatory	0	4.2%	8.0%	5.3%	10.3%	5.6%
Explanatory & Predictive	3.6%	0	4.0%	0	0	1.6%
Exploratory & Understanding & Explanatory	0	0	4.0%	0	0	.8%
Exploratory & Descriptive & Understanding	3.6%	0	0	5.3%	0	1.6%
Exploratory & Descriptive & Understanding & Explanatory	3.6%	0	0	0	0	.8%
Exploratory & Descriptive & Explanatory	0	4.2%	0	0	0	.8%
Total (N =)	100.0% 28	100.0% 24	100.0% 25	100.0% 19	100.0% 29	100.0% 125

Percent Distribution of the Presence of Conceptual Frameworks

Explicit	82.2%	87.5%	88.0%	94.7%	100.0%	90.4%
Implicit	10.7%	8.3%	12.0%	5.3%	0	7.2%
None	7.1%	4.2%	0	0	0	2.4%
Total (N =)	100.0% 28	100.0% 24	100.0% 25	100.0% 19	100.0% 29	100.0% 125

Percent Distribution of the Type of Conceptual Framework in the ARPs*

Descriptive Categories	35.7%	54.2%	68.0%	73.7%	62.1%	57.6%
Working Hypothesis	28.6%	29.2%	28.0%	31.6%	65.5%	37.6%
Ideal Type ²⁴	10.7%	0	0	5.3%	6.9%	4.8%
Formal Hypothesis	14.3%	16.7%	12.0%	5.3%	13.8%	12.8%
Models	14.3%	4.2%	4.0%	0	3.4%	5.6%
No Framework	7.1%	4.2%	0	0	0	2.4%

*It is possible to have different types of conceptual frameworks within the same research project, thus, percentages and total frequencies in the columns do not add up to 125 (total number of ARPs) nor to 100% of all the cases.

Percent Distribution of ARPs that are Case Studies

Case Study	57.1%	50.0%	52.0%	73.7%	65.5%	59.2%
Other	42.9%	50.0%	48.0%	26.3%	34.5%	40.8%
Total (N =)	100.0% 28	100.0% 24	100.0% 25	100.0% 19	100.0% 29	100.0% 125

²⁴ This conceptual framework was added as a possible choice for the students in 1995.

Percent Distribution of Research Methods Used in ARPs

Content Analysis	0	8.3%	0	0	3.4%	2.4%
Document Analysis	14.3%	4.2%	12.0%	5.3%	3.4%	8.0%
Experimental	0	4.2%	0	0	0	.8%
Focus Group	7.1%	4.2%	4.0%	0	0	3.2%
Interview	0	0	0	5.3%	0	.8%
Survey	35.7%	45.8%	52.0%	36.8%	27.6%	39.2%
Quasi-Experimental	7.1%	4.2%	0	5.3%	0	3.2%
Content Analysis + Document Analysis	3.6%	0	0	5.3%	0	1.6%
Content Analysis + Focus Group	0	0	0	0	3.4%	.8%
Content Analysis + Interview	0	4.2%	4.0%	0	0	1.6%
Content Analysis + Survey	0	0	0	0	6.9%	1.6%
Document Analysis + Interview	10.7%	8.3%	8.0%	21.1%	6.9%	10.4%
Document Analysis + Quasiexperimental	3.6%	0	0	0	3.4%	1.6%
Document Analysis + Survey	3.6%	4.2%	4.0%	10.5%	17.2%	8.0%
Experimental + Quasiexperimental	3.6%	0	0	0	0	.8%
Experimental + Survey	3.6%	0	0	0	0	.8%
Focus Group + Interview	0	0	0	0	3.4%	.8%
Interview + Quasiexperimental	3.6%	0	0	0	0	.8%
Interview + Survey	0	0	0	5.3%	10.3%	3.2%
Content Analysis + Document Analysis + Interview	0	0	0	5.3%	0	.8%
Content Analysis + Document Analysis + Survey	0	4.2%	0	0	0	.8%
Content Analysis + Interview + Survey	0	0	0	0	3.4%	.8%
Document Analysis + Interview + Survey	3.6%	0	8.0%	0	6.9%	4.0%
Document Analysis + Survey + Quasiexperimental	0	0	4.0%	0	0	.8%
Experimental + Interview + Survey	0	4.2%	0	0	0	.8%
Focus Group + Interview + Survey	0	0	0	0	3.4%	.8%
Content Analysis + Document Analysis + Interview + Survey	0	4.2%	4.0%	0	0	1.6%
Total (N =)	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
	28	24	25	19	29	125

**Percent Distribution of ARPs Using
Triangulation -- All ARPs**

Yes	9 32.1%	7 29.2%	8 32.0%	9 47.4%	20 69.0%	53 42.4%
No	19 67.9%	17 70.8%	17 68.0%	10 52.6%	9 31.0%	72 57.6%
Total (N =)	28 100.0% 28	24 100.0% 24	25 100.0% 25	19 100% 19	29 100.0% 29	125 100.0% 125

**Percent Distribution in which
Triangulation was Used in Case Studies
(74 out of 125 ARPs examined were case studies)**

Yes	37.5%	41.7%	38.5%	50.0%	73.7%	50.0%
No	62.5%	58.3%	61.5%	50.0%	26.3%	50.0%
Total (N =)	100.0% 16	100.0% 12	100.0% 13	100.0% 14	100.0% 19	100.0% 74

Percent Distribution of Statistical Techniques Found in the ARPs

None	21.4%	8.3%	12.0%	10.5%	10.3%	12.8%
Univariate	32.1%	45.8%	56.0%	68.4%	75.9%	55.2%
Bivariate	10.7%	25.0%	16.0%	0	6.9%	12.0%
ANOVA	7.1%	0	0	0	0	1.6%
Multiple regression	14.3%	4.2%	4.0%	5.3%	0	5.6%
Other	14.3%	16.7%	12.0%	15.8%	6.9%	12.8%
Total (N =)	100.0% 28	100.0% 24	100.0% 25	100.0% 19	100.0% 29	100.0% 125

**Percent Distribution of ARPs Demonstrating
Relevance of the Research to Theory**

Yes	14.3%	4.2%	0	0	3.4%	4.8%
Possibly	32.1%	37.5%	24.0%	10.5%	24.1%	26.4%
No	53.6%	58.3%	76.0%	89.5%	72.4%	68.8%
Total (N =)	100.0% 28	100.0% 24	100.0% 25	100.0% 19	100.0% 29	100.0% 125

***Percent Distribution of ARPs Demonstrating
Practical Relevance within the Setting***

Yes	82.1%	83.3%	92.0%	94.7%	69.0%	83.2%
Possibly	17.9%	16.7%	8.0%	5.3%	31.0%	16.8%
No	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total (N =)	100.0% 28	100.0% 24	100.0% 25	100.0% 19	100.0% 29	100.0% 125

***Percent Distribution of ARPs Demonstrating
Practical Relevance of the Research Beyond Its Setting***

Yes	7.1%	12.5%	12.0%	10.5%	24.1%	13.6%
Possibly	78.6%	79.2%	80.0%	84.2%	65.5%	76.8%
No	14.3%	8.3%	8.0%	5.3%	10.3%	9.6%
Total (N =)	100.0% 28	100.0% 24	100.0% 25	100.0% 19	100.0% 29	100.0% 125

Appendix D

Interview of Patricia M. Shields, Ph.D.²⁵ ***MPA Program Director***

21 February 1997

Q: Dr. Shields, how did the two-course sequence POSI 5304B and 5397 originate, and what's the philosophy that you use to teach this class?

A: Well, it originated out of a problem that was identified in the first accreditation process through NASPAA [National Association of Public Administration and Public Affairs]. The Applied Research Projects (ARPs) were not being completed in one semester. And, a lot more people entered the program than graduated--the ARP was viewed as a roadblock. At the same time, the original curriculum for the MPA program was two ARPs or one six-hour credit thesis so, we had a course that was kind of available. Instead of having the students do two ARPs, or just give an extra elective, we decided that it might make sense to have a methods course which would get the students ready to write the ARP so that they would be more able to do it on their own.

I was assigned responsibility for teaching the class that would get the students ready to write the ARP, POSI 5304B. Originally, the idea was to get the students to be familiar with their topic because it seemed that that was one of the big problems. Before POSI 5304B, the students would walk in and they wouldn't have a sense of their topic. So, part of that class would involve writing a Lit. Review and also part of the class would deal with qualitative research methods because, at that point, we had not really covered qualitative research methods very well.

When I began teaching POSI 5304B I thought of it as just another research methods class. Subsequently and coterminously I began to link it to my own research--I've been studying pragmatism as a paradigm for public administration or as a philosophy that would help to guide public administrators in what they do, and explain their imprint. In the process of studying pragmatism, I have learned that pragmatism is a legitimate philosophy of science and that it has as its logic--a logic of inquiry which I find very appealing. It also makes sense in light of the practitioner-orientation of our students. A pragmatic common-sense kind of perspective enabled me to kill two birds with one stone--to enhance my own research area and apply it to the POSI 5304B course.

²⁵ These questions are taken from the following materials: Shields 1996a, page 5; Shields 1995, pp. 9-10; and, Shields 1993, pp. 6, 24, 26, 30, & 35.

Q: Do you remember when this change, from two ARPs to one ARP happened?

A: Well, really, this was kind of a question area. When I first came to Southwest Texas it was two ARPs, then the faculty and the students started saying, well it seems like a little bit too much--could we just make it one ARP and use the remaining three hours as an elective? Unfortunately, the change in the curriculum (to the one ARP) had never really been formally approved. So, that was a kind of question mark. I would say that the decision to go to POSI 5304B and link it to the applied research was made around the time that we had the site visit team come in (seven or eight years ago).

Q: So, originally, was POSI 5304B supposed to be an individual study class like 5397?

A: No, it was supposed to be a formal class which would meet regularly and help the students to figure out what their topic of research would be. In the process of teaching POSI 5304B I came to the awareness that there's a lot to writing a thesis that it was not appropriate to even expect the students to know. That really, the problem associated with the students' failure to complete the ARP was really our problem, not the students' problem.

Q: Well, we've addressed the question as to what is the intent or purpose of POSI 5304B, which is really to prepare the students to write the ARP.

A: Well yes, and then the other thing that is very clear to me is that the major stumbling block that the students have is a conceptual stumbling block. They are unfamiliar with how to find some sort of theory or conceptual framework to help them organize or manage their inquiry. Therefore, the course, in part, is for them to learn to identify conceptual structures within empirical research. And then, in their own research, to develop the conceptual structures that later on are measured and used to test hypothesis or to develop classification systems.

Q: What is the notebook method? How does it help the student to do the review of literature?

A: The notebook method is a method that I personally use to write articles. Dr. Rich and Dr. Hofer both suggested that I incorporate the use of the notebook method in the POSI 5304B class. Basically, this method is the homework that people have to do if they're going to understand the topic; it enables the students to collect their literature, to take notes on their literature, and to figure out how to organize and write up a discussion of their literature in an organized way. It also, practically, keeps the materials they need to write a literature review in one place, and it enables the instructor to easily check and make sure they did the necessary background work. The other thing is that when you're starting a new

topic, most people really do need to, aside from reading, they have to take notes. And I think that's a bitter pill to swallow for students, so that if they're not somehow checked that they are taking notes, a lot will take the easy way out and not get the learning that is associated with taking notes.

Q: How is the ARP used by practitioners? Does the ARP have a function outside of the university setting that you've seen?

A: Yes. I have observed many stories of the use of the ARP. I think that one of the major uses of the ARP for any individual student or graduate is that when they are asked to produce a writing sample that the ARP is a very strong writing sample--I've heard many people say that they were able to get the promotion or get the new job because the prospective employer was impressed with their Applied Research Project. I've seen ARPs published or sections of them published in journal articles. I've seen ARPs used to influence legislation. I've seen ARPs being presented at National Conferences where students received recognition. Two ARPs that that were presented at the national ASPA [American Society for Public Administration] Conference were identified as cutting edge research in public administration by the *Public Administration Times*. So, I think that certainly, that's a wonderful thing for a graduate, to see their name in print. I know that Jane McFarlan, one of the two students that wrote a "cutting-edge" ARP, felt that her ARP was instrumental in her getting the job.

Q: What is the role of theory in empirical research?

A: Well, theory has an important role to play in empirical research because in a lot of ways it's the engine that drives the inquiry. What kind of data do you collect when you're doing the empirical research? The concepts and hypotheses all of these are driven by the theory.

I think that in a larger sense, for day to day administrators theory can help them to organize tasks to help them solve problems. This could be low level theory like categorization, but the key is the conscious awareness that they are using categorization. Say they have to revise a manual and they have to make fifteen changes. Well, if they can describe those fifteen changes into four types of changes; then, they can go to their manager and say I'm making these four types of changes. That type of change, and classifying the different types aids in their argument and helps them to solve the problem of revising the manual. If they see theory as a tool they can use--and I think, that in the POSI 5304B course, or in a research methods class which talks about theory and quantitative research it draws out where the theory is and what it is in a way that they can see that it will be useful to them--then, hopefully, they can go and apply it on the job.

Q: What is the link between research purpose, theory and method?

A: Well, I'd say that that was one of the things that as I grew as a teacher in the applied research project, that students--in the beginning--would always say, 'I know you want a conceptual framework. What is a conceptual framework anyway?'

When I got the insight that there actually was a link between the type of research question and the purpose of the research question and the type of theory that would be used to organize the conceptual framework that would be used to organize the research question. This insight was a big leap forward in my ability to supervise students in applied research projects and in the students' ability to understand: okay, if you can nest it, if you can say I want to explore something, then I have to find working hypotheses versus if I want to explain something, that A causes B then I have to come up with a formal hypothesis or if I'm going to describe it, which categories do I come up with? Then, the theoretical problem becomes something that you can put in ordinary language. Once you can put it into ordinary language, you can relax and start doing it.

Thus, there is a linking of the purpose and the theoretical construct--which kind of dictates whether you use quantitative or qualitative methods. So, most explanatory research is going to be quantitative--there's different steps or things to do than if you're going to be doing qualitative research. As an instructor, or I can say why and I can supervise the project with a kind of consistency that's reassuring for everybody.

Q: Would you say that practitioners use conceptual frameworks to perform their jobs?

A: Well, I'd say that they may or may not do it, but the notion of using theory as an organizing tool in the accomplishment of administrative tasks is valid. And, that depending upon where you are or what kind of problem you have, you use different kinds of theorizing but probably the one that's the most useful or current is classification. That there's some kind of problem that you have to figure out how to get it into chunks, into steps. What do you do when, where, and to figure out: how am I going to classify this, how am I going to make sense of what very well may seem like chaos. That gives the practitioner a sense of control.

Q: We've briefly touched upon quantitative vs. qualitative research methods. What kinds of questions can qualitative methods answer that quantitative can't?

A: Well, I think qualitative research methods can probe, they can achieve greater depth and quantitative research methods have the benefit of often being able to generalize because you've measured and quantified something. But if you're interested in solving a problem that's associated with a particular case, which is what an administrator would do, then the problem of generalizing is not as much an issue as figuring out 'what the heck is going on here anyway.'

In that sense, qualitative research relies in part on aesthetics or on a sense of things being right or wrong or intuition and this is something that administrators use. When you ultimately use a test, as a pragmatic test would be: Does it work? Then, the qualitative research has some kind of empirical importance to you because it either works or it doesn't.

I think I have a good example, a student came in to see me and we were talking about classifying employees. Her job was to classify employees and she did it for a small city around Austin. She showed me a form which was used by classifiers to quantify where these individuals with certain jobs would fall in job classification 1, 2, 3, or 4. She said, 'but that's not what I would ever take to the City Council because I know that a librarian with a Master's degree should always make more than a janitor. But when I did it quantitatively, the librarian was put in with the janitor.' What you're dealing with is an art of classification, here's your science which says that you would put it this way but your art is knowing what is going to work and what doesn't work and to apply experience. She's an experienced classifier and knows from experience that you're not going to get people to agree to put librarians in with janitors in the same classification. So, she has a sense of what works and what doesn't work because the City Council will agree or not agree with how she ultimately classifies this. It's not as if there isn't an ultimate test of whether it works or not, but it's a combination of art and science and both of those should be things that are in an administrator's bag of tricks.

Q: How is pragmatism a method of inquiry? How is it a method of learning or teaching?

A: What drew me to pragmatism, as I began to study it, was my sense that public administrators were pragmatic and that no one had looked at the literature. No one had shown whether or not they were pragmatic. As I learned about the philosophy and studied it with Dr. Vincent Luizzi, who is the Chairman of the philosophy department, I was just really amazed at what a deep well it was, what a comprehensive philosophy.

The logic of pragmatism is a logic of inquiry, John Dewey wrote a book called *Logic, A Theory of Inquiry*. So how is it a method of learning? Well, you learn by asking questions and the components of pragmatism deal with a problem, experience, actions and consequences. All of these things, I think make sense to administrators and they also are part of empirical research--that you go to the real world to the world of experience. There's a definition of pragmatism that I'll read here:

Pragmatism is a philosophy of common sense, it uses purposeful human inquiry as a focal point. So as method of learning, how do you learn anything? By asking questions. It is viewed as a continuous process so it's a method of learning that really never

stops and it acknowledges the qualitative nature of human experiences. It takes into account that human experiences are not just quantitative but have a qualitative aspect as problematic situations emerge and are recognized.

Most of the time the pragmatic method of inquiry incorporates some kind of problem, a problematic experiential reference. This recognition involves a kind of doubt associated with questioning existing belief systems. I think if you look at the POSI 5304B class, as people are starting to do their project they will be confronted with literature that might not confirm their existing belief systems and that as the existing belief systems are challenged, that enables the scholar to learn new things. It's only in that nexus or in that place where it's unknown where you'll be learning new things. And then doubt is resolved through critical reasoning and ultimately tested in action. You reason it through but then you go out and ask questions. There needs to be some kind of action. The practitioner is uncomfortable, when there isn't some kind of action to back it up.

Pragmatism is a logic of common sense because actions are assessed in light of practical consequences. Returning to the employee classification example, what difference would it make if the student developed a classification system that took into account the things that she knew from experience? Perhaps the proposal is passed with less rancor than another one. Then, the practical consequence is that the proposal went through. Her classification system becomes the new classification system in this town. It has practical consequences.

Pragmatism also is a method of learning that incorporates a community of inquirers. So, it's not something that's necessarily done alone, and public administration, by its nature, involves community. You don't get much done in public administration by yourself. Thus, pragmatism incorporates an important element of what public administration is about.

Q: How does pragmatic action involve scientific enterprise?

A: Pragmatic action can be doing an experiment. I'm working on understanding this more myself. I have a research methods text written by a philosopher which talks about pragmatism and logical positivism and it says "to get the meaning of a statement, a logical positivist asks what would the world be like if it were true? The operationalist asks [and in a way this is the quantifier] asks what would we have to do to believe it? Where with the pragmatist, the question is what would we do if we did believe it? To believe a proposition is not to lay hold of an abstract entity called truth with a corresponding abstract mind. It is to make a choice among alternative sets of strategies and actions."

If we do believe that this describes the attitude of a set of administrators about something, what does this mean for action? If we do believe that this is an

ideal standard for workplace violence policy and we find that an HEB, for example, does not conform to these ideal standards. Then we might make recommendations for actions for how HEB could change what they want. I think this sort of sense fits better with public administrators, but it says here "Pragmatism has been persistently and widely misunderstood by reason of the impossibly narrow sense given the keyword action. There is a vulgar pragmatism in which action is opposed to contemplation, practice to theory, expediency to principle. It goes without saying that this vulgar doctrine is almost the direct antithesis of pragmatism which aims precisely at dissolving such dualities. The action that is relevant to the pragmatic analysis of meaning must be constructed in the broadest sense. So that as to compromise not only the deeds that make up the great world of affairs but also those that constitute the scientific enterprise. Whether it be as practical as performing an experiment or as contemplative as formulating a theory." So, formulating a theory is subsumed under the pragmatic philosophy of science because it helps you to solve your problem.

Q: You've stated in previous works that pragmatism addresses the theory-practice debate from two angles. Would you expand on that?

A: What I see as the debate in public administration about theory is two perspectives. One is the perspective of the academic who says there's not enough theory in public administration and then, ironically, there's the perspective of the administrator who says 'Theory is not important. I learned these theories and they're just not relevant.' So, what I see--at least the one angle here--is that in the practitioner-academician debate pragmatism addresses the concerns most fully of the practitioner. Basically, saying that theory is a tool. Theory is something that you can use to organize yourself to do your job. As James says, you can have economy of mental effort you don't have to think as hard if things are organized and you know where you've put something. And, that it also is instrumental, that depending upon your problem, theories may or may not be useful and your job is to see whether your theory can be applied to help you address an issue or solve a problem. A problem and then the action is your test. You need to do something about it and see whether it makes a difference.

William James talks about the hotel corridor metaphor where the pragmatist owns the corridor owns the pragmatic method which enables him or her to use a theory or not use a theory as it helps them solve a problem. They can go in one room and use something and return to the corridor and go into another room and use a theory.

I think the academic is going to ask right away 'Well, what's in the corridor? Why would you have things in the room? Or, how do you define what's in the hotel to start with? Does pragmatism help there?' I think it does because John Dewey spent so much time trying to understand Democracy and

had such faith in the democratic process or democratic processes. It seems to me that the public administrator needs to look to the founding documents in some sense to have a sense of direction about public purposes. And, within the Constitution we have some guiding values and Democracy is certainly one of those.

Dewey uses the term "end in view" where the pragmatic administrator would have some kind of sense of a just society. A society that had some kind of equity that had personal liberties, that incorporated a rule of law. Administrators should solve problems in light of these kinds of ends in view. And, within that, the problems would be at some point, the administrators confront legislative or democratic kinds of processes in decision-making. In some sense, the big picture of developing a welfare program that doesn't include welfare payments in the same way that they did before in the form of AFDC. Well, this came about through a democratic process, democratic agreement between Congress and the President. In some ways, this constitutes a community of inquirers. In my readings, I've seen that Peirce or Dewey in some ways talk about Democracy as being the great experiment and that the community of inquirers is the community itself. And they try AFDC and if AFDC works fine and if it doesn't you try something new. Within this sort of milieu of different values and different power structures in any one decade or two decades there might be some big terrible programs that just don't work and it's not recognized. But over the long haul, even a flawed democracy enables a community of inquirers to, hopefully, progress.

I think that there's something about pragmatism being associated with the Progressive Movement. That the founders of the Constitution are important, but they certainly did not include women or blacks as part of the people that were created equal. Then you have someone like Dewey who worked to incorporate women. He was out there demonstrating in favor of women's suffrage as much as many women leaders. He was also one of the founders of the NAACP. I think that a public administrator can look at the pragmatic philosophy and at the early pragmatists as in some ways having a *simpático* with the importance of Democracy as a way to make decisions and to allocate resources. I feel like that kind of *simpático* reaffirms what we're doing.

Q: You speak about the consequences associated with problem solving. Can you elaborate on that?

A: Well, generally there's an action that after you've organized yourself somehow to act. Then, there will be consequences when you do act. What happens when you put forward a proposed employee classification scheme? What happens when you propose that there's a change in the manual? What happens if you propose that you allow different students to enter the university with different kinds of requirements? When you change the way people receive public welfare? Then you observe an action, what happens, and you analyze those consequences.

So, you have this continuity--this continuation of inquiry. Because I think the notion of problem succession exists--where you never really end up in the perfect world where you've solved all your problems. There will always be new problems that will sort of maybe come from the action that you created before. I mean, certainly race relations and that whole issue that slavery was a big problem and the Civil War was fought in order to overcome that problem. But that doesn't mean there aren't new manifestations of race relations issues now that we aren't having to deal with and when we do deal with them there will be consequences.

Q: You make a distinction between fragmented pragmatism and the whole of pragmatism, which you advocate for public administration. Please elaborate on that.

A: In one way, let's step back, and take into account that in my study of pragmatism as compared to other social science philosophies that underlie, like logical positivism or logical empiricism, that these two don't incorporate ethics or aesthetics as part of their philosophy. Because if you are in the empirical world, there's sort of a value-fact dichotomy that is embedded in the other philosophies that there's a world of value and there's a world of fact and the world of fact is the empirical world.

Pragmatism incorporates both aesthetics and an ethics. Dewey wrote one of the major ethics textbooks used throughout the United States in the 1920's. So, that is something that I think in terms of other philosophies or sciences are fragmented. The other is when pragmatism has been dismissed in some ways because it has been seen as a philosophy of expediency. This view assumes that pragmatism mean that an individual would do whatever worked at the time regardless of the consequences. I think that when you look at the whole of pragmatism then it takes into account its connection with Democracy.

When pragmatism is applied to PA, pragmatism should not be considered as a philosophy that only wants to go with what works. Rather, pragmatism wants to go with what works in light of values that have been put forward and embedded in the Constitution. And this is what the public administrator is ultimately serving--the Constitution. I could see pragmatism employed by ruthless corporate enterprises without taking into account the consequences, this is where the end in view does not incorporate a better world, it only incorporates profit. It's a fragmented pragmatism in one sense because it doesn't take into account the elements of ethics that are built into the pragmatic philosophy as handed down by Dewey.

Q: How does pragmatism relate to the methodology you have chosen to teach students to perform research and report their findings in POSI 5304B and in 5397?

A: What it's done for me. Since I understand the inquiry process and the learning process through the pragmatic lenses, I can kind of see where they're [the students] at and how I can better meet their needs. Or what goes on in the early stages, the doubt and the confusion and the questioning of what they're going to do, that's a normal process of inquiry. It's a normal process of learning. Almost ironically in some sense, the more the student struggles often the greater the fruits later on. My job is to kind of keep them on track is to say: listen read-write-think-connect to experience. Things will start making sense to you if you do this with a good faith effort.

Connecting to experience is taking into account the qualitative nature of problem recognition. But then, part of what Dewey in *Logic, A Theory of Inquiry* really separates inquiry into two phases, one phase is a kind of ideation or conceptual phase and that's what I really work with in POSI 5304B to get them to find the concepts, the ideas, the conceptual structure that will enable them to have some kind of productive inquiry and let them recognize what it is. And then, next is going out and doing it and that's what happens in 5397 is doing the inquiry. Collecting the data, the action part occurs in 5397, the conceptualizing hopefully occurs in POSI 5304B.

END OF TAPE (Interview lasted approximately 42 minutes)

Appendix E

(This presentation is referenced in the bibliography as:
Shields, Patricia M. 1996a.)

A System for Guiding Students in Research and Writing Applied Research Projects and Master's Theses

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National Association of Public Affairs and
Administration, Denver, Colorado, October 16-19,
1996.

Preface
Using the Philosophy of Pragmatism to Guide Public
Administration Inquiry

For the past several years I have investigated pragmatism as a philosophy with applications for public administration.¹ Pragmatism has emerged as the philosophical underpinning that I use in this two course sequence. Below is a brief explanation of how the ideas of John Dewey, William James and Charles Sanders Peirce have shaped my teaching.

Pragmatism is the philosophy of common sense. It uses purposeful human inquiry as a focal point. Inquiry is viewed as a continuing process which acknowledges the qualitative nature of human experience as problematic situations emerge and are recognized. Recognition involves the doubt associated with questioning existing belief systems. Doubt is resolved through critical reasoning and ultimately tested in action. It is the philosophy of common sense because actions are assessed in light of practical consequences. Finally, inquiry is not necessarily limited to individual effort, rather it often incorporates a "community of inquirers."

John Dewey (1938) examined many of the above elements in *Logic: a Theory of Inquiry*. The following is a discussion of how I apply *Logic* to the higher education classroom. I have a pair of classes that is well suited for application of many of the ideas in *Logic*. I supervise about 25 Applied Research Projects a year. These projects are about 50-75 pages long and always include an empirical component. They are like masters theses since they end up in a library and are defended before a faculty committee. The first class in the pair is a "getting ready to write" research methods class. It is in this class that the *Logic* ideas are applied most directly.

After I began to read Dewey and Peirce², I saw that what I was doing was supervising lots of individual "inquiry" projects. It made sense, that if I used the pragmatic "Logic of Inquiry" the process would be better. The first issue student's face is finding a topic and then ultimately a "problem" around which their project will be built. This is clearly a critical component. The student's assignment is to READ-WRITE-THINK-CONNECT TO EXPERIENCE, and then to do this again and again. They are of course working on their

¹ See Shields, Patricia M. "Pragmatism: Public Administrations Policy Imprint," *Administration and Society*, November 1996.

² Charles Sanders Peirce is known as the founder of American Pragmatism. See Peirce, Charles Sanders, "The Fixation of Belief," in *Charles Sanders Peirce: Selected Writings* pp. 91-112. Edited, Introduction and Notes by Philip Wiener. New York: Dover Publications, 1958. Peirce, Charles Sanders, "How to Make our ideas Clear" in *Charles Sanders Peirce: Selected Writings* pp. 113-136. Edited, Introduction and Notes by Philip Wiener. New York: Dover Publications, 1958. Dewey gives credit to Peirce in the preface of *Logic*.

literature review. I have a specific "notebook" method that they are required to use as they take notes on articles. They may be called upon at any time to discuss a recent article that they have read.

The most interesting aspect of this exercise is the state of confusion the class is thrown into. They enter what I would call the "doubt" state. The benefits of the "doubt" state are unambiguous. The more a student is willing to hang in there and live with the doubt and to READ-WRITE-THINK-CONNECT TO EXPERIENCE in good faith, the better the final product. As a class we discuss the anxiety that often accompanies the doubt state. They have to trust that the problematic situation will be clearer as they progress. The MPA students are adults that work in the public sector. They have a rich experiential context to draw upon. They have "indeterminate" situations in their work environment that puzzle them. This is how they are connecting to experience.

Dewey (1938, p.117) says that "Inquiry is the directed or controlled transformation of an indeterminate situation into a determinately unified one. The transition is achieved by means of operations of two kinds which are in functional correspondence with each other. One kind of operations deals with ideational or conceptual subject-matter. This subject matter stands for possible ways and ends of resolution. It anticipates a solution.... The other kind of operations is made up of activities involving the techniques and organs of observations."

The most challenging part of research for the very a-theoretical students is the first part the "ideational or the conceptual." As the students search for their research question or problem they are also charged with searching for a conceptual framework. If they choose a research question which is exploratory in nature they usually use "working hypotheses"³ as their conceptual organizing device. They will probably be going into an agency asking questions. Working hypotheses have proved very successful because they are focused yet flexible.

I try to get the students to see, as Larry Hickman (1990) notes in *Dewey's Pragmatic Technology*, that theory is instrumental. It is a tool for them to use. The best students leave the two course sequence with the sense that theory is a tool. This insight alone is probably worth the exercise.

I also use William James' hotel corridor metaphor to demonstrate the instrumental nature of theory. For James, pragmatism lies in the midst of theories like a hotel corridor. All the rooms open out to it and all the rooms can be entered. Pragmatism *owns* the corridor and the right to move freely from room to room (James, *Pragmatism*, 1907, p. 54).

Using pragmatic logic, one would *not* expect a unifying PA theory. Rather PA is organized around the principle that theories are useful and should be judged by their usefulness in solving problems. Students therefore must search for the appropriate theory or invent their own. Ownership of the corridor joins theory and practice.

James (*Essays in Pragmatism*, 1959, p.4) also has a practical justification for theory which students find appealing. People who use theory *work smart* because it takes "far less mental effort" to understand the complexity of the world. It is a "labor saving contrivance." The facts of the world in their sensible diversity are always before us, but our theoretic need is that they should be conceived in a way that reduces their manifoldness to simplicity. Our pleasure at finding that a chaos of facts is the expression of a single underlying fact is like the relief of the musician at resolving a confused mass of sound into melodic or harmonic order. The simplified result is handled with *far less mental effort* than the original data; and a philosophic conception of nature is thus in no metaphorical sense a *labor-saving contrivance* (italics added).

This justification is particularly helpful when they have to develop a classification system as their conceptual framework. The conceptual framework is a labor saving contrivance because it helps to organize both the methodology section (operationalization of theory) and the results.

The "methods" part of the first course involves Dewey's "techniques and organs of observation." Since the students have been acquainted with survey research in another class, I focus on qualitative methods. I try to view qualitative research as naturalistic inquiry -- another theme developed in *Logic*.

Since I have been consciously applying the insights of *Logic* to the way I supervise these projects, the final papers have improved. Two were even identified as cutting edge research at the 1995 national ASPA conference. (It helps when your student is Director of Strategic Planning of a major state agency.)

Also, faculty from throughout the university (philosophy, geography, sociology, higher education administration and law) have read and signed off on the papers. The papers are also used by public agencies. At their best, these papers become part of a logic-in-use helping to address on-going government problems.

After completing the first course, the students are ready to collect data and write up the results. They are testing their theories in action (the final component of inquiry). In the first class, I try to develop a sense of comradeship among the students. Some of the students' closest friends emerge from this process. Hopefully, it mirrors the "community of inquirers" that is part of the definition of pragmatism presented above.

Two Course Sequence: MPA Capstone Research Projects

Course 1: A formal research class that gets students ready to collect data and write the paper

1. Review of the literature: The Notebook Method
2. Investigating the role of the research problem
3. Understanding and recognizing theory in empirical research
 - theory is a **conceptual organizing device**
 - theory is **instrumental**
4. Understanding the link between research purpose, theory and method
5. Introducing qualitative research methods
6. Examining the elements of a proposal: conceptualizing the project from question through theory to method.

Course 2: independent study -- data collection and written report

1. Formal Proposal
2. Revised Literature Review
3. Data Collection
4. First/Final Draft
5. Formal Defense

Course Description

This course is designed to prepare you for successful completion of your Applied Research Project. Since I assume a significant quantitative ability, the course will emphasize qualitative and conceptual aspects of research methods. This course will also focus on building and applying a few fundamental research and conceptual skills students often lack when they begin their Applied Research Project.

Office: 332 Liberal Arts
Office Hours: Wednesday 4-5 and 6-6:30
Monday, before Class 6:00 (in Austin/ POSI 5343)

Telephone: Office 245-3279 or 245-2143
Home 280-3548 (Austin)

e-mail ps07@academia.swt.edu

Course Objectives:

1. At the end of the semester, the student will demonstrate significant conceptual and methodological skills by completing a structural analysis of three scholarly journal articles.
2. At the end of the semester, the student will demonstrate significant conceptual and analytic research skills through the successful completion of a review of the literature.
3. At the end of the semester the student will understand the nature of field research as applied to public administration.
4. At the end of the semester the student will understand how conceptual foundations form the basis for all sound social science research.
5. At the end of the semester, the student will be better able to interpret and use quantitative information.

Evaluation Criteria:

- | | |
|--|-----|
| 1. Paper (Literature Review) | 30% |
| 2. Background documentation (end of semester) | 10% |
| 3. Background documentation (mid semester check) | 5% |
| 3. Presentation (ARP Prospectus) | 10% |
| 4. Structural analysis of an article (3) (8 points each) | 24% |
| 5. Class participation | 21% |

Note: The paper, background documentation for the paper, and the presentation are all over the same topic. Thus, the paper topic constitutes 55% of your grade and, ideally, the paper will be a *first draft of the literature review chapter* of your Applied Research Project.

The presentation is an oral presentation of the research prospectus. Ideally, it represents an *oral outline (with feedback) of the prospectus you must hand in prior to registering for the Applied Research Project.*

Required Texts:

- Babbie, Earl. *The Practice of Social Research*. (Fifth edition) Belmont CA: Wadsworth, 1989. (This book is to be used as a reference. You may use an earlier edition)
- DiLeonardi, Joan and Curtis, Patrick. *What to Do When the Numbers Are In*. Chicago: Nelson-Hall, 1988.
- Morgan, David L. *Focus Groups as Qualitative Research*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications, 1988.
- Yin, Robert. *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*. 2nd edition. Newbury Park CA: Sage Publications, 1994.
- Course packet purchased at the book store. (CP)
- Handouts (HO)

Course Outline:

- | | |
|---------------|---|
| Aug. 28 (w1) | Introduction |
| Sept. 4 (w2) | Thinking about Research and Science |
| | Readings: Skim Babbie |
| | Review 3 Applied Research Projects (ARP) |
| | Assignment: |
| | Do review Questions over the 3 ARPs (You can find ARPs in the library. There are some that can be checked out from the MPA office. See Liana) |
| | PANEL PRESENTATION |
| Sept. 11 (w3) | Literature Review |
| | Explanation of notebook method |
| | Thinking about Research and Science (cont.) |
| | The Cycle of Research: From Topic to finished product |
| | Purpose of Research |
| | Linking concepts/theory and purpose |
| | Conceptual categories and hypotheses |
| | Readings: Skim Babbie Chs. 4-5 |
| | Shields "Pragmatism..." (CP) |

Assignment 1: Find definitions for the terms found in the course packet. Be prepared to discuss.

Assignment 2: Study Questions "Pragmatism" (CP)

Sept. 18 (w4)

What is a Hypothesis?

Assignment 1: Go to the library and find articles with hypotheses. Bring the three hypotheses to class.

Assignment 2: Go over the list of terms from the previous class. Group terms that are similar into 3-7 categories. Write a sentence for each category explaining what the terms have in common (why they are similar). There is no right or wrong answer. This is an exercise in abstraction.

Sept. 25 (w5)

Finding Conceptual Frameworks: Linking theory and methods

Readings: Cope and Davis (CP)
Stalnaker and Shields
Kohen

Assignment: Study Questions -Conceptual Frameworks (CP)

Oct. 2 (w6)

Identifying the Research Question

Assignment 1: First structural analysis of article due
Assignment 2: Come to class with two alternative research questions written up. Be prepared to present your questions to the class. (The questions will NOT be graded. The quality and thoughtfulness of your discussion will be.)

Oct. 9 (w7)	<p>Operationalization: Moving from Theory to Measurement Unit of analysis/Levels of Measurement Sampling Operationalizing Hypotheses Dealing with Bias and Error: Validity and Reliability</p> <p>Readings: DiLeonardi & Curtis Chs. 1-3 Babbie Chs. 6-7</p>
Oct. 16 (w8)	<p>Guest Speaker Dr. Hassan Tajalli Elements of a literature Review with emphasis on Political Science literature</p> <p>Assignment: Work on notebook</p>
Oct. 23 (w9)	<p>Field Research</p> <p>Readings: Yin (all)</p> <p>Assignment 1: Study questions Yin Assignment 2: Mid semester notebook check</p> <p>..... BRING YOUR NOTEBOOK TO CLASS. IT WILL BE EXAMINED AND REVIEWED BY THE INSTRUCTOR DURING THE BREAK, BEFORE AND AFTER CLASS. THERE MUST BE EXTENSIVE NOTES ON 12 ARTICLES OR BOOK CHAPTERS. THIS IS WORTH 5% OF YOUR GRADE.....</p>
Oct. 30 (w10)	<p>Field Research (Cont.) Panel discussion (Guest Speakers)</p> <p>Readings: Swanson (CP)</p> <p>Assignment 1: Swanson study questions Assignment 2: Second structural analysis due</p>
Nov. 6 (w11)	<p>Review required Outlining procedure</p> <p>What is a Prospectus?</p> <p>Experimental Design</p>

Readings: Example of outline and text (CP)
 Prospectus handout and research deadlines (CP)
 Sample Prospectus Section (CP)
 Babbie Ch. 8 Skim Chs. 9&11

Assignment : Study questions over sample prospectus

Nov. 13 (w12)

Focus Group
 Indexes and Scales
 Class exercises: applying research terms and concepts to research settings.

Readings: Babbie: skim Ch 15
 Morgan (all)

Assignment: Study questions

Nov. 20 (w13)

Presentations - Research Prospectus (oral only)
Special Note: See form which is used to evaluate the oral presentation. Bring to class. Fill in relevant information.

Nov. 27 (w14)

No class Wednesday before Thanksgiving
 the University closes at 5:00 p.m.

Dec. 4 (w15)

Presentations - Research Prospects (oral only)
Assignment: Third Structural analysis due

Dec. 11 (w16)

Presentations - Research Prospectus (oral only)
paper due: Literature Review

11

The Cycle of Empirical Research
a few Comments

Patricia M. Shields
POSI 5304b

Note: This assumes the use of deductive reasoning

Beginning

Find a Topic

Learn about the topic — Read—Write—Think—connect to experience

This is where the literature review begins—

gives you a purpose and deadline so that you will Read—Write—Think

Formulate the Research Question

As you Read-Write-Think and connect to experience, the question should begin to emerge and focus. The actual question should be tied to the topic but much more narrow.

Middle

Determine research purpose— This connects to your question

Exploratory

Descriptive

Understanding

Explanatory

Predictive

Find Conceptual Framework to aid in answering question/addressing purpose

Working Hypotheses

Conceptual Categories

Ideal Types or Standards

Formal Hypotheses

Models

Determine the Research Design or technique/method used to answer the question.

Survey

experiment or quasi-experimental design

case study

document analysis

focus groups

structured interviews

content analysis

other

Deal with **research method issues** such as variable measurement, data collection plan, operationalization of the hypotheses, consider bias and error issues etc.

End

Collect Data

Summarize Data — Test Hypotheses ---

Compare results with expected results

Answer Research question — Organize the information (Use the conceptual framework as your guide) Write-think-connect to experience

1. Exploratory Research

Types of Questions Anything goes What, When, Where, Why, Who, How or any combination of the above.

Types of Conceptual Frameworks Most of the time either loosely defined descriptive categories, working hypotheses

Types of methods/techniques Case study research, focus group, structured interviews, document analysis

Statistics Used Usually none— But anything goes.

2. Descriptive Research

Types of Questions What (you are describing something — what are its characteristics — What are the attitudes of...)

Types of Conceptual Frameworks Descriptive categories

Types of methods/techniques Survey, content analysis

Statistics Used Simple descriptive statistics Mean, Median, percentages, percent distributions.

Understanding Research

Types of Questions How close is situation (law) x to the ideal/standard?

Types of Conceptual Frameworks Ideal type or standard (usually needs categories)

Types of methods/techniques case study, survey, document analysis, structured interviews

Statistics Used Simple descriptive statistics Mean, Median, percentages, percent distributions.

3. Explanatory Research

Types of Research Questions Why (loosely what is the cause) (loosely does A cause B or is there a relationship between A and B. It is also possible they have lots of factors e.g. A, B, C, D.....)

Types of Conceptual Frameworks Formal Hypotheses (generally between at least two concepts)
Hint for structural analysis: When the hypotheses is put in operational form one can speak of the relationship between the independent and dependent variable. Variables are operationalized concepts. You can work backwards to find the abstract concept.

Types of methods/techniques Experimental/Quasi-experimental design, survey

Statistics Used t-statistics (comparison of means), correlation, Chi-square, Analysis of Variance, simple regression, multiple regression

4. Predictive Research Seldom used for ARPs

Types of Research Questions What can one expect in the future? IF you know the answer to the why question then you can generally answer the predictive question.

Types of Conceptual Frameworks Models and formal hypotheses

Types of methods/techniques Experimental/Quasi-experimental design, survey

Statistics Used Analysis of Variance, simple regression, multiple regression Usually the most sophisticated of techniques.

Hypotheses

Hypothesis — Statement of expectations. It must be possible to collect evidence that will either support or fail to support the expectation.

Hypotheses are never proven. They are supported with empirical evidence. -

Working Hypothesis — This is a term borrowed from John Dewey's pragmatism. It deals with expectations that are preliminary in nature. Expectations that are subject to revision.

The expectations may be either simple or complex. They may deal with direct facts or relationships between factors.

These are usually the hypotheses used to guide qualitative research such as field or case studies. These are used in formative evaluations.

It still must be possible to collect evidence with can either support or fail to support the hypothesis.

Formal Hypotheses --- These hypotheses generally deal with relationships between concepts or variables.

Loosely A causes B. Or, knowing information about A will tell you something about B. Most empirical work in academic journals like the Academy of Management use formal hypotheses.

Formal hypotheses are used in experimental and quasi experimental design. They are used in formal evaluation research. (Program A causes outcome B).

A formal hypothesis can be either conceptual or operational. Conceptual hypotheses are at the abstract level. They are not tied to a study design. Operational or operationalized hypotheses deal with variables (concepts that are measured)

Null Hypothesis A type of formal hypothesis that states that two variables are not related in the population. It is the null hypothesis that is actually tested by tests of statistical significance.

Generally a null hypothesis is paired with a formal research hypothesis. In program evaluation the guiding formal hypothesis would be that the program influences the outcome. The null hypothesis would be that there is no relationship between the program and the outcome. If the null hypothesis is rejected the formal hypothesis is supported by the evidence.

- Revised by Dr. Shields during Spring semester 1997, see the 3 pages these (14 + 15) - new revision pages are not numbered

Structural Analysis of a Journal Article

POSI 5304B

PATRICIA M. SHIELDS

For each assignment include a copy of the article reviewed. Part of the grade will be based on the choice of article must meet the criteria specified in the assignment. If possible, the topic should be the same as your review.

First Structural Analysis

1. Pick an article with easily identifiable hypotheses. And/or, choose an article which develops a conceptual framework.
2. Summarize the article in 100 to 200 words.
3. In a coherent essay, answer the following questions about the theory in the article.
 - a. Determine the purpose of the research (justify)
 - b. What type of reasoning was employed (inductive/deductive justify)
 - c. Identify key concepts. (were they well articulated. why/why not)
 - d. Identify important relationships among the concepts (if any)
 - e. Specify any conceptual hypotheses. (if applicable specify the direction of the hypotheses)
 - e. Describe and assess the conceptual framework
 - f. Relate the conceptual framework to the research purpose. (i.e., if the research purpose is descriptive show how the concepts can be used to describe the topic)
4. In a coherent essay answer the following questions about the methods used in the article.
 - a. Identify some of the key variables. If under 5 variable indicate all, otherwise indicate 5.
 - b. How are the above variables operationalized.
 - c. What is (are) the dependent variable(s), if any?
 - d.. What is (are) the independent variable(s). if any?

Second Structural Analysis

1. Pick an article with identifiable hypotheses.
2. Summarize the article in 100 to 200 words.
3. In a coherent essay, answer the following questions about the theory in the article.
 - a. Determine the purpose of the research (justify)
 - b. What type of reasoning was employed (inductive/deductive justify)
 - c. Identify key concepts. (were they well articulated. why/why not)
 - d. Identify important relationships among the concepts (if any)
 - e. Specify any conceptual hypotheses. (if applicable specify the direction of the hypothesis)
 - e. Describe and assess the conceptual framework
 - f. Relate the conceptual framework to the research purpose.
(e.g., if the research purpose is descriptive show how the concepts can be used to describe the topic)

4. In a coherent essay answer the following questions about the methods used in the article.

- a. What research technique or methodology was used?
- b. Was the technique/methodology appropriate for the research question?
- c. What is (are) the dependent variable(s)?
- d. What is (are) the independent variable(s)?
- e. Discuss how the variables are operationalized.
- f. Identify operationalized hypotheses.
- g. What kind of data was collected?
- h. If a sample was used, discuss the sampling technique.

Third Structural Analysis

1. Pick an article that analyzes data quantitatively and has identifiable (implicit or explicit) hypotheses.

2. Summarize the article in 100 to 200 words.

3. In a coherent essay, answer the following questions about the theory in the article.

- a. Determine the purpose of the research (justify)
- b. What type of reasoning was employed (inductive/deductive justify)
- c. Identify key concepts. (were they well articulated. why/why not)
- d. Identify important relationships among the concepts (if any)
- e. Specify any conceptual hypotheses. (if applicable specify the direction of the hypothesis)
- e. Describe and assess the conceptual framework
- f. Relate the conceptual framework to the research purpose.
(i.e., if the research purpose is descriptive show how the concepts can be used to describe the topic)

4. In a coherent essay answer the following questions about the methods used in the article.

- a. What research technique or methodology was used?
- b. Was the technique/methodology appropriate for the research question?
- c. What is (are) the dependent variable(s)? Identify the level of measurement.
- d. What is (are) the independent variable(s)? Identify the level of measurement.
- e. Discuss how the variables are operationalized.
- f. Identify operationalized hypotheses.
- g. What kind of data was collected? What is the unit of analysis?
- h. If a sample was used, discuss the sampling technique.

5. In a coherent essay answer the following questions about the statistical methods used in the article.

- a. What statistical technique(s) was (were) used?
- b. Was the statistical technique multivariate or univariate?
- c. Which results achieved statistical significance?
- d. Which statistical tests were performed? How were they used to test the above hypothesis?
- e. Was the statistical technique appropriate for the research question? Why? Why not?
- f. Was the technique well suited to the conceptual framework? Why? Why not?

Structural Analysis of a Journal Article
POSI 5304B
PATRICIA M. SHIELDS

For each assignment include a copy of the article reviewed. Part of the grade will be based on the choice of article. The article must meet the criteria specified in the assignment.

First Structural Analysis

1. Pick an article that analyzes data quantitatively and has identifiable (implicit or explicit) hypotheses.
2. Summarize the article in 100 to 200 words.
3. In a coherent essay, answer the following questions about the theory in the article.
 - a. Specify the hypotheses. (choose at least two)
 - b. Identify key concepts. (were they well articulated? why/why not?)
 - c. How are the concepts related?
4. In a coherent essay, answer the following questions about the methods used in the article.
 - a. What research technique or methodology was used?
 - b. What is (are) the dependent variable(s)? In your discussion relate the dependent variable to the relevant concept identified above. [repeat for each hypothesis]
 - c. What is (are) the independent variable(s)? In your discussion relate the independent variable to the relevant concept identified above. [repeat for each hypothesis]
 - d. Discuss how the variables are operationalized. [repeat for each hypothesis]
5. In a coherent essay answer the following questions about the statistical methods used in the article.
 - a. If available, specify the means of the dependent variable(s). Interpret the mean. [repeat for each hypothesis]
 - b. If available, specify the means of the independent variable(s). Interpret the mean. [repeat for each hypothesis]
 - c. What statistical technique(s) was (were) used?
 - d. Was the statistical technique multivariate or univariate?
 - e. What evidence was used to test the hypothesis. Did the evidence support the hypothesis? Justify. [repeat for each hypothesis]

Second Structural Analysis

1. Pick an article that analyzes data quantitatively and has identifiable (implicit or explicit) hypotheses.
2. Summarize the article in 100 to 200 words.
3. In a coherent essay, answer the following questions about the theory in the article.
 - a. Specify the hypotheses (choose at least two)
 - b. Identify key concepts. (were they well articulated. why/why not)
 - c. How are the concepts related?
4. In a coherent essay, answer the following questions about the methods used in the article.
 - a. What research technique or methodology was used?
 - b. What is (are) the dependent variable(s)? In your discussion relate the dependent variable to the relevant concept identified above. [repeat for each hypothesis]
 - c. What is the level of measurement used for the dependent variable(s)? [repeat for each hypothesis]
 - d. What is (are) the independent variable(s)? In your discussion relate the independent variable to the relevant concept identified above. [repeat for each hypothesis]
 - e. What is the level of measurement used for the independent variable(s)? [repeat for each hypothesis]
 - f. Discuss how the variables are operationalized. [repeat for each hypothesis]
 - g. What kind of data was collected?
 - h. If a sample was used, discuss the sample and the sampling technique.
5. In a coherent essay, answer the following questions about the statistical methods used in the article.
 - a. If available, specify the means and standard deviations of the dependent variable(s). Interpret. [repeat for each hypothesis]
 - b. If available, specify the means and standard deviation of the independent variable(s). Interpret. [repeat for each hypothesis]
 - c. Which statistical technique was used and what statistical tests were performed to test the hypothesis? [repeat for each hypothesis]
 - d. Which results achieved statistical significance?
 - e. What evidence was used to test the hypothesis. Did the evidence support the hypothesis? Justify. [repeat for each hypothesis]
 - f. Describe the connection between the conceptual framework and the empirical portion of the article.
 - g. Assess the conceptual framework as an organizing device for the empirical portion of the article.

Third Structural Analysis

1. Pick an article that analyzes data quantitatively and has identifiable (implicit or explicit) hypotheses.
2. Summarize the article in 100 to 200 words.
3. In a coherent essay, answer the following questions about the theory in the article.
 - a. Specify the hypotheses (choose at least two)
 - b. Identify key concepts. (were they well articulated. why/why not)
 - c. How are the concepts related?
4. In a coherent essay, answer the following questions about the methods used in the article.
 - a. What research technique or methodology was used?
 - b. What is (are) the dependent variable(s)? In your discussion relate the dependent variable to the relevant concept identified above. [repeat for each hypothesis]
 - c. What is the level of measurement used for the dependent variable(s)? [repeat for each hypothesis]
 - d. What is (are) the independent variable(s)? In your discussion relate the dependent variable to the relevant concept identified above. [repeat for each hypothesis]
 - e. What is the level of measurement used for the independent variable(s)? [repeat for each hypothesis]
 - f. Discuss how the variables are operationalized. [repeat for each hypothesis]
 - g. What kind of data was collected?
 - h. If a sample was used, discuss the sample and the sampling technique.
5. In a coherent essay, answer the following questions about the statistical methods used in the article.
 - a. If available, specify the mean(s) and standard deviation(s) of the dependent variable(s). Interpret. [repeat for each hypothesis]
 - b. If available, specify the mean(s) and standard deviation(s) of the independent variable(s). Interpret. [repeat for each hypothesis]
 - c. Which statistical technique was used and what statistical tests were performed to test the hypothesis? [repeat for each hypothesis]
 - d. Which results achieved statistical significance?
 - e. What evidence was used to test the hypothesis. Did the evidence support the hypothesis? Justify. [repeat for each hypothesis]
 - f. Describe the connection between the conceptual framework and the empirical portion of the article.
 - g. Assess the conceptual framework as an organizing device for the empirical portion of the article.

The notebook method is a method to write papers. With it, you can organize information and use short periods of time effectively. It facilitates analysis and integration of the readings. Students who use this method swear by it. Also, the method is an excellent organizing tool and can be adapted to work or job related projects.

Use of this method is a requirement. It constitutes 10% of your overall grade. Bring the notebook to that class and to each class thereafter. Ten to 15 minutes of each class will be spent discussing your progress.

- *1. Buy a three ring notebook. Pockets on the side are helpful. In this notebook you will keep most information relevant to your paper. For example, keep this handout in the notebook. There are a few essential items which must be included in the notebook when you hand it in. These items are starred (*).
- *2. In the front keep a "things to do" list. Include all tasks you need to complete. Try and insure that the items on the list take different amounts of time. For example, one task, such as reading a short article might take 15 minutes. Another task, such as finding 5 articles, might take an hour and a half. The list should include the articles to read and write up. Date the item when task is completed.
3. Keep a list of the articles you wish to find. Many of the articles will be located through standard bibliographical tools in the library or from footnotes in other references.
4. Keep any relevant phone numbers, e-mail addresses, addresses or dates (personal timetable). Keep items referred to often.
- *5. Keep a running bibliography. If you are using a computer, keep it on disk. If you do not have access to a computer, put the references on index cards. Use Turabian. The cards are easily alphabetized later.
- *6. Keep your notes on the articles in another section of the notebook. These notes can be written up by hand or on the computer. In either case, use the format attached. Key information on the notes include the authors last name, the year, the page and when quoting indicate through quotation marks. The notes must be placed in your notebook in alphabetical order by author's last name.

There must be at least 25 articles reviewed. There must be detailed notes on at least 20 of these articles. The format must be as specified in the example.

- *7. Make at least two outlines of your paper. Begin the outline with a brainstorming list. What ideas, facts, critical points, concepts, hypotheses, do you want to include in the paper? Let your mind run free. Be creative. Then, review the list. Write a sentence or two which indicates the purpose of your paper. Review the list in light of the purpose. Adjust the list to take into account your purpose. You are now ready to begin the first draft of your outline (major headings). A pattern should emerge from the list. There will be natural groupings of topics. The first and last major heading are obvious; Introduction which includes the paper's question or purpose and Conclusion or summary. The other major headings will be developed from the groupings in your brainstorming list. Try and come up with a broad category that will describe the groupings. You now have the first draft of your outline. The second draft is more detailed. Leave plenty of room between items on the outline. You are getting ready for the next step in the process.

Now a review of the major steps in the outlining process.

- a. Brainstorm list (You may keep a list as you go along)
 - b. Statement of purpose. **I want to see this in the paper.**
 - c. Find the natural groupings in the list. What fits together, what is the level of detail.
 - d. Start your outline, include only the major headings. A 20-25 page paper should include no more than 5-8 major headings including the introduction and conclusion.
 - e. Second draft of outline. Lots more detail. Take items from the brainstorm list to form subheading within the larger groupings.
 - f. Leave lots of space between sections in the outline
- *8. Go to the beginning of your alphabetized references that are in another section of the notebook. Start with the first article, review your notes and place the relevant information from the reference in the outline in the space provided. The relevant information might be a key word or a phrase but always includes the author's name and page. Proceed to the next article until all reference material are incorporated into the outline. This stage is critical. It is important to be flexible. Going through the references you may discover that a topic has been omitted from the outline. Here you are free to amend the outline to accommodate any new insights. Also many of the references will be useful in more than one section of the outline. This helps to create a well integrated paper. You are now ready to write. The outline headings can be used for headings in the paper.

Don't forget your paper must have a purpose. I will evaluate it in light of your ability to achieve the purpose.

Example of how to write up an article

CHARLES LEVINE PAR 1986

"THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT IN THE YEAR 2000:
ADMINISTRATIVE LEGACIES OF THE REAGAN YEARS"

- 195 Three aspect of the Reagan legacy on the Adm state (1) the rôle & reach of Gov in Am's mixed econ (2) the organizational & adm apparatus that is used to carry out gov's role (3) the role of gov employees-- career civil servants & political appointees -- in the policy process
- 196 3 dimensions of adm state (1) what gov shd do? (2) How it shd do it? (3) who shd do it?
- there have been few major policy changes over the Reagan Adm yrs because our system is cumbersome & complicated
- 197 although thae actual policies have changed only marginally the huge deficit and Reagans conservative philosophy result in the second legacy of the Reagan yrs "indirectly through the deficit, it has changed the dialogue surrounding gov from one of debating additions to the scope of gov activities to a focus on how to maintain the functions and fund the prgms that gov has already assumed."
- Sees arms control as a long shot way to take pressure off the def budget and hence the overall budget
- 198 "A 3rd legacy of the Reagan pres-- and perhaps the one that will have the most lasting effect-- has been to legitimize debate over the tools and techniques of policy implemenataion...dependence on third party providers... By insisting on greater reliance on contracting-out gov respon to pvt sec service provider, the use of user fees for gov ser, and other alternatser deliv mechanisms, the Reagan adm has accentuated the trend AWAY from the fed gov direct provision of services."

Levine, Charles. "The Federal Government in the Year 2000: Administrative Legacies of the Reagan Years." Public Administration Review 46 (May/June 1986): 195-206. (This is the source--it is NOT necessary to include for your assignment.)

Prospectus
POS1 5397
The Applied Research Project

The research prospectus should include the following:

1. Project title
2. Statement of the research question
3. Conceptual framework
4. Methodology
5. Bibliography

Statement of the Research Question or Problem (1 - 5 paragraphs)

Introduce the topic. Include general information which tells why the problem is interesting, timely etc. This discussion justifies your choice of research question. Make sure the topic is relevant to public administration.

After the introductory paragraph(s), state the research question/problem. This statement should be very specific.

The actual research question/problem statement generally takes one of two forms.

1. It can be in the form of a question.

EXAMPLES:

- * What is the impact of ABC County's program of allowing patrol officers to bring their patrol car's home when they are off duty?
- * Is the contract monitoring system at TDXX effective at facility XYZ
- * What is the status of Texas university faculty compared with university faculty at peer institutions? What is the likely impact of any disparity?
- * How have conceal carry laws influenced the incidence and pattern of violent crime?

2. It can also be a declarative sentence.

EXAMPLES:

- * The purpose of the research is to assess the contracting system used by TDXY.
- * The purpose of the research is two fold. First, the determinants of job satisfaction at TDWWs ABC facility will be examined. Secondly, based upon the findings, recommendations to improve job satisfaction and performance will be developed.
- * The purpose of this research is to assess the Employee Assistance Program at XYZ City.

Conceptual Framework (1 to 3 pages)

The conceptual framework provides the theory for the project. Discuss the broad research purpose(exploratory, descriptive, etc.) Link the purpose and conceptual framework. (See Appendix)The conceptual framework can be thought of as an organizing device. It helps to define and focus the topic/research question. It helps the researcher assess the relevance of information. It helps determine the content and type of empirical information that must be collected. Finally, it helps to organize the results. While the research question/problem should be as specific as possible, the conceptual framework should be general and abstract.

Common Conceptual Frameworks include:

- Working Hypotheses
- Conceptual Categories
- Ideal Types or Standards
- Formal Hypotheses
- Models

Methodology (1 to 5 pages)

In this section discuss the technique/method you intend to use to address the research question and/or test hypotheses. Explain why it is the most appropriate method to address the research question.

Review several resources that provide scholarly discussion of the methodology you have selected. Provide an analytical discussion of the strengths and the weaknesses of the method you have selected based on your review of research methodology literature. What can this method tell you? What information cannot be evaluated or derived with the use of this methodology? Are there other methods that could have been used for your research? The research techniques you might use include: Survey research, Document analysis, Case study, Experiment/Quasi-experimental design, Focus Groups, Simulation, Aggregate data analysis or a combination of the above.

Discuss the specifics of the methodology.

For any design that **requires a sample**, discuss the population, sampling frame, sampling method(random, systematic, stratified), expected sample size and sources of bias or error.

After the **technique** has been chosen, incorporate the relevant information:

For **survey research**, include a preliminary copy of the instrument and a discussion of how you plan to pretest the instrument.

For **experimental/quasi-experimental** design, include a discussion of the control group/comparison group and a description of the design e.g., Pre-test, posttest comparison group, interrupted time series. Discuss variable measurement. Identify independent and dependent variables and show how they will be measured.

For Field Research/Case Study Research, discuss the organization(s) to be studied. Justify the choice of organization(s). Include a copy of the questionnaire (probably open ended) that you intend to use. Discuss who will be interviewed and the method used to select the sample. This discussion can be approximate, for example, what types of people do you intend to interview.

For Content Analysis, include a copy of the coding scheme and unit of analysis. What is the nature of the document or social artifact that you will be studying. Remember that this is the type of research that needs a full discussion of the sample.

For Focus Groups, include a copy of the questions or issues that will be the topic of the discussion. Describe the number of groups, their approximate size and the type of people that will make up the group. Describe how the data will be collected (transcript or tape etc.).

For Document Analysis, list the documents that will be used. Document analysis is usually a supplemental method used in conjunction with field research/case study. Make the connection (triangulation).

For Analysis to Existing statistics or aggregate data analysis, discuss the data source used to address the research question. Be as specific as possible. Discuss how variables will be measured and if appropriate the independent and dependent variables.

Connecting the method to the conceptual framework (Operationalization)

Exploratory research. Link the working hypotheses to the method. For example, the open ended questions used in the interview process would connect to specific working hypotheses.

Descriptive research. Link the conceptual categories to the method. For example, which questionnaire items refer to which conceptual category.

Understanding (as research purpose) Link the ideal categories or standards to the data collection technique. Discuss the instrument(s) you will use to determine whether the organization you are investigating meets the "ideal type" criteria. Link the elements of the instrument to corresponding ideal category.

Explanatory research. Operationalize your hypotheses. Include a discussion of your independent and dependent variables. indicate their level of measurement. If you are using survey research, indicate which questionnaire item makes up each variable. If you are using existing statistics, indicate the source of the data and the way it is measured. Give the codes and what they mean.

Statistics

Discuss how the data will be aggregated to test the hypotheses or collect the descriptive information. Name the statistical technique/tests that will be used. Justify this choice. (Hint: the and Curates book is very good for this. For example, if the hypothesis is and both the independent and dependent variables are nominal (level of measurement) the appropriate test is the Chi-Square. (See DiLeonardi & Curtis, p.77)

Appendix

1. Exploratory Research

Types of Questions Anything goes What, When, Where, Why, Who, How or any combination of the above.

Types of Conceptual Frameworks Most of the time either loosely defined descriptive categories, working hypotheses

Types of methods/techniques Field research/case studies, focus groups structured interviews, document analysis

Statistics Used Usually none— But anything goes.

2. Descriptive Research

Types of Questions What (you are describing something – what are its characteristics -- What are the attitudes of...)

Types of Conceptual Frameworks Descriptive categories

Types of methods/techniques Survey, content analysis

Statistics Used Simple descriptive statistics Mean, Median, percentages, percent distributions.

3. Understanding Research

Types of Questions How close is situation (law) x to the standard? How can x be improved?

Types of Conceptual Frameworks Ideal type or standard (usually categories)

Types of methods/techniques case study, survey, document analysis, structured interviews

Statistics Used descriptive statistics Mean, Median, percent distributions, simple t-statistic

4. Explanatory Research

Types of Research Questions Why (loosely what is the cause) (loosely does A cause B or is there a relationship between A and B. It is also possible the have several causal factors

Types of Conceptual Frameworks Formal Hypotheses (generally between at least two concepts)
Hint for structural analysis: When the hypotheses is put in operational form one can speak of the relationship between the independent and dependent variable. Variables are operationalized concepts. You can work backwards to find the abstract concept.

Types of methods/techniques Experimental/Quasi-experimental design, survey

Statistics Used t-statistics (comparison of means), correlation, Chi-square, Analysis of Variance, simple regression, multiple regression

5. Predictive Research Seldom used for ARPs

Types of Research Questions What can one expect in the future? IF you know the answer to the why question then you can generally answer the predictive question.

Types of Conceptual Frameworks Models and formal hypotheses

Types of methods/techniques Experimental/Quasi-experimental design, survey

Statistics Used Analysis of Variance, simple regression, multiple regression Usually the most sophisticated of techniques.

MEMORANDUM

TO: POSI 5397 Students
 FROM: Dr. Pat Shields
 DATE: Nov. 1, 1996
 SUBJ: **Applied Research Project
 Timetable and Procedures**

This memorandum is designed to provide information about the Applied Research Project requirements. Note the deadlines and procedures.

REQUIREMENTS

All Components of the Applied Research Project should be turned in by the deadline. I have set aside time to review materials. You can expect a short turn-around. Components submitted after the deadline will be read as I can fit them in.

1. **Research Prospectus etc. DUE: December 27, 1996**

The Prospectus or proposal is the plan of your research. It should include a

- a. Statement of the research question or problem
- b. Discussion of conceptual framework
- c. Discussion of the methodology used to address the research question.

The prospectus must be approved before you can register "in good standing" for POSI 5397. You can register over the telephone, but if your prospectus is not approved, you must withdraw from the class. You will know the status of your prospectus in time to receive a full tuition refund.

A supplemental handout on the prospectus will be provided.

2. **Bibliography (20 to 50 citations)**
 Select an approved format (Turabian or the American Psychological Association) and check to see that your format is accurate. Determine the appropriate format for books, journal articles, legal statutes.

Use only scholarly sources.

3. **Time Table:** List tasks to be completed and anticipated dates of completion for all parts of the project. The Time Table should include your proposed dates for completion of each chapter.

2. **Literature Review/progress report DUE: Jan. 27, 1997**

The **Progress Report** should include:

- Title of the Applied Research Project

- Chapter Titles
- Paragraph or two describing the material to be discussed in each chapter
- Listing of Relevant Appendices

The Progress Report must be **completed and approved** before the literature Review draft will be reviewed.

Literature Review

Use your Posi 5304b paper as a guide. Pay particular attention to comments that address how to change the Posi 5304b paper to a chapter. Hand in the Posi 5304b paper and my comments in with the revised version.

The Literature Review must be **completed and approved** before the First draft will be reviewed.

3. First Draft DUE: March 21, 1997

The first draft should be in the following format:

1. Typed on work processor
2. Fully expanded chapters
3. Charts/Tables may be in draft form (hand written is ok)
4. Footnotes/endnotes complete
5. Bibliography complete

If you do not complete the course, you must hand in a first draft to receive an "I." Otherwise, you must withdraw or receive an "F."

4. Final Draft Due: One week prior to your oral exam

5. Class meeting April 11, 1997

At this meeting, which will be at my home, at 7:00 P.M., we will discuss how to prepare for oral exams. My address is: 11005 Shady Hollow Dr., Austin 78748.

(512) 280-3548

6. Orals April 21 -29, 1997

FINAL NOTE: POSI 5397 is offered during each semester. If you fail to complete the paper during one semester, you can re register the following semester. If the student fails to meet deadlines or fails to submit an acceptable product, the professor is under no obligation to supervise the student during the following semester if that person is not on the schedule. Occasionally, a first draft is submitted on time, but the student is unable to meet the final draft deadlines. At the discretion of the professor and in rare instances, these students will receive an "I" upon completion of the project and can schedule orals early the following semester. A Letter of Completion can then be issued by the Dean of Graduate Studies.

A Sample Title Page for the Applied Research Project is attached and must be included at the front of the paper.

NOTE: THE OFFICIAL DROP DATE IS _____ (This date must be subject to change based on university policy. Make sure that you keep yourself informed regarding the drop date.)

The final Applied Research Project should be organized in a manner similar to the following:

- Chapter 1 Introduction and statement of research question and problem, including general introductory remarks and summaries of chapters
- Chapter 2 Review of the Literature (Concepts Should be Derived from this Section)
- Chapter 3 Research/Legal Setting (Describe agency or unit of government that you will be using in your research. The legislative and legal foundations of a policy or program may also be incorporated here.)
- Chapter 4 Methodology Chapter (Discuss methodology/technique, data, variable measurement and statistical techniques)
- Chapter 5 Analysis (Not Simple Description but Results)
- Chapter 6 Summary and Conclusions

POSI 5397 Requirement Checklist and Important Dates

Prospectus Dec. 27

- 1. Statement of problem ---
- 2. Conceptual framework ---
- 3. Methodology ---
- 4. Bibliography ---
- 5. Time table ---

Progress Report Jan. 27

- 1. Title of ARP ---
- 2. Chapter titles ---
- 3. Literature review ---
- 4. Paragraph for each ch ---
- 5. Relevant Appendices ---

First Draft March 21

Class Meeting April 11

Final Draft Date _____ One week before the oral

Oral Date _____

Oral Committee:

TITLE OF PAPER

BY

(YOUR NAME)

**AN APPLIED RESEARCH PROJECT (POLITICAL SCIENCE 5397) SUBMITTED TO
THE DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE
SOUTHWEST TEXAS STATE UNIVERSITY
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
FOR THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTERS OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION**

(Fall 1990)

FACULTY APPROVAL:
