ORIGINAL RESEARCH STUDY

The purpose of this assignment is for students to gain understanding of the research process by designing, conducting, and reporting on an original research project. Think of this assignment as an exercise. You will collect data (in some cases you may design your own measurement instruments), but there will not be time to establish high levels of comprehensiveness, reliability, and validity for that data.

Assignment
Conduct a research study and write a research report that includes the following sections:
- Title page
- Abstract
- Introduction
- Literature Review
- Methodology
- Results
- Discussion/Conclusions
- References

Topic
The topic is one you'll select based on your interests, experience, and understanding of the "do-ability" of research, especially with respect to the limited time available in this course. You might want to review the section "Identifying a Research Problem," pp. 47-55 in Ch2 of GBG, and R&F Ch4, Finding a Research Purpose, pp. 56-65.

General Guidelines
Your report should be 12-20 pages (double spaced, one-inch margins, 10-12 point type) in length, inclusive of all sections described below. Conform throughout to one of the following style manuals: Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (3rd edition, 1983); A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations (K.L. Turabian, 5th edition, 1987); or The Chicago Manual of Style (13th edition, 1982).

Sections of the Report
- Title Page. Use a separate page. Include title, name of this course, semester, your name, and style manual chosen (see above).
- Abstract. Use a separate page. See abstract assignment for guidelines. Examine abstracts in research journals to refine your understanding of the purposes and form of a good abstract. Length: 100-150 words.
- Introductory Section. Opens briefly with broad canvas: the research topic in the context of the "big picture" of the real world. Answers the "so what?" and "who cares?" questions. The opening could, and probably will, include popular and/or theoretical literature (see GBG, p. 59). Culminates in the "Need for the Study", which places the study in the context of the existing literature. GBG call this section "Interpretive Summary of the Current State of Knowledge" (See 2b on pg. 66 in GBG), followed by the state of the Research Hypothesis, or Research Question and Purpose (See GBG, pp 57-59 for guidance).
Literature Review (review GBG, p. 114-117). See BGB “Purposes of a Literature Review” in pp. 114-116 of Ch 4 to help you identify and address relevant sources. Include 10-15 research articles in this section, if possible. Note evaluative questions contained in Appendices F and G.

Methodology (Procedures). Describe the design of the study, the subjects used, instruments employed (including efforts to establish reliability and validity), methods of sampling and data collection, and the method of statistical analysis. For guidance here, see various sources on critical evaluation of research in photocopied handouts and texts, such as BGB Appendices G and H. Also, as with other sections of the study, use published research reports as models.

Results. This section is generally a report of the data produced by the study without interpretation or an attempt to address the significance of data relevant to the problems and subproblems of the study. See me if you need assistance in determining the best way to organize and report data.

Discussion/Conclusions. This is the section in which to address data in reference to your research questions. What conclusions are warranted on the basis of these data? Which are not? What are the practical implications for the population (students and teachers) and teaching situations addressed by your study? Are there any instances in which findings seem to be contradictory? Do your data call into question any “common knowledge” in the field? What directions for further research are suggested by your results?

References. Be sure to follow your chosen style manual (Turabian, Chicago, or APA) in listing references. All sources found in the body of the study must be in the references sections.

Due
Last class period before final exam.

Note: There are many good printed and online sources of information about good writing. I highly recommend Strunk and White The Elements of Style. This is a brief, concise little book jam-packed with excellent advise about how to write with clarity, economy, and impact. It is widely available in libraries and bookstores, and can now be found online at:

http://www.columbia.edu/acis/bartleby/strunk/

Another WWW site that you may find helpful is:

http://www.english.upenn.edu/~jlynch/grammar.html

No doubt sure there are dozens more.

Key