

Speaking Notes
PADM 5502
August 17, 2022
Dr. Neubauer

WHERE WE ARE

- This is our first class meeting
- We meet on Wednesdays.
- We will use GeorgiaView (D2L).
- Ideally, each of you will have access to software called SPSS.

REQUIRED TEXTBOOK

Why research methods matter: Essential skills for decision making
Gooden and Berry-James
978-0999235935
Melvin & Leigh, Publishers; 1st edition (January 1, 2018)

“WHERE’ WE WILL MEET EACH WEEK

<http://www.robertcat.net/zoom/>

No password is required.

NOTES FOR THIS WEEK

Scholars are EXPECTED to do research and publish articles in "the right" journals.

There is less expectation for PRACTITIONERS to do scholarly research.

IT IS important that practitioners be able to read and understand research reports and to identify situations in which additional information is needed to make a good decision.

I disagree with the statement in the first chapter of our textbook that you as a practitioner will never need to do actual data analysis. Even if that may be so, I believe you should know how to think like a data analyst, if only not to be taken advantage of by others.

Research is important for several reasons.

- We all need to be able to understand and interpret research findings. Otherwise, we are subject to being taken advantage of by others.
- So many programs not are expected to be EVIDENCE-BASED.

- Politicians and others have reasons to want to know what citizens think about things.
- Sometimes even practitioners want to UNDERSTAND things posed as hypotheses.
- Research is the basis of NEEDS ANALYSIS, which is important for administrative purposes and to support requests for money from various sources.

Another important thing -- research requires clarity of thought and clarity of expression. These are vital critical thinking skills.

And, it is good to understand something about PROBABILITY THEORY and STATISTICAL METHODS used to test hypotheses.

A few beginning highlights . . .

Primary and secondary research

Qualitative and quantitative research

Pure research and applied research

The physical sciences and the social sciences

Research focused on one case in contrast to aggregate research

Experimental research, observation and survey research

Designing and constructing a SURVEY RESEARCH INSTRUMENT

CODING people's responses to items on a survey research instrument

CLEANING AND ENTERING DATA into software

Applying STATISTICAL TECHNIQUES that are appropriate for use with the kind of data

Identifying the presence or absence of STATISTICAL SIGNIFICANCE between pairs of variables

Understanding difference between CORRELATION and CAUSATION

Interpreting and reporting findings correctly, citing the presence or absence of statistical significance when testing hypotheses

CONCLUSION TODAY

This is not "rocket science," but it is important social science and has both qualitative and quantitative/statistical aspects. Any professional public administrator (or other well-educated person) should know these things.

If possible, we are going to use software called SPSS. You may or may not have access to SPSS in your career. It is good tool for our purposes. I do this the "old school" way using the SYNTAX EDITOR in SPSS. The THINKING SKILLS required to do this are valuable. I am not trying to teach you to click buttons. I want you to THINK about what you want to do and how to do what needs to be done using SYNTAX rather than buttons.

I plan to more or less follow the chapters of our textbook. Having said that, I think we will focus on survey instruction design and implementation during the first half of the semester and the statistical analysis of survey data the second half of the semester.

Use Wikipedia and other resources to find information about things I make reference to in class that are not in our textbook.

This class is intended to "set up" the capstone project class. Dr. Adams-Cooper and I are working to figure out how to help make that happen. We want you to finish the capstone course the first (and hopefully only) time you take it. Ideally, you will select a research topic and methodology in this course, ask that it be approved by Dr. Adams-Cooper, and at least begin to do your literature review this semester.

Several of you are in both this course and the capstone course this semester. In that case you need to take additional responsibility to move forward very quickly.