

# Constructing a Research Proposal

# Title Page

- ◆ **Title of proposal (12-15 words)**
- ◆ **Your name (omit the word “by”)**
- ◆ **Departmental and Institution affiliation**
- ◆ **Date**

# Abstract

- ◆ 75-100 words
- ◆ Single paragraph on a separate page

**“An abstract is a brief, comprehensive summary of the contents of the article; it allows readers to survey the contents in an article quickly and, like a title, is used by abstracting and information services to index and retrieve articles.....An abstract is accurate, self-contained, concise and specific, non-evaluative, coherent and readable”**

*(American Psychological Association, 1994, pp. 8-10)*

# Introduction

- ◆ Gain reader's attention
- ◆ Make the purpose statement clear
- ◆ Focus on a single idea or a specific perspective

# Rationale

- ◆ Establish a conceptual framework which describes your orientation
- ◆ Cite recent research efforts in the area, and provide a description of the environment that will be under observation (3-5 pages)
- ◆ Indicate assumptions that have been formed
- ◆ Facilitate alternative starting points

# Importance

- ◆ Highlight the issues, concerns and unanswered questions as implied by the relevant literature, as well as your own perspectives.
- ◆ Explain why this study is important
- ◆ Identify the information void that will be filled as a result of this investigation
- ◆ **BDSW (Big deal!- So what?)**

# Research Questions

- ◆ Seeks to answer the unknown
- ◆ State what you want to know
- ◆ Highlight the perspectives of inquiry that will inform the data collection strategies

# Methodology (outline)

1. Participants
2. Description of the research situation
3. Materials
4. Data collection procedures
5. Data analysis design



# Limitations

- ◆ Identify potential weaknesses
- ◆ Acknowledge uncontrollable variables
- ◆ Indicate self-imposed limits to make the study manageable (delimitations)

# References

- ◆ Sufficient to document your preliminary case, and provides the information necessary to identify and retrieve each source
- ◆ Comprehensive literature review to follow as a section of the research report

# Appendices

- ◆ Only if necessary at this point
- ◆ Routinely include appendices beginning with subsequent drafts

# Format

1. Spacing, margins and pagination
2. Header includes running head with page number underneath
3. Footer includes date and name of author(s)
4. 10-15 pages; stapled together
5. Be succinct, tentative, and remember, the development order may vary

\*Primary reference: The Publication Manual  
of the American Psychological Association  
4<sup>th</sup> edition ed. (1994)

Robert (Rob) Maribe Branch, Associate Professor, University of Georgia,  
May, 1997