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Many vs. Two-Thirds: Diverging Traditions in Qualitative Sociological Writing

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RCEU22-SOC-JPS-03 Project Proposal

Project Title

Many vs Two-Thirds: Diverging Traditions in Qualitative Sociological Writing

Faculty Information

Name: Dr. Jennifer Patrice Sims

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Proposal ID RCEU22-SOC-JPS-03

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I. Project Description

In Sociology and other disciplines, researchers have opposing views on the appropriateness of including quantitative information in qualitative writing. While journal Editors can helpfully communicate what writing conventions are required for submissions to their specific journal, that clarity does not address the broader disagreements, uneven research education, or disparate writing practices. This research seeks to discover what is the current normative practice regarding including quantitative information in qualitative sociological writing. The main aim of the project is to analyze published interview-based documents in order to answer this question. The motivation and goal of the project is to use the knowledge gained regarding current writing norms to improve qualitative research, writing, and education.

II. Student Duties, Contributions, and Outcomes

a. Specific Student Duties

The student-researcher's duties will include data analysis and literature review. Regarding the former, the student-researcher will learn to conduct a documents based content analysis while working with Dr. Sims to analyze the language usage patterns in interview-based sociology articles. The student-researcher will also find and read about 15 peer-reviewed research articles (i.e., about two per week) on trends and best practices in research writing. They will produce an annotated bibliography that they and/or Dr. Sims can use to write a literature review for a future publication.

b. Tangible Contributions by the Student to the Project

The student-researcher will advance this project by helping complete data analysis and by helping start or complete the literature review. These contributions will directly lead to publication of the work.

c. Specific Outcomes Provided by the Project to the Student

As an outcome of participation in this project, the student-researcher will firstly learn and gain practice conducting documents based content analysis. Secondly, from searching for relevant literature, the student will learn how to find, read, and identify key findings from scholarly work as well as gain knowledge of trends and best practices in research writing. Finally, from completing an annotated bibliography, the student-researcher will improve their writing skills. These outcomes will be useful to the student-research in future courses, graduate school, and/or a variety of employment positions.

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III. Student Selection Criteria

The student-researcher must have an interest in writing, rhetoric, or communication. They must also have at least sophomore standing by summer 2022, and have passed the following college level courses (or have the transfer equivalent):

- (1) *both* EH101: College Writing I and EH102: College Writing II
- (2) *either* SOC100: Introduction to Sociology or PY101: General Psychology I
- (3) *any* methods course (e.g., SOC301, PSY302, ED315, etc.)

Applicants who have taken any technical or creative writing courses and/or those who have career aspirations to be a writer will receive preference.

IV. Project Mentorship

Dr. Sims will provide the student-researcher with skills training and mentorship. Meeting two times a week in the Sociology Department Lab, one meeting will be devoted to data analysis and the other to literature review. During data analysis meetings, Dr. Sims will first teach, then supervise, and finally simply hear reports on the student-researcher analyzing the textual data. During literature review meetings, the student-researcher and Dr. Sims will discuss the most recently read articles. By listening to the student-researcher's summary of the articles as well as reviewing drafts of the annotated bibliography, Dr. Sims will be able to ensure that the student-researcher is learning to find appropriate academic literature, that they are learning how to identify and synthesize key information from the studies, and that their writing skills are improving.