

## TÓPICOS ESPECIAIS EM METODOLOGIA DA PESQUISA – 2009.1

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### TEXTO INTRODUTÓRIO II

Texto extraído do livro: Bailey, D.M.. Research for the Health Professional. A Practical Guide. Capítulo I, Identifying a question or problem. Philadelphia: F.A. Davis Company, p.5-6, 1991.

#### **Identifying a Question or Problem**

##### **Where do Research Topics Come From?**

Research topics usually come from the work environment. For most therapists, that means the clinic or other patient settings. You may have found you often ask yourself and your co-workers clinically based questions, such as "I wonder why this patient with hemiplegia made more gains than that patient with hemiplegia?"; "What did I do differently, that Mr. Smith complies with his home program but Mr. Brown doesn't?"; "Would a behavioral approach or a sensory integrative approach work better for that group of retarded clients?"; "When I use this particular type of group treatment, there seems to be more response from the patients. I wonder why?"; "Why do we always do it this way? What if we tried ...?"

Or you may be reading about other people's treatment programs or ideas that trigger a series of questions in relation to your own treatment. You might see something in other people's findings or recommendations that doesn't agree with your clinical experience. Or you identify gaps in the literature that make it difficult to answer your specific questions.

Perhaps you have read a fascinating study that has particular significance for you and decide that you would like to replicate it, either just as it is or with modifications based on your own interests. Replication is an excellent way to learn and to practice the scientific inquiry process.

Clinical practice, the literature, and conference presentations are all legitimate sources for research topics. However, there are some things to keep in mind when deciding upon a topic:

- Choose an area of study that fascinates you. Research is a lengthy, sometimes tedious business with many pitfalls. If you aren't excited about your topic to begin with, you most certainly won't be by the time you finish. If you should lose the drive to find the answer to your question, it is almost guaranteed that you won't finish the study.
- Keep it simple. It is very tempting to add on some "juicy" subquestions to see whether those can be answered at the same time. However, this may result in your not knowing which variables are responsible for which changes. It is generally better to try to answer one question at a time.
- Do a pilot study to iron out the "kinks" before starting the main study. A pilot study is a smaller version of the main study and will allow you to see if there are any problems in the design. Such a study can save innumerable headaches later and prevent the feeling that you would have done a whole host of things differently had you known then what you know now.
- Keep writing things down to clarify your thinking - the question, variables, definitions, methods. Whenever you have a brainstorm about your project, take a minute to write it down.

Ending up with a researchable question is undoubtedly a difficult task, and people go about it in different ways. However most people go through several common stages, including having an idea, thinking about the idea, discussing the idea with colleagues to see if it makes sense, checking in the literature to see if it makes sense, deciding exactly what goals are to be achieved through the research, and, finally, defining the questions more precisely to formulate the hypotheses.

## **ROTEIRO PARA DISCUSSÃO**

- (1) Escreva pelo menos três perguntas que têm estado em sua mente, a partir da sua prática diária ou da discussão com seus colegas de profissão. Escolha perguntas que têm despertado a sua curiosidade e que você gostaria muito de responder.
- (2) Analise a sua lista e determine aquelas que mais te interessam. Priorize as perguntas (numerando-as). Escreva abaixo a três mais importantes.
- (3) Por que esta é a pergunta que mais te interessa?
- (4) A pergunta pode ser dividida em partes? Caso afirmativo, explique.
- (5) Você acha possível fazer um estudo piloto sobre esta pergunta para analisar a viabilidade? Caso afirmativo, explique.
- (6) Existe alguma teoria que sirva como base para esta pergunta? Caso afirmativo, diga qual é.
- (7) Na sua opinião, esta pergunta aborda um problema importante? Caso afirmativo, responda a pergunta “E daí ?” aqui.
- (8) Quais as variáveis você estará estudando?
- (9) Num primeiro momento, você considera possível encontrar uma maneira de identificar e medir estas variáveis?
- (10) Que tipos de indivíduos (ou animais se for o caso) você precisará para estudar a pergunta? Eles estão disponíveis?
- (11) Repita este processo para as outras duas perguntas que você identificou no item “2”. Observe qual a mais favorável. Lembre-se que as perguntas precisam ser razoáveis e pesquisáveis. Caso você encontre problemas aparentemente insolúveis com as suas perguntas, não desespere. Talvez você ainda não esteja familiar com as diversas opções metodológicas disponíveis no processo de investigação.