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**EDUC 712 – Introduction to Qualitative Research**

**Dr. Rodriguez & Dr. Henriquez**

**Assignment - Research Design Rationale**

**April 29, 2014**

I am interested in researching about the Inclusive Practices (including children with special needs with typical peers) of Head Start preschool classrooms. The Head Start Act of 1965 mandates that 10% of the total children enrolled are reserved to serve children with special needs and their families.

I plan to conduct a mixed method study to assess the Inclusive Practices of Head Start Classrooms. I would like to find answers from my qualitative research paradigm using the case study research design. According to (Creswell, 2012) a case study is the study of an issue within a real life through detail in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information. I would like to get an in-depth understanding of the issue from conducting interviews of teachers and directors of Head Start preschool classrooms. By understanding of their experiences and assessing Inclusive Practices, I plan to make a transformative change in Head Start classrooms in the Inland Empire.

I find the issue of not assessing Inclusive Practices in Head Start Preschool is worthy of using a descriptive qualitative case study. My intent of conducting a case study is because I want to understand a specific issue. The issue is: why isn’t it mandated to measure/assess inclusive practices of the Head Start classrooms for accountability purposes even though Head Start program has many mandates for accountability of other components (parent involvement, mental health, curriculum etc…)?

The research design logically fits my research topic, purpose statement and research questions as stated bellow:

**i. Research Topic –**

Assessing Inclusive Practices (including students with special needs with typical peers) of Head Start preschool classrooms to improve access and equity of the preschool curriculum for children with special needs in the Inland Empire.

**ii. Purpose Statement -**

The purpose of my case study is to understand Inclusive Practices of Head Start preschool teachers and assess Head Start preschool classrooms using the Inclusive Classroom Profile (ICP) (Soukakou, 2012) (in press) to improve access and equity of the preschool curriculum for children with special needs in the Inland Empire.

**iii. Research Questions -**

1. How do Head Start preschool teachers define, describe and explain Inclusive Practices (including children with special needs with typical peers) in their daily interactions with students?

**Sub Questions**

a. How do Head Start preschool teachers define Inclusive Practices in their daily interactions with students?

b. How do Head Start preschool teachers describe Inclusive Practices in their daily interactions with students?

c. How do Head Start preschool teachers explain Inclusive Practices in their daily interactions with students?

2. How do Head Start preschool directors define, describe and explain Inclusive Practices (including children with special needs with typical peers) in their daily interactions with students?

**Sub Questions**

a. How do Head Start preschool directors define Inclusive Practices in their daily interactions with students?

b. How do Head Start preschool directors describe Inclusive Practices in their daily interactions with students?

c. How do Head Start preschool directors explain Inclusive Practices in their daily interactions with students?

When I build my participation pool to conduct interviews (Seidman, 2012), I want to select the most suitable participants who are related to my study though purposeful sampling and self-selection process. I want to make sure that the participants have a work history and experience in serving as teachers and directors in Head Start preschool programs because my objective of the case study is to learn about their experience of Inclusive Practices (including children with special needs with typical peers).

1. Teachers who have served as Head Start teachers for at least 5 years

2. Teachers who have had students with an I.E.P (other than for speech and language services) for at least years.

3. Teachers who are currently serving students with an I.E.P (other than for speech and language services)

4. Directors who have served as Head Start Directors for at least 5 years

References

Creswell, J. W. (2012). *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approaches* (Third Edition edition.). Los Angeles: SAGE Publications, Inc.

Seidman, I. (2012). *Interviewing as Qualitative Research: A Guide for Researchers in Education and the Social Sciences, Fourth Edition* (4 edition.). New York: Teachers College Press.

Soukakou, E. P. (2012). Measuring quality in inclusive preschool classrooms: Development and validation of the Inclusive Classroom Profile (ICP). *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, *27*(3), 478–488. doi:10.1016/j.ecresq.2011.12.003