Exemplar Methodology Workshop

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Agenda

- 9:15 – 10:45am Exemplar methodology overview
- 10-45-11am Break
- 11-noon Small group break-out
- Noon-1:30pm Lunch
- 1:30-3pm Small group break-out
- 3-3:15pm Break
- 3:15 – 4:45pm Group presentations
A new approach

- The exemplar methodology is a sample selection technique that involves the intentional selection of individuals, groups, or entities that exemplify the construct of interest in a particularly intense and highly developed manner (Bronk, King, & Matsuba, 2013)

The need for the exemplar method

- Person-centered approach
  - Considers cultural and contextual influences
- Full range of human development
  - Existing measures assess typical and deficient forms of growth
- Reveals what the developmental trajectory is likely to entail if development continues
  - Reveals what is possible
Historical roots

- Aristotle:
  - “We approach the subject of practical wisdom by studying the persons to whom we attribute it” (1962, 6.5 1140a25)

- Maslow:
  - Development “is learning to grow and learning what to grow toward” (1971, p. 169)

Contemporary uses

- Positive developmental psychology
- Studies of moral and ethical development
  - Moral exemplars (Colby & Damon, 1992; Matsuba & Walker, 2004; Walker, 2002)
  - Care exemplars (Walker & Frimer, 2007; Hart & Fegley, 1995)
  - Bravery exemplars (Walker & Frimer, 2007)
  - Environmental exemplars (Pratt, 2011)
  - Purpose in life exemplars (Bronk, 2005; 2008; 2011; 2012; Damon, 2008)
Nomination criteria

- Criteria by which individuals will qualify as exemplars
  - Can be generated by experts, researchers, or definitions
  - Concrete as possible
  - Narrow enough to describe exemplar development but broad enough to capture range of experiences and characteristics

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Nominators

- Subject matter experts often serve as nominators
  - E.g. Youth experts in varied areas
  - E.g. Religious leaders from different faith traditions
  - E.g. Philosophers, theologians, etc.
Data analysis approaches

- Qualitative Case Study
  - Moral Exemplars
  - Colby & Damon, 1992

- Quantitative Study
  - Moral Personality of Brave and Caring Exemplars
  - Walker & Frimer, 2007

Qualitative Case Study:

- Colby & Damon (1992)
- 22 nominators spent 2 years devising criteria
- 5 criteria emerged
  - Sustained commitment to moral ideals, including respect for humanity
  - A disposition to act in accordance with moral ideals
  - Willingness to risk one’s self-interest for moral beliefs
  - Tendency to inspire others
  - Sense of humility about own importance
Quantitative Study

- Walker & Frimer, 2007
  - 50 winners of Canadian national awards for care (n=25) and bravery (n=25)
  - 50 comparison individuals
  - N=100

Conceptual Issues to Consider

- What can be learned?
- Who defines and operationalizes the exemplar construct?
- What constitutes “highly developed?”
- Should I use a comparison sample?
Break-out Session #1

- Small groups
- Select a topic to study using an exemplar method
- Determine research questions and this should dictate data analysis approach
  - Qualitative?
  - Quantitative?

Break-out Session #2

- Devise nomination criteria
- Decide who your nominators will be
- Will you include a comparison sample?
  - If so, how will you find them?
  - What criteria will you use for the comparison sample?
Small group presentations

- Prepare brief presentations
  - 7-10 mins and 5 mins for questions

- Make presentations

- Wrap-up

Wrap-up

- Purpose of exemplar methodology

- Steps in conducting exemplar research
  - Pose research question
  - Determine analytic strategy
  - Create nomination criteria
  - Identify nominators