

Debrief for Linda's Pre-Proposal

Good start, Linda. You have a lot of specifics as to what you are looking for as you study these organizations, but don't underestimate the time it takes to write out the mechanics of a pre-proposal: an introduction, justification, objectives, detailed data and methodology (and limitations). You'll need these elements clearly written out to be able to use this document to find your committee chair and convince them that you have a plan for completing this thesis.

Your first paragraph should introduce your subject area and end with your purpose statement. Also, expand a little more on your justification, it's great that it has three parts, just be a little more specific and avoid overly generalized terms. You should also add a sentence that bounds your research in the broader subject area that you've introduced, so that your readers can get an idea of the scope of your study. This will add depth and credibility to your focused research and will discourage readers from expecting too much from your work. Your purpose sentence has good verb usage and gives the reader a fair idea of how the rest of your thesis will play out, but I feel like it could benefit by having some sort of implied argument. Your analysis won't consist of cut and dry reporting of what these organizations do, you'll have discussions that claim how some things work better than others; so maybe lead in to your purpose statement by claiming a need for this assessment in order to demonstrate analytical rigor and show your emphasis on evaluation rather than on the organizations themselves. Dr. Rodrigue also put forth the idea of trading your verb *trace* for a verb that implies your interview methodology instead.

Dr. Rodrigue pointed out that establishing parameters for measuring success will be crucial to your analysis. These parameters will not be science based, but measurements of things like comeback or community support. Dr. Rodrigue threw out the example of the White Point restoration center in Palos Verdes as an example of community support for an environmental cause. Similarly, you'll also want to define parameters for success in engaging and educating and the community. Standardizing these parameters and your system for measuring them will help you create a template for evaluating these kinds of organizations. The goal of creating a template should be one of the main goals of your research and it definitely makes a tangible contribution to your area of study. This template can potentially be used by organizations trying to maximize their effectiveness and will streamline the way organizations will apply the results of your study.

The next paragraph needs to be rewritten in paragraph format and your research questions need to be aggregated as objectives of your study. Many of them relate to one another and can be grouped under one idea. Look to your purpose statement and break it into smaller, more specific statements that encompass your research questions while still remaining relevant to your purpose. You'll also rank your objectives and designate some objectives as more essential to your purpose and other objects that inform elements of your purpose (for example your discussion of funding/budgets might not be a major part of your overall analysis, but might provide context or inform broader analytical points). It was also

recommended that you carefully discuss organization members' personalities and make sure you counterpoint this part of the discussion with the stronger, more pertinent parts of your analysis.

This paragraph is also a good place to insert your literature gap and short review, instead of separating it out at the end. We all agreed that part D. of your pre-proposal belongs in the literature review section. The iconic names you list in this section are well chosen and just need to be cited.

As for data, it should be clear as to what data you are looking for and why. You'll also want to formalize your methodology, by utilizing more standard terminology for your methods as well as being more specific on how you intend to carry out research. Try distinguishing your different methods and discuss them in relation to how each method will uniquely add something to your research and thoroughly discuss any limitations or biases in these methods and how you plan to work around them (if possible). Since you will be utilizing qualitative methodologies, it would be very appropriate for you to discuss *reflexivity*, which is an acknowledgment of how the researcher fits into the collection of data. The Qualitative Methods in Human Geography book I loaned you has a thorough explanation of reflexivity. Demonstrating this "self-awareness" will also help you impress potential chairs for your committee. Also add in your methods for processing and extracting meaning from the data that you collect (ex. NVivo, literary content analysis, statistical analysis, etc.).

Your writing style is clean and concise; just be careful of passive voice and word choice. It would also be helpful if you reordered parts of this draft so that it fits the standard order we discussed in class. And, all of us included, there needs to be more citations!

The number of organizations you are setting out to discuss was brought up in discussion, and it was recommended that if you feel like three is too many once you hash out your methodology, then you should at least keep two of them so you can compare and contrast. Besides considering your time constraints and other logistical things, I'd also recommend thinking about what you can glean from the organizations themselves? Are the three different enough to merit that much of your time? Can you build a solid analysis just looking at two key organizations instead of three?