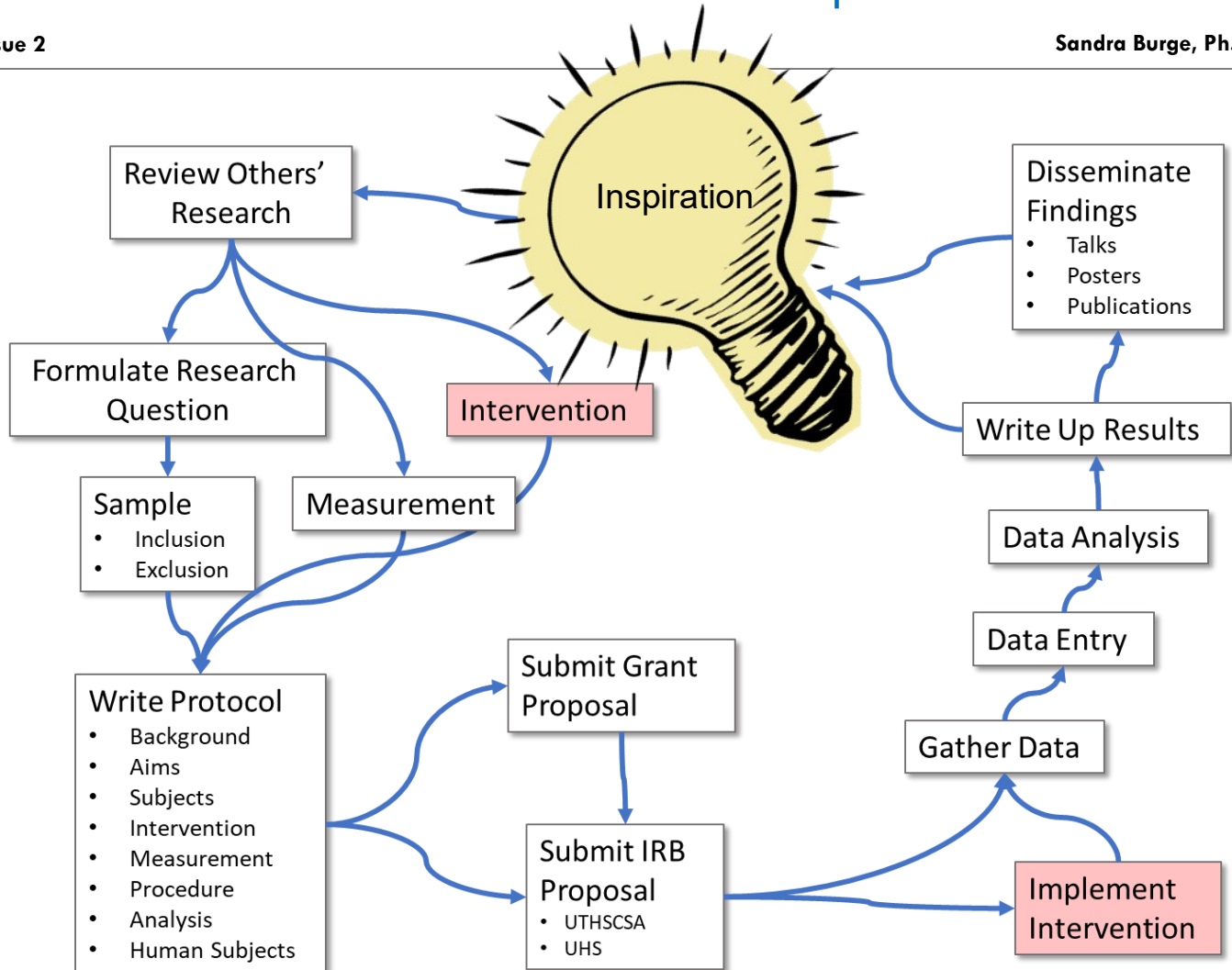


Research Minute

The Research Roadmap

Issue 2

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Research projects begin with an inspiration and curiosity, with a need to answer a question. These ideas can come from anywhere!

Once inspired, a researcher **READS**. One digs into the research literature to discover what is already known about the topic, and what is unknown. Previous research can guide the new researcher to refine the research question, to identify ways of measuring important concepts, to select an appropriate sample, to design interventions. (Many studies do not have interventions.)

Next, the researcher **WRITES**, gathering notes from others' work, and assembling a plan for the project. This plan is submitted to a funding entity for dollars to cover salaries, supplies, technology, and travel for the study. The plan is also submitted to the Institutional Review Board to assess protections for human subjects. Turnaround is slow. It may take 2–10 months to know the results of a grant proposal, and 6–16 weeks for IRB.

After all approvals are granted, the researcher may begin the project. Now the researcher **GATHERS DATA** in a

systematic way and stores for later analysis.

DATA ANALYSIS can begin while the study is ongoing; some researcher prefer to wait until all data are in. Now the research questions gets answered! Sometimes this inspires new questions.

The final stage involves more **WRITING**. Findings must be disseminated so that others can learn from them. *The job of researchers is to SHARE what they have learned.* And this work in turn, inspires new research questions.