Center on Research and Evaluation (CORE)

At-A-Glance Services Offered

Instrument Design
Surveys, observation forms, academic achievement measures, interviews (individual/focus group).

Data Collection
Data collection, logistics management, conduct interview/observations, recruit and train reliable data collectors, and recruit participants.

Consulting
Logic model development, current conditions planning, grant/proposal writing assistance, independent research and evaluation design with statement of work, and professional development awareness sessions and trainings.

Data Processing & Management
High integrity data entry, data cleaning and database creation, and database management.

Data Analytics
Quantitative and qualitative data analysis, including descriptive statistics, multiple regression analysis, factor, cluster analysis, and advanced statistical models.

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As part of the Annette Caldwell Simmons School of Education and Human Development at SMU, the Center on Research and Evaluation (CORE) conducts research and evaluations on programs, practices, and policies designed to strengthen families and communities. The appropriate use of data is central to CORE’s work, so it is essential to create well-designed plans from the beginning of a project. CORE believes the development and use of comprehensive plans, based on sound theory and evidence, should drive efforts to improve people’s lives.

**Partnerships and Design Process**

To bring program design and planning, data collection, analysis, interpretation, and dissemination into a unified approach, CORE constructs logic models to guide its evaluation and research work. Ideally, the development of logic models occurs during the design stage of any project.

Logic models specify the major goals of the evaluation project or research study. They also provide sufficient detail about how these goals will be accomplished. Central to this approach is accurate goal measurement and assessment.

CORE promotes collaboration with other researchers and organizations and is committed to SMU and Simmons School objectives to build knowledge through rigorous research. Toward this end, CORE actively seeks out opportunities to work with Simmons and SMU faculty on research initiatives, especially those with tangible benefits for the Dallas area community and the state of Texas.

**Data Collection**

CORE has expertise in the foundation of data-driven decisions through data collection and management. In many cases, an abundance of data is available for analysis and CORE can help determine which data will best answer specific questions. CORE also has expertise in accessing and developing measurement instruments. Whether collected in the field or accessed from existing databases, CORE emphasizes the collection of data that is trustworthy, securely managed, and organized for purposes that include conducting appropriate statistical analyses, preparing presentations for stakeholders, and developing proposals for project funding.

**Data Analysis**

CORE utilizes both quantitative and qualitative methods to analyze data. In addition to having methodologists and analysts on staff, CORE also leverages its position within SMU to access the best methods to answer intricate research and evaluation questions. The science of methods and statistical approaches to accurately answer questions is evolving rapidly, and CORE is committed to maintaining its expertise in this area.

**Dissemination**

Finally, CORE has expertise in disseminating findings in ways that are accessible to a wide range of audiences, and can be acted upon in a variety of ways to deepen understanding and improve program quality. This includes presenting findings through traditional research briefs and evaluation reports, publishable manuscripts, in-person presentations, and infographics.