

Chapter 2

1. List two influences not mentioned in this chapter that might reduce the risk of child death and generally improve child health. For each influence, is physical control or statistical control (Chapter 1) more appropriate to control (hold constant) each influence? Briefly explain.

Answers to will vary, but should be reasonable alternative explanations for child mortality and the type of control a researcher could expect to hold each explanation constant.

2. Is evaluation research a method of data collection? Why or why not?

No. Evaluation research is distinguished from other research by the goals of the research. Evaluation research is conducted to determine how well a specific policy or program works. Evaluation research can be conducted by experiments, surveys, personal interviews and other methods of data collection.

3. If information is obtained at an all-boys school, does gender vary among students? Briefly explain in your own words the difference between a variable and a constant.

No, there would be information only from one gender – boys. Gender is constant. A variable is a set of categories that are mutually exclusive and exhaustive. A constant is a measure with only one category.

4. Should a researcher inform potential participants that they will be research subjects? Provide one reason why and one circumstance under which one might not inform participants.

Being known as a researcher during data collection can influence responses. The subject might choose behaviors and comments to please (or displease) the researcher. Yet, not disclosing one's identity as a researcher poses an ethical issue. It violates the norm of informed consent. Also, being a member of the group under study, while at the same time not disclosing one's identity, likely influences the objectivity of the observer and the activities of the subjects. Punch (1986) suggests viewing research subjects as "collaborators" in the research, and behaving toward them as we behave toward friends and acquaintances. However, if for example, a participant observer becomes

embroiled in a sexual relationship with a subject, participant observation has a lot of potential for skewing the conclusions of the study.

18. What is an IRB? Summarize their activities.

IRB stands for Institutional Research Board but often goes by other names such as Human Subjects Review Board. IRBs examine research proposals for potentially harmful impacts on the subjects. They consider potential social, psychological, emotional, and physical effects on research participants. After deliberation the IRB may advise researchers about needed changes in procedures. Often an IRB must approve a research plan before the study may begin.