**Progress Report, Part 1**

*Summary*

I am observing the Reserve Officers’ Training Corps (ROTC) at the University of California, Irvine (UCI). Because they conduct classes, training, labs, and field exercises in a few locations, my site includes the Summer Session B Building, the outside of Howard Schneiderman Hall, Aldrich Park, the Anteater Recreation Center (ARC), and the plaza outside of the Science Library. The Summer Session B Building classroom is small. It holds three long wooden tables and about eleven chairs. The classroom also has a wooden podium near the front of the room, a VIZIO television in the front corner of the room. There are also a whiteboard, push-pin board, and American flag on the far side of the room. Aldrich Park is a large grass area in the middle of the UCI campus. It is comprised of large trees, grass, dirt and pavement walkways, and other plant life. The ROTC cadets conduct their field training on the grass nearest to Howard Schneiderman Hall. The outside of Howard Schneiderman Hall and the plaza outside of the Science Library is all pavement/concrete. It is mostly a walkway for students.

My goal is to uncover how instructors encourage Socratic style discussion among cadets and how effective these methods are in facilitating participation and dialogue between ROTC students. Upon one of my initial observations, I noticed how the seating in the classroom and the instructor’s questions encouraged cadets to talk with one another when brainstorming. The seating in the classroom is arranged such that the students can face each other and the instructor (a C-shape/semi-circle). The Socratic-style discussion stood out to me because of my previous experience with such seminars in high school. My high school teachers would change the organization of the classroom from a lecture-style seating (with desks facing forward in straight rows and columns) to a discussion-style seating (with desks in a circle facing inwards toward each other).

*Accomplished so far/Timeline*

Since completing my project proposal, I have conducted three field observation sessions of one to three hours each. They all took place in the classroom of the Summer Session B Building. I have also converted all my jottings from these sessions to field notes.

I also gained new insight into the dynamics and culture of the ROTC during class. During Socratic-style discussions, they are not as formal as I had assumed and very interactive with one another. The cadets participate and help each other out in answering questions. At the same time, the instructors and officers routinely engage the students in conversation. The classes are not merely lecture-style.

I have also expanded my research question from focusing only on the layout of the classroom. Now, my research question also encompasses the ways instructors encourage Socratic-style dialogue and get cadets to engage with one another. This allows me to conduct more diverse field research by observing the cadets’ Socratic-style dialogue outside of the classroom. For instance, I can answer my question by seeing how they converse with one another in the context of field training and lab as well.

I plan to finish my field observations and begin note-taking/brainstorming for the Case Study by the middle of week eight. I plan to spend about a week and half completely writing and editing each deliverable (with some overlap for each). I plan to iteratively work on the PowerPoint alongside the Executive Summary since they are related and will be due around the same time. The final deliverables (Executive Summary and PowerPoint) are likely to take the most time. It may take me more than a week and a half to work on it. I plan to space out my work accordingly and edit the final drafts of preceding deliverables while writing the first drafts of later deliverables.

*Challenges*

One challenge I have faced was scheduling conflicts. ROTC classes, training, field exercises, and labs take place at designated times throughout the week. Sometimes the ROTC agenda for the week conflicts with my courses/discussions. So, I am unable to attend or conduct field research. This makes it difficult to have enough observation to make meaningful analyses.

Another challenge I have faced was coming up with my research question at first. With minimal field notes, it was hard to find something interesting to explore. However, after more observations, I was able to focus in on the discussions between cadets and instructors. The initial spark for my idea was the physical layout of the seating in the classroom. As my research progressed, I further developed my research question to focus on Socratic discussions in the ROTC.

*Plan going forward*

I am slightly behind schedule. Even though I have a decent amount of research hours and notes, I would like to have more content with which to work. To catch up, I plan to modify the schedule for outside group work. One of my other classes requires that I meet and work with a group on a project. Since the meeting time frequently conflicts with the ROTC observation times, I will change my availability and meet with my project group at another time/day.

*Assessment*

I am likely to meet my objectives in terms of deliverables. However, I do not think I have enough observations to fully answer my research question. I plan to address them by narrowing the scope of my project questions and going to as many observations as I can throughout the week.