**Introduction and Theoretical Framework**

A.                 “The introduction is the part of the paper that provides readers with the background information for the research reported in the paper. Its purpose is to establish a framework for the research, so that readers can understand how it is related to other research” (Wilkinson, 1991, p. 96).

B.                 In an introduction, the writer should

1.                  create reader interest in the topic,

2.                  lay the broad foundation for the problem that leads to the study,

3.                  place the study within the larger context of the scholarly literature, and

4.                  reach out to a specific audience. (Creswell, 1994, p. 42)

C.                 If a researcher is working within a particular theoretical framework/line of inquiry, the theory or line of inquiry should be introduced and discussed early, preferably in the introduction or literature review. Remember that the theory/line of inquiry selected will inform the statement of the problem, rationale for the study, questions and hypotheses, selection of instruments, and choice of methods. Ultimately, findings will be discussed in terms of how they relate to the theory/line of inquiry that undergirds the study.

D.                 Theories, theoretical frameworks, and lines of inquiry may be differently handled in quantitative and qualitative endeavors.

1.                  “In quantitative studies, one uses theory deductively and places it toward the beginning of the plan for a study. The objective is to test or verify theory. One thus begins the study advancing a theory, collects data to test it, and reflects on whether the theory was confirmed or disconfirmed by the results in the study. The theory becomes a framework for the entire study, an organizing model for the research questions or hypotheses for the data collection procedure” (Creswell, 1994, pp. 87-88).

2.                  In qualitative inquiry, the use of theory and of a line of inquiry depends on the nature of the investigation. In studies aiming at “grounded theory,” for example, theory and theoretical tenets emerge from findings. Much qualitative inquiry, however, also aims to test or verify theory, hence in these cases the theoretical framework, as in quantitative efforts, should be identified and discussed early on.