**Methods Section**

The purpose of the methods section is to help the reader know what you did. Precisely.

Everything in the methods section is related to your problem statement.

Methods sections are written in past tense. You are describing what you have done (even if you haven’t done it yet).

Remember what you know about defending reliability and validity as you write this.

**Writing a Methods Section**

In this order (usually)

* Problem statement exactly as it appears in chapter 1.
* Description of the context in which you gathered information.
  + ONLY include facts relative to your study.
  + If you are doing a study on cooperative learning does it really matter what the mission statement for the school is? Probably not.
  + If you are doing a study on the effectiveness of teacher inservice does it really matter that inservice days were recently cut from the teacher contract? Maybe.
  + If you described the context of the study in the introduction you will still need to describe it here.
* Description of those from whom you gathered information.
  + ONLY include facts relative to your study.
  + Report gender, ethnicity, or other variables if they are relevant   
    to your study.
  + This is where you talk about how your respondents got into the study.
* Description of the intervention if there was one.
  + Remember about operationalizing variables. This is where the reader comes to find out precisely what you did to demonstrate differences among groups. You must be specific.
* Description of the tools you used to gather information.
  + This includes a description of how tools were developed. This is really important in some cases.
  + Even if you are using an interview protocol how you developed the questions must be described
  + If you are using other people’s instruments they need to be cited.
* Description of how you gathered information.
  + What procedures did you use?
  + Get as specific as you need to for a reader to know how you did what you did.
  + If you did interviews or observation this is where you describe exactly how those were done.
* Description of how the information was analyzed.
  + Don’t skip this step even if you are doing a qualitative study, because it dictates what should appear in the results section.

Congratulations, you are now ready to complete the IRB form.