Question # 1

Consider the following statement: "There are many ways to exercise control over public administrators, but in order for a government to be ethical its' employees must be ethical."

A. Discuss at least three different ways in which control is exercised over public administrators in an effort to make sure they are ethical.

B. Discuss how these three methods of control can also fail to produce ethical behavior.

C. Do you agree or disagree with the opening statement (in quotes) above? Why, or why not?

Question # 1 Grading Criteria

At minimum:
1. You must answer the question
2. You must answer all parts of the question.
3. You must exhibit good writing skills
4. You must present logical and well-reasoned arguments.

Minimally acceptable (pass) answer – must include:

Part A. There are both internal and external forces, as well as formal and informal forces, that attempt to exert control. Among the formal forces are those internal to the organization, such as the chief executive, laws, and written codes of ethics. Formal but external to the organization are oversight committees, checks and balances by other branches of government, control of the budget, sunshine laws, and the freedom of information act.

Informal mechanisms internal to the agency include professional standards, personal morality, the concept of the public interest, and whistle blowers. Informal mechanisms external to the agency include media scrutiny, monitoring by interest groups, and citizen participation.

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<th>Internal Controls</th>
<th>External Controls</th>
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<td><strong>Chief Executive</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Written Codes</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Professional Codes</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Interest Groups</strong></td>
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Part B. How can these methods fail? Student can use examples or come up with reasonable explanations.

Part C. Any reasonable statement from the student will be acceptable that addresses the question and is well-written.

Question 2

There have been many attempts at introducing rationality into public budgeting, such as Zero Base Budgeting (ZBB), Program Planning Budgeting System (PPBS), and Management by Objectives (MBO), with mixed results.

A. When they do succeed, why do they succeed? What are the necessary conditions for success?

B. When they fail, why have they failed? What are the conditions that contribute to failure?

Question # 2 Grading Criteria

At minimum:
1. You must answer the question
2. You must answer all parts of the question.
3. You must exhibit good writing skills
4. You must present logical and well-reasoned arguments.
Part A. The conditions for successful implementation of attempts to introduce rationality into public budgeting are:
- it is perceived as bringing about consensus
- it is perceived to facilitate decision-making
- there is strong leadership
- there is buy-in from the staff
- it is policy-oriented
- it helps to answer major questions
- any other reasonable condition(s)

Part B. The reasons why attempts to introduce rationality into public budgeting revolved around such concerns as:
- budgeting is inherently a political issue
- incremental budgeting is a safe political strategy
- entrenched forces resist change
- each part of the budget has interest groups that support it
- any other reasonable condition(s)

Comprehensive Grading Criteria Spring 2002

PPA 555 – PUBLIC BUDGETING AND FINANCE

1. With almost every state running a budget deficit, lawmakers in at least thirty of them are looking to garner additional revenue by raising tobacco or alcohol taxes—the so-called “sin taxes.” In most cases, state lawmakers are doing so in lieu of increasing broader sales or income taxes, fearing the reprisals of voters in the major election year.

Using the evaluation criteria for tax policy, assess the use of “sin taxes” in California.

A. Identify, define, and apply the definition of the evaluation criteria to “sin taxes.”

B. Based on the application of the evaluation criteria, make recommendation, and include the rationale for your decision.

Question #1 - Grading Criteria

a. The first of the criteria is economic efficiency. The definition of this criterion states that efficient taxes are ‘neutral’ or do not distort economic decisions. In other words, the imposition of the tax or any change in the tax structure including rates does not alter the behavior of consumers or firms. Most taxes are not economically neutral however so the primary policy issue, from an efficiency perspective, is designing and adopting taxes that minimize economic distortions. ‘Sin taxes’ are taxes on goods such as tobacco and alcohol. Again in practice no tax is perfectly efficient but taxes on goods such as alcohol and tobacco tend to be more efficient since imposing or increasing the tax will not cause most consumers of this type of good to reduce their consumption significantly.

b. The second of the criteria is equity. This criterion has two perspectives on what is considered an equitable or fair tax. The first perspective is the benefit principle, which states that a fair tax is one in which tax payment is proportional to benefits received from services financed with the tax. If taxes on tobacco or alcohol were earmarked for treatment programs for ailments associated with tobacco or alcohol consumption then the benefit principle could be applied. However, this is generally not the case in California.
other perspective is the ability to pay principle, which states 
that a fair tax is one in which tax payment as a proportion of
some measure of wealth such as income varies with changes
in wealth. ‘sin taxes’ tend to be regressive; that is, the tax
burden tends to decrease with an increase in income.

c. The third of the criteria is adequacy and stability. This relates to the yield of
the tax and how sensitive it is to economic cycles such as changes in income.
Broad-based taxes such as taxes on all forms of consumption generate more
revenues and they are generally more stable than narrow-based taxes such as
on one type of consumption. Nevertheless, ‘sin tax’ yields do not vary
dramatically during economic fluctuations and are not as sensitive to relative
price changes through taxation as some other taxes. Thus, ‘sin taxes’ can
generate a substantial amount of revenues and the yield will not change
dramatically with changes in economic conditions.

d. The forth of the criteria is cost of administration. The administrative costs
include collection, compliance, and enforcement. With ‘sin taxes’ collection
costs are shifted to the seller of the good and thus are relatively small for the
government. Collecting the ‘sin tax’ does require the retailer to conduct some
additional calculations and required paperwork. The cost of compliance is not
overly burdensome since retailers must currently collect and remit the state
retail sales tax. Cost of enforcement is borne by the government who should
periodically conduct audits of retailers to insure compliance with the law. Even
with the above in mind, the marginal administrative costs are minimal since
the tax is already in place and the proposal is to increase the tax rate only.

e. The last of the criteria is political feasibility. This criterion is simply defined as
the likelihood that policy-makers and/or the public will approve the tax
proposal. There are many factors associated with political feasibility. Some of
these are visibility and understandability of the tax, political culture, traditions
and history, distribution of wealth and income, fiscal health and overall
economic conditions. For ‘sin taxes’ those affected most are the consumers
of the goods being taxed, in this case, alcohol and tobacco. This group is a
relatively small portion of the population. Another way of viewing this issue
would be to state that those people who consume large amounts of alcohol
and tobacco and thus will pay substantially more are likely to be a very small
portion of the populace. Even with citizen’s anti-tax sentiment in the State,
the current fiscal crisis may be permit passage of an increase in ‘sin taxes’ here
in California.

2. Your answer depends on what you value and the knowledge you have acquired in
evaluating tax policy, thus, you can argue for or against the increase. A passing
answer will clearly articulate your position and be supported with the application
of the criteria stated above.

Question # 2

A city is considering the construction of a new recreation center. The Mayor and
City Council are committed to building the center, but need to identify the proper
financing mechanism to complete the project, taking into account the following:

The city is undergoing a period of fiscal stress, but still maintains a relatively strong
credit rating

The tax base of the city has been growing gradually over the past five years and the
city has a significant amount of room under the state-mandated debt ceiling.

The recreation center is expected to generate enough revenue to cover annual
operating expenditures, but will not generate a sufficient stream of revenue to retire
the debt incurred by constructing the center.

The center will cost $5 million to construct and the life expectancy of the structure
is thirty years.

Given this information:

a. What type of bond would you suggest using, and what are the features of this
bond?

b. Compare the advantages and disadvantages of this type of debt financing
mechanism to other alternatives.

Question #2 – Grading Criteria

An acceptable answer will demonstrate the following:
- An identification of a General Obligation bond as the appropriate debt-financing tool.
- A comprehensive justification of the appropriateness of G.O. bonds in this given situation. This justification must include a recognition of the following factors:
  - G.O. bonds provide lower interest rates.
  - G.O. bonds do not require repayment with revenues derived from the operation of an enterprise.
  - G.O. bonds are more marketable and easier to sell to investors.
- A comparison of the strengths of G.O. bonds with the weaknesses of more than one alternative approach. For example,

  - Revenue bonds are inappropriate since the enterprise will not generate sufficient revenue to cover debt service.
  - A well reasoned, logical, and well-written answer.

Given the fact that the city is constructing a recreation center that will not generate a sufficient amount of revenue to cover debt service, a revenue bond is not feasible.

The characteristics of the city identified in the scenario are conducive to the use of a G.O. bond. Specifically, the increase in the city’s tax base indicates that the city will have sufficient revenues to retire the debt. Since G.O. bonds are backed by the full faith and credit of the city, the increase in tax revenue would provide the city with the needed flexibility to retire the debt. The flexibility the city enjoys under the state mandated debt ceiling also supports the use of a G.O. bond. The city is not concerned with violating the debt ceiling, therefore a revenue bond is not necessary.

A General Obligation bond would also provide a lower interest rate than revenue bonds. This would make the G.O. bond less expensive for the city and also make the issue much more marketable than a higher interest alternative.

While a G.O. bond is certainly superior to a revenue bond, a lease-rental or sale-leaseback bond may also be feasible. A lease-rental bond would indicate that the city is not planning on operating the recreation facility. If a private sector entity was charged with running the facility, the bond may become a private-activity bond, which may threaten its tax-exempt status. A sale-leaseback bond would require that the city sell the facility to a private sector entity and then lease the facility. This would partially mitigate risks for the city but it would also risk the tax-exempt status of the bond. A loss of tax-exempt status would make the issue more expensive for the city and also...
Grading Criteria: Public Human Resources Management (PPA 577)

At minimum:

1. You must answer the question.
2. You must answer all parts of the question.
3. You must exhibit good writing skills.
4. You must present logical and well-reasoned arguments.

Question #1

The Clinton-Gore National Performance Review (NPR) of 1993 is the most recent in a long line of government reform efforts targeted largely at public employees.

a. What are the four major provisions of NPR relating to public employees?

b. Which two provisions would you say are most realistic? Thoughtfully cite the reasons why you believe those two provisions are realistic.

c. Discuss whether you believe NPR has “trickled down” to local government. If so, in what ways has it affected local government? If not, what might explain that?

Grading Criteria, Question #1

1. You must answer the question.
2. You must answer all parts of the question.
3. You must demonstrate a high level of critical thinking skills (which include the ability to forcefully present an argument or position).
4. You must exhibit excellent writing skills (which include syntax, grammar, punctuation).
5. Your response must be both logical and well-organized.

Background of the National Performance Review

The focus of the Clinton-Gore “National Performance Review” (NPR) published in 1993, was not just on changing federal government administrative systems generally, but on changing the personnel system particularly. Their objective as to make government more “entrepreneurial.”

NPR was grounded in the Clinton Administration’s belief that, even though government itself is not “inherently incompetent,” it is “broken.” The primary reason for this breakdown is structural: Washington is replete with organizations designed for an environment that no longer exists. That is, from the 1950’s through the 1960’s, the federal government built large, top-down, centralized bureaucracies to do the public’s business. These structures were patterned after the corporate structures of that era — rigidly preoccupied with SOP’s, vertical chains of command, and standardized services — which made the agencies of government “steady, but slow and cumbersome.” And, in today’s world where we have rapid change, lightening-quick information technologies, tough global competition, and demanding customers, large, top-down bureaucracies — public or private — do not work well. They also said that many government organizations are monopolies with few incentives to innovate or improve.

The second part of the problem concerns politics. Washington is highly politicized, they said, and the greatest risk is not that a program will perform poorly, but that a scandal will erupt. That is because “scandals are front-page news, while routine failure is ignored.” As Clinton and Gore saw it, this resulted a “piling up” of control system after control system designed to minimize the risk of scandal. They also said that many government organizations are monopolies with few incentives to innovate or improve.

In this search for “entrepreneurial” public organizations, Clinton and Gore found them, at all levels of government. After they found them, they studied them and found several characteristics common to these successful organizations. These characteristics get boiled down to four basic principles which, they argued, would save the Federal government $108 billion over five years if they got applied.

Part A. Major provision of NPR, and those administrative elements Clinton and Gore, said we should pay attention to were:

1. Cutting red tape. Among the ways this can be done: streamline the budget process; decentralize personnel recruitment and hiring procedures so that managers can have more of a say in their own effective management -- via the authority to hire, promote, reward and fire personnel; eliminate thousands of regulations that hamstring federal employees.
2. Putting Customers First. NPR recommends that all federal agencies should be required to put customers first by regularly asking them how they view government services, what problems they encounter, and how they would like services improved; agencies should compete for their customers’ business. Wherever feasible, dismantle government monopolies. If competition isn’t feasible, turn government monopolies into more businesslike enterprises in closer touch with both customers and market incentives.

3. Empowering Employees: Give decision-making power to those who do the work, pruning layer upon layer of managerial oversight; replace “command and control” government management with organizational and individual accountability for results; give federal employees the training to handle their own work and to make decisions cooperatively; give them good information and the skills to take advantage of computer and communications technologies; forge a new partnership between management and labor; and offer top-down support for bottom-up decision making. In short, it is management’s job to ensure that everyone understands power will never flow through the old channels again.

4. Cutting Back to Basics: Eliminate unnecessary programs, the obsolete, the duplicative, and those that serve special, not national, interests; and re-engineer govt. activities, making full use of computer systems and telecommunications to revolutionize how services are delivered.

Part B. A successful response to this part of the question will depend upon whether you:

1. Correctly identified the major provisions of NPR called for in Part A;
2. Correctly identify two provisions of NPR for discussion in this part of the question; and
3. Can make a compelling, logical argument for your choices and your reasons for those choices. That is, you must convince the reader of the “correctness” of your choices.

Part C. A successful response to this part of the question will depend upon whether you:

1. Correctly identified the major provisions of NPR called for in Part A;
2. Can present a logical, well-organized, and well-written discussion of whether you believe NPR has “trickled down” to local government, and the ways in which it has affected local government if it has. Alternatively, if you do not believe NPR has trickled down to local government, you must present a logical, well-organized, and well-written discussion of the reasons which may explain that.

Question #2

It has been said that a competent position classification system is at the heart of a competent personnel system.

a. Define “position classification”.
b. Discuss the reasons why position classification is said to be at the “heart” of a competent personnel system.
c. Briefly describe the classification system in your organization or one with which you are familiar. Does your organization’s classification system appear to support the statement above? If so, explain. If not, explain.

Grading Criteria Question #2

1. You must answer the question.
2. You must answer all parts of the question.
3. You must demonstrate a high level of critical thinking skills (which include the ability to forcefully present an argument or position).
4. You must exhibit excellent writing skills (which include syntax, grammar, punctuation).
5. Your response must be both logical and well-organized.

Part A. The definition of “position classification”: a formal job description that outlines the duties and responsibilities for all jobs in a civil service merit system, and that then groups the jobs based on their similarities. Moreover, position classification is a mechanism that helps managers determine the pay level for any position, and to assign pay levels based on the importance of one job, relative to others in the organization.

Other useful information you might cite, but are not required to cite:

1. The underlying management principle of position classification is division of labor and task specialization. Hence, positions, not individuals, should be classified.
2. The duties and responsibilities pertaining to a position constitute the outstanding characteristics that distinguish it from, or mark its similarity to, other positions. 
3. Qualifications with respect to education, experience, knowledge, and skill necessary for the performance of certain duties are determined by the nature of those duties. (Therefore, the qualifications for a position are an important factor in the determination of the classification of a position.)
4. The individual characteristics of an employee occupying a position should have no bearing on the classification of the position.
5. Persons holding positions in the same class should be considered equally qualified for any other position in that class.

Part B. A successful response will include, but is not limited to, the following. You may cite other, perfectly defensible, reasons for why a classification system is at the heart of a competent personnel system:

1. Efficiency. We know that merit systems tend to have two overarching values: neutrality and objectivity. When the idea of classification was first introduced at the end of the 19th century, reformers tried to make the public personnel system fair, just, and efficient. So, in keeping with the Scientific Management times when efficiency and economy were primary values, classification was seen as a convenient and useful tool to develop a rational approach to organizing activities in a hierarchy. The expected result was that the work activities of public employees would be more efficiently coordinated.

2. Objectivity and Neutrality. A position classification system in government did provide a means of making personnel decision on the basis of objective, job-related, considerations, rather than on personal or political factors. This idea originates, in part, with passage of the Pendleton Act in 1883. The Act mandated that selection practices were to be based only on “objective job-related considerations” rather than on personal or political ones. To do that, objective, “practical,” and competitive examinations were developed. And in order to create objective, “practical” examinations, you needed to have some idea of the duties and responsibilities the position called for.

3. Classification is related to all other personnel functions: How is job classification related to the other formal tasks of personnel? By way of example, a fair salary and compensation scale requires us to know how a job is classified before we make decisions about compensation; and if we are going to recruit and to examine for a specific job, we had better know what the qualifications are for the job are, so job classification is important there too. You may have other, perfectly appropriate, examples.

4. Helps promote “equal pay for equal work” which, at least in theory, is pretty much an accepted principle in our democracy. To apply that principle, positions had to be evaluated and classified to establish a basis for comparison. So, the movement toward comprehensive position classification arose from the desire for equality; but it was reinforced by increasing complexity of technology and specialization.

5. Allows management to more objectively evaluate employee performance. Position classification also makes management’s job easier because they can have a much more objective idea of what jobs they are managing and coordinating, exactly what qualifications are needed for people in those jobs, and the objective criteria that define responsibilities of the job. Hence, performance evaluation becomes much easier.

Part C. A successful response to this part will depend upon whether you:

1. Can briefly and clearly describe your organization’s (or one with which you are familiar) classification system.
2. Can make a compelling, logical argument for why you believe your organization’s classification system supports the original statement, and can clearly explain you reasoning. Alternatively, if you believe your organization’s classification system does not support the original statement, you must present a logical, well-organized, and well-written discussion of the reasons which may explain that.
Comprehensive Grading Criteria Spring 2002

PPA 650 Contemporary Issues

Question # 1

Faced with a sudden decline in the economy in the Fall of 2001, many local governments are seeking to control costs by layoffs and a shortened work week. This raises questions for both public employees and the public they serve. Explain and illustrate your understanding of these developments as they are faced by both the internal audience (employees) and external audience (citizens/voters).

A. Describe and discuss at least two implications for public employment

B. Describe and discuss at least two implications for service provision.

Grading Criteria Question # 1

At minimum:
1. You must answer the question
2. You must answer all parts of the question.
3. You must exhibit good writing skills
4. You must present logical and well-reasoned arguments.

Minimally acceptable (pass) answer – must include:

Description of strategies adopted by government to cut costs and increase efficiency can include:
- downsizing
- rightsizing
- contracting out
- devolution of responsibilities to lower levels
- joint ventures
- and others

Impacts on public employment can include:
- unions
- morale
- recruitment and retention
- early retirement packages
- and others

Impacts on service provision can include:
- quality of service
- contract enforcement and monitoring
- citizen satisfaction
- equity for disadvantaged groups
- and others

Question # 2

California legislators are limited in the number of years they can serve. A recent measure on the ballot would have weakened the term limits placed on California legislators.

A. What are the positive effects of term limits for the public bureaucracy?

B. What are the negative effects of term limits for the public bureaucracy?

C. How can the negative effects for the bureaucracy be mitigated?

Grading Criteria Question # 2

At minimum:
1. You must answer the question
2. You must answer all parts of the question.
3. You must exhibit good writing skills
4. You must present logical and well-reasoned arguments.

Minimally acceptable (pass) answer – must include:

The positive effects of term limits for the bureaucracy revolve around the higher status that career public employees attain, since they provide the continuity between...
administrations and have specialized knowledge that elected officials are likely to lack; the advantages of bureaucracy over politics; and others.

The negative effects of term limits for the bureaucracy include the possibility of frequent shifts in policy as new politicians are elected; a lack of carefully constructed working relationships between politicians and career public servants; and others.

Any reasonable suggestions about how to mitigate the negative effects on the bureaucracy will be accepted as long as they are logical and well written.

Grading Criteria PPA 660 Seminar in Organization Theory and Behavior

1. You must answer the question presented, not the one you wish had been presented.
2. You must respond to all parts of the question.
3. Your answer must demonstrate excellent writing skills.
4. Your answer must be well organized and logical.

In addition to meeting these general criteria, a successful answer will discuss the following:

Question # 1

Which is the more important feature of a public organization, its structure or its culture? In answering this question, be sure to,

a. discuss the important concepts involved in the analysis of organizational structure,

b. review the major components of organizational culture that affect individual behavior and group performance, and

c. discuss how analysis of organizational structure and culture can be used to address what you believe to be the most significant challenges confronting public organizations today.

Question # 1 Grading Criteria

I. Division of opinion about whether public organizations have distinctive structural characteristics:

a. Administrative Management School view
   b. The Contingency Perspective
   c. National Performance Review
   d. The “restructuring” movement

II. Key Elements of Structural Analysis:

a. Centralization/Decentralization
   b. Formalization
c. Complexity

d. Influences on Structure
   1. size
   2. environment
   3. technology and tasks

e. Major Design Alternatives
   1. Functional
   2. Product
   3. Hybrid
   4. Matrix

III. Key Elements of Organizational Culture

   a. Observed behavioral regularities
   b. Group norms
   c. Espoused values
   d. Formal philosophy
   e. Informal rules
   f. Climate
   g. Embedded skills
   h. Habits of thinking, mental models and/or linguistic paradigms
   i. Shared meanings
   j. Root metaphors and integrating symbols

IV. Emerging Challenges to Organizational Culture

   a. The impacts of diversity on organization culture
   b. Culture and organizational learning
   c. Culture and organizational change

V. Application of structure analysis and culture analysis to three problems of the student's choosing.

   a. Use of both approaches to discuss each problem
   b. Identification of strengths and weakness of each approach
   c. Relative assessment of the two approaches

VI. An Identifiable and Sensible Conclusion

Question # 2

Discuss the relationship between organizational conflict and employee motivation:

   a. what are the major sources and types of organizational conflict?
   b. how could these types of conflict be expected to negatively affect employee motivation?
   c. how could these types of conflict be expected to positively affect employee motivation?

Question # 2 Grading Criteria

I. Sources of Conflict

   a. Differences in goals, values, cultures, and priorities
   b. Specialization of work and responsibilities
   c. Emphasis on adherence to rules and goals of specialized units
   d. Differences in power, status, rewards, and resources
   e. Overlapping decision making processes between two groups
   f. Clashes of personal style and ego

II. Types of Conflict

   a. Conflict within the individual
   b. Conflict between individuals
   c. Horizontal conflict (between organizational subunits)
   d. Vertical conflict (across levels of the hierarchy)
   e. Conflict in various stages and modes
      1. Latent conflict
      2. Perceived conflict
      3. Felt conflict
      4. Manifest conflict
      5. Conflict aftermath

III. Negative effects

   a. Stress, frustration, dissatisfaction
b. Dysfunctional communication patterns

c. High turnover and absenteeism

d. Poor individual and organizational performance

IV. Potential for positive effects

a. Effective Conflict Management
1. team building and T-group procedures
2. organizational mirror and confrontation meetings
3. dialectical inquiry and devil’s advocacy
4. brainstorming and Delphi techniques

b. Potential benefits
1. enhanced communication
2. improved self-awareness
3. better strategic decision-making
4. greater organizational creativity and learning

V. An Identifiable and Sensible Conclusion

Grading Criteria PPA 670 Policy Issue Analysis

At minimum:
1. You must answer the question.
2. You must answer all parts of the question.
3. You must exhibit good writing skills
4. You must present logical and well-reasoned arguments

Core Concepts—Question #1

Alternatives Development Concepts
Development approaches
  Incremental
  Branching
  Inventive
  Contextual mapping
  Prototyping

Validating alternatives

1. In your city there are a number of new Cyber-Cafes, where you can drink coffee and use computers 24/7. However, they are being taken over at night by teen and young adult gangs, leading to increases in crime and violent behavior.

Your city council wants you to develop possible policy alternatives to address this problem. Some council members prefer a very traditional, tried and true approach, while others would like to try to find a more innovative solution.

A. Propose a way to develop alternatives that will accommodate the conservative traditionalists on the council. What approach(es) will you use to develop alternatives? What technique(s) will you use?

B. Propose a way to develop alternatives that will accommodate the innovative members of the council. What approach(es) will you use to develop alternatives? What technique(s) will you use?

C. Which strategy would you prefer to use, and why?
Question # 1 -- Grading Criteria

**Minimally acceptable answer (pass)--must include 1-6 below**

1. Addresses the question that was asked
2. Addresses all parts of the question (a, b, c)
3. Identifies at least one conservative alternative development strategy (e.g. incremental, branching) and at least one innovative alternative development strategy (e.g. inventive, contextual mapping, prototyping.)
4. Describes at least one technique for developing conservative alternative strategies (e.g. historical analysis, existing policy, review of prior effort, comparison with other similar problems, use of conceptual models) and at least one technique for developing innovative policy alternatives (e.g. prototyping, simulation, use of predictive models such as game theory, pay-off matrices or decision trees.)
5. Discusses choice of alternative development strategy and justification for the choice. Validation of the choice should include, at least:
   a. Discussion of how the approach would best produce workable alternative.
   b. Includes characteristics of a good alternative.
   c. Recognizes the political context of the problem.
6. Answer is logical, well-written, persuasive

**Unacceptable answer (fail)--any of the following is a fail:**
1. Does not address the question that was asked
2. Does not address all parts of the question (a, b, c)
3. Does not identify at least one traditional and one innovative alternative development strategy or mis-identifies strategies
4. Does not describe at least one technique for traditional development strategy and one technique for innovative development strategy or describes inappropriate or incorrect techniques.
5. Does not choose an alternative development strategy and justify its use.
6. Answer is not logical, or not well-written, or not persuasive

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Question # 2

**At minimum:**

1. You must answer the question.
2. You must answer all parts of the question.
3. You must exhibit good writing skills
4. You must present logical and well-reasoned arguments

**Core Concepts--Question 2**

**Evaluation Concepts:**
- Traditional approaches/models
- Innovative approaches
- Role of politics
- Insuring utilization

**Question #2**

For the past three years, your city has offered rental housing assistance for low-income families. The purpose of the program was to reduce the number of homeless families in the city. The City Manager wants you to conduct an evaluation of this program: how effective has it been in reducing homelessness?

A. Suggest one evaluation strategy which makes use of traditional evaluation methods. What technique(s) and methods will you use? What are the strength and weaknesses of this strategy?

B. Suggest one evaluation strategy which applies a more innovative approach. What technique(s) and methods will you use? What are the strength and weaknesses of this strategy?

C. Which strategy would you prefer to use, and why?

**Grading Criteria--Question 2**

**Minimally acceptable answer (pass)--must include 1-7 below**

1. Addresses the question that was asked
2. Addresses all parts of the question (a, b, c)

3. Discusses an evaluation strategy that makes use of a traditional approach (e.g., site visits, public hearings, output measures) and discusses an evaluation strategy that makes use of an innovative approach (e.g., before/after program comparisons, time-trend projections, systems-based evaluation.)

4. Discusses appropriate techniques and methods for each evaluation strategy:
   a. Traditional approaches tend to focus on output measures and not actual measures of performance. Importance given to efficiency, exclusive of equity and effectiveness. Techniques and methods for traditional approaches include public meetings, surveys, establishing workload measures, counting complaints, site visits, etc.
   b. Innovative evaluation approaches utilize more analytic rigor. Focus is on actual performance measures and effectiveness. Techniques and methods for these approaches include quasi-scientific experimental designs, group comparisons, matrix assessment methods, quantitative assessment of objectives/performance, time-series analysis, etc.

5. Discusses strengths and weaknesses of traditional and innovative evaluation strategies:
   a. Traditional approaches are usually easier to conduct, quick, simple to understand and provide a “bottom line” result. They are also methodologically invalid, poor indicators of effectiveness, easy to manipulate and prone to emphasizing negative aspects of the program.
   b. Innovative approaches are scientifically rigorous, both internally and externally valid, more comprehensive and produce true assessments of program effectiveness. They are also complex to design, expensive, time-consuming and require substantial expertise to conduct.

6. Discusses strategy choice and justifies strategy choice in the context of the problem situation presented.

7. Answer is logical, well-written, persuasive

Unacceptable answer (fail) – any of the following is a fail:

1. Does not address the question that was asked
2. Does not address all parts of the question (a, b, c)
3. Does not identify at least one traditional and one innovative evaluation strategy or incorrectly identifies a strategy.
4. Does not discuss appropriate techniques and methods for each evaluation strategy or associates techniques and methods discussed with the incorrect strategy.
5. Does not address strengths and weaknesses of each strategy or inappropriately identifies strengths and weaknesses with a strategy.
6. Fails to choose an evaluation strategy or fails to adequately and appropriately justify the strategy selection.
7. Answer is not logical, or not well-written, or not persuasive
Grading Criteria PPA 696 Research Methods

Question # 1

A school principal wants to see if anti-violence training will make elementary school students less violent. She pulls a sample of third graders, and randomly assigns them to either the experimental or the control group. The anti-violence training that only the experimental group receives includes watching a video with graphic pictures of the physical injuries that can result from violence. Students from both groups will be interviewed afterward about their attitudes toward violent behavior.

A. What are the concerns you would have with this study from an ethical point of view?

B. What are the steps that must be taken before conducting this type of research?

C. Aside from the ethical problems, what are the weaknesses of this type of research design (threats to internal and external validity)?

Question # 1 Grading Criteria

A passing answer must demonstrate the following:

An identification of the “at-risk” nature of the population.
An identification and discussion of the implications of dealing with “at-risk” populations.
An identification and discussion of the salient elements of informed consent.
An identification of attitudes toward violent behavior as the dependent variable and the operationalization of the variable.
An identification of the anti-violence program as the intervention variable.
An identification of the many flaws associated with the design including:
- The failure to specify other potential variables.
- The failure to randomly select the initial sample of students.
- The absence of a pre-test and baseline for comparison.

First, the study deals with an “at-risk” population. As such, the researcher must show that students are not harmed by the research and that the benefits far outweigh any potential risks. Informed consent is vital. The researchers must obtain informed consent from parents. If this research is being done by an agency that receives federal funds, an institutional review process must be initiated.

One possible dependent variable could be identified as “attitudes toward violent behavior.” This could be measured by face-to-face interviews and defined as approval of violent behavior. Violent behavior would also need to be defined. Possible definitions could include physical and/or verbal violence. The independent variable that is being applied is the anti-violence program. The program would be defined by its component parts, one of which is the use of images of physical injuries. Other possible variables include physical abuse, Socio-Economic Status, and previous involvement in violent confrontations.

There are many flaws associated with this type of design. First, it appears to be a post-test only control group design. This is a strong design if the initial sample is randomly selected. The researcher does randomly place students in an experimental and a control group but there is no indication of how the original sample is selected. If the initial sample is not randomly selected, a pre-test may be needed to provide a “baseline” for comparison. Without random selection and a pre-test, there is not point of comparison to use with the post-test.

A second potential problem is history. There are many extraneous variables that are uncontrolled for in this design. A researcher would be well-served to control for these other variables with the use of a quasi-experimental design.

Question # 2

A state is concerned that there has been a noticeable decrease in the amount of sales taxes being collected statewide. While a drop of one or two percent is usual, this 10% drop is very unusual.

Analyst A hypothesizes that the drop is due to a drop in average incomes due to the economic downturn. Analyst A uses the following data to support his argument:
Correlation of sales taxes collected with average income, r = .529 (p < .01)

Analyst B hypothesizes that the drop is due to sloppy sales tax collection and incomplete reporting by many businesses. Analyst B uses the following data to
support her argument: 2x2 Contingency table for sales taxes collected with number of businesses reporting, Chi Square = 2.35, df=1, (p<.33).


C. Critique the approaches of the two analysts. What are the flaws in their research?

Question # 2 Grading Criteria

In order to receive a “Pass” grade, an answer must address the following:

A proper interpretation of the correlation coefficient (r) and associated probability
A proper interpretation of the Chi Square statistic and associated probability
An identification of the flaws inherent with using a bivariate analysis for the purpose of explanation and determination.

The correlation coefficient of .529 indicates that average income is related to the amount of sales tax collected, explaining approximately 28% of all the variability in this variable. With a p-value of .01, average income can be assumed to be important in the assessment of fluctuations in sales tax revenue. However, since most of the variability remains unexplained by this variable, it is not sufficient to explain fluctuations in sales tax revenues. There are many other variables that would help to explain the remaining unexplained variation.

The Chi Square statistic of 2.35, given one degree of freedom and a p-value of 0.33, indicates that sloppy collection and reporting practices are not related to the drop in sales tax revenue. The value of the statistic does not reach the most minimal requirement for demonstrating a statistically significant relationship. In addition, it is improper to use a nominal or ordinal level statistic such as Chi Square when considering relationships among variables measured on an interval and/or ratio scale.

The primary methodological flaws in both the analyses consist of the use of bivariate rather than multivariate techniques. Multivariate techniques could highlight other potentially important variables. The use of multivariate techniques could also uncover any possible relationships between these two predictor variables and with other independent variables, and between the amount of sales tax collected and other independent variables. In short, if the state wants to learn why sales tax revenue has decreased, it will need to engage in a more elaborate study. The use of a case study approach could also add some depth to the analysis, depth that is lost with an aggregate cross-sectional analysis.