

ED 237: Introduction to Qualitative Methods

Lora Bartlett
Associate Professor
Education Department
831 459-1893
LoraB@ucsc.edu
Office hours: by appt

Introduction:

This course offers an introduction to the logics and logistics of qualitative research. It is designed as an introductory course and the primary emphasis is on 1) the nature of qualitative research and 2) research design, data collection and analysis. The fine art of interviewing people well and the nuances of field observations will be emphasized as data collection methods. This course will often take the form of a workshop as students engage the methodology in their own small-scale research projects.

We will engage in five main activities:

1. critically reviewing published accounts of qualitative research
2. reading textbook accounts which focus directly on design, fieldwork and analysis
3. Designing, conducting, managing, analyzing and presenting a mini-study.
4. Experimenting with data collection methods.
5. Reflecting on the form and function of qualitative methods.

Reading and Materials

There are three main texts for the class as well as some articles that will be handed out:

Patton, Michael Q. (2001) *Qualitative Evaluation and Research Methods - Third Edition*. SAGE Publications, Inc.

Weiss, Robert S. (1994) *Learning From Strangers: The Art and Method of Qualitative Interview Studies*. NY: The Free Press.

Grossman, Pamela L. (1990) *The Making of a Teacher: Teacher Knowledge and Teacher Education*. NY: Teachers' College Press. (provided)

Peshkin, A., (1986) *God's Choice: The total World of a Fundamentalist Christian School*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. The Introduction

Lourdes Morales 4/1/14 5:28 PM

Comment [1]: Textbook 1 - 'Bible' of qualitative research

Lourdes Morales 4/1/14 5:28 PM

Comment [2]: Textbook 2

Lourdes Morales 4/1/14 5:29 PM

Comment [3]: Professor will provide PDFs of these two.

Recommended Readings:

Boyatzis, R.E (1998) Transforming Qualitative Information. SAGE Publications.

Goodson, I., (2001) Life History Research in Educational Settings. Buckingham, Philadelphia: Open University Press.

Miles, M and Hubberman, A.M (1994) Qualitative Data Analysis. SAGE Publications

Yin, R.K. (1994) Case Study Research: Design and Methods. SAGE Publications.

Film recommendations

Kinsey

Kitchen Stories

40 and up series

Unknown White Male

Course requirements

1. Complete readings and written assignments by the date they are due.
2. Participate actively and cooperatively in class discussions and fieldwork exercises. Regular attendance is expected. Read and comment on one another's memos in class and by email.
3. Design, conduct, and analyze a small qualitative research project. (Interview based)
4. Create individual project portfolio and present findings and project analysis.
5. Take the lead in some part of the research project.

The portfolio will include all memos, protocols, transcripts etc that you create over the quarter. You will – in essence – be tracking the development of the project from the conceptual stage to the concluding analysis. You will turn in and share elements of that portfolio throughout the class and you will submit the final product at the end of the class.

Course assignments:

All written assignments should be **single spaced** in 12 point times font with one inch margins. Spaces may be left between paragraphs. Emailed papers should be sent as word attachments or cut and pasted (after formatting) into email. Please do not send pdfs.

Research project: Over all you will design and conduct a small-scale research project using the research methodology studied in this course. The project you select must be primarily interview based and should be something you are prepared to experiment with. All of the written assignments described below represent two types of writing: 1) work

Lourdes Morales 4/1/14 5:30 PM

Comment [4]: Good follow-up book after this class.

that facilitates the design, completion and analysis of your research and 2) work that asks you to analyze and reflect meta-cognitively on the research process.

- **Memos:** Each one is described within the course outline. I call them memos to indicate the somewhat less formal structure and nature of them and to encourage you to develop the important research skill of memo-ing to self and other research team members regarding important decision points, reflections and directions etc. As a memo that has an audience other than yourself, it is important to still give form and function to your writing. You should complete your analysis and then use the memo to communicate your thinking to us rather than writing to find your analysis (also a good practice but one that should precede the memo). Memos do not generally exceed 2 singled spaced pages but note the guidelines for each. Memos are read for clarity, scope and depth and enable all of us to provide you feedback and commentary. Memos will be shared with all class members.
- **Research design:** You will complete a full research design and data collection plan for your empirical and qualitative study. It is a 'map' outlining your research question, rationale for study, data collection plan including sample size, sampling strategy, collection methods etc. Its overall length will depend on your formatting. It will be marked for thoroughness and clarity – of purpose as well as writing. We will cover more on the details in class.
- **Discovery Memos:** Two final memos – longer and more formal. One a meta-analysis of your methodology and the other tracing a transparent path of inference through your data to a finding – however small. See dates for details.
- **Final presentation.**

Participation:

This course will more often resemble a workshop than a lecture theater. Learning to do good qualitative research requires you to use the tools, make mistakes, try them out, use them in different ways and continually refine your understanding and thinking about the tools, context and purpose of your work. This can only be accomplished with your participation and engagement. You are expected to participate actively in this class and in fact you need to participate actively if you hope to master the skills needed. Participation means: engaging with the material, reading and one another in class and by email, coming to class having thought about the readings and assignments and prepared to engage the topics.

Course Outline

Wk 1: Course overview and introduction

What is qualitative research, purpose, tradition etc

Observation exercise in class

Logistics: Scheduling collaborative work time, research project,

Lourdes Morales 4/1/14 5:38 PM

Comment [5]: Like the course description said, it will be on Qualitative Research Methods but with an emphasis on Education. Still, the professor promised that what we'll learn in terms of methods will be applicable to any project.

Wk 2: Nature of Qualitative Research & the Qualitative researcher

Readings: Grossman book ((including and especially Appendix A & B on Methodology and interview protocols) and Peshkin chapter 1 of *God's Choice: The total World of a Fundamentalist Christian School*.

Come to class prepared to discuss Grossman and Peshkin's relationship to their research, their role as researchers and the implications for their research. Also – come to class prepared to discuss how you are and are not persuaded by Grossman's findings. Analyze relationship between Grossman's question and her methods. What about her methodology was effective? What was problematic? What do you think she should have done differently? How are her methods either appropriate or inappropriate for her question?

Lourdes Morales 4/1/14 5:39 PM

Comment [6]: Grossman was an 'insider' and Peshkin an 'outsider' – Grossman was comparing teachers who had been prepared in the same program she was and was still part of (so she had a something to gain in a way) vs. teachers that weren't – while Peshkin was an atheist jew... not catholic at all, hence an outsider when studying something about Catholicism and education.

Do you think this had any effect on their research and/or findings?

Wk 3: Design & data collection

Readings: Chapter 1- 5 of Patton – Designing Qualitative Studies and chapter 6 Fieldwork Strategies and Observation Methods

Observation exercise – maybe

Research Design conversation

Short memo due (1-2 pages): Preliminary thoughts on the research question, type of qualitative research called for and implications for design. (**email it to everyone in the class on Monday by midnight**).

Lourdes Morales 4/1/14 5:41 PM

Comment [7]: In relation to the previous comment – see if despite the fact that she was an insider the data that she presents justifies her claims

Wk 4: Research Design

Readings: Patton chapter 7 Interviewing
Weiss Chapters 1, 2 and 3.

In class workshop: naming interview.

Design intro.

Wk 5: Research design

Due – Initial design plan and preliminary interview protocol. Email to everyone in the class for discussion and plan to hand in a copy to me. Write up design and explanation for design. Each of you will have **10 minutes to present your approach**.

Design workshop in class. Finalization of project plan.

Note: You should contact interviewees and get your interviews scheduled for weeks 6 -8.

Wk 6: Data Collection

Readings: Weiss chapters 4 & 5

Bring **draft Interview protocol** to class for discussion

Due: Interview protocol

Start conducting interviews (2), transcribe them and do Weiss like analysis of them.

Due week 8 – Bring enough copies of your unedited but sanitized ('clean' out any identifiable info) transcripts for everyone in class– **or send by email.**

Wk 7: Data Collection & Meta-analysis

Readings: Weiss Chapter 6

Continue (if necessary) interviews... Due next week – Bring enough copies of your unedited but sanitized ('clean' out any identifiable info) transcripts for everyone in class– **or send by email.**

Wk 8: Data Collection & Analysis

Readings: Patton Chapter 8

Due: Interview transcripts and analyzed interview transcripts.

In class: we will begin thematic analysis

In class: Analyze across interviews

Lourdes Morales 4/1/14 6:02 PM

Comment [8]: The night before?

Wk 9: Analysis and Reflection

Discovery memo 1 due: reflect on the experience of the interviews and analyze the relative effectiveness at getting the information you sought. Be very specific. Which questions worked well and which did not? What surprises did you have? What did you learn about interviewing from the experience of interviewing?

Wk 10: Report of Findings

Discovery memo 2 due: Using at least both interviews as your sample – write a memo of findings using the themes we identified in class last week as your starting point. Pick one thing that you think you found and trace it back to show the evidence. Trace the methodological choices that you made and trace the transparent path of inference.

Come to class prepared to discuss.

Plan a power point presentation of findings.

Methods section/analysis: Presentations of findings (briefly) and analysis of methodology. In every empirical paper you will ever write you will need to have a methods section. Present the equivalent of Grossman's appendix coupled with a methods analysis. Describe the decisions that you made and the degree of appropriateness to your research question. What about your methodology was effective? What was problematic? What do you think you would do differently if you were to do it again? Prepare and present the design and findings of your project. Please plan to use visuals – this is not simply a talking head situation.