

George Mason University
College of Education and Human Development
School of Education
Educational Psychology Program
EDRS 621, Section 001: Qualitative Inquiry in Education
3 Credits, Fall 2019
Mondays, 7:20 – 10:00 p.m., Thompson Hall L018–Fairfax

Faculty

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Prerequisites/Corequisites

EDRS 590 or equivalent experience.

University Catalog Course Description

This course focuses on the study of basic application of naturalistic research methods. It examines major theoretical frameworks, and qualitative research techniques, which include participant observation, interviewing, coding, and interpretation of data. (Prerequisite: EDRS 590 or equivalent)

Course Overview

This course is designed to be highly interactive as students are guided through the process of learning to use, conduct, and write about qualitative research in education.

Course Delivery Method

This course will be delivered primarily through face-to-face class sessions with large group, small group and individual activities. GMU's Blackboard course framework will be used regularly throughout the course. Your GMU email address is required for communication with the course instructor and must be active by the first week of class. Please inform me of any accessibility problems the first day of class. Please note that because you have much to learn from each other, and because teaching is often a collaborative effort, you will frequently work in groups. This will give you a chance to share ideas, be exposed to a range of perspectives and experiences, and support each other as you continue to develop your teaching and researching skills.

Learner Outcomes or Objectives

This course is designed to enable students to do the following:

- Gain a basic understanding of current qualitative research methods and the theories and epistemologies that have influenced their development.
- Gain experience with data collection techniques including participant observation and qualitative interviewing.
- Gain an understanding of basic approaches to qualitative data analysis and interpretation, including categorization strategies such as coding and matrices, and connecting strategies such as case studies.
- Gain experience using computer-aided qualitative analysis software (e.g. MaxQDA)
- Find, understand, evaluate, and apply published research that is relevant to their field.
- Thoughtfully consider ethical issues in qualitative research
- Thoughtfully consider validity issues in qualitative research

Professional Standards: The program goals are consistent with the following Learner-centered psychological principles (APA Division 15) outlined by the American Psychological Association Presidential Task Force in Education.

- Principle 1: The Nature of Learning Process
- Principle 2: Goals of the Learning Process
- Principle 3: Construction of Knowledge
- Principle 4: Strategic Thinking
- Principle 5: Thinking about Thinking
- Principle 6: Context of Learning
- Principle 7: Motivational and Emotional Influences on Learning
- Principle 8: Intrinsic Motivation to Learn
- Principle 9: Effects of Motivation on Affect
- Principle 10: Developmental Influences on Learning
- Principle 11: Social Influences on Learning
- Principle 12: Individual Differences on Learning
- Principle 13: Learning and Diversity
- Principle 14: Standards and Assessment

For more information please see: American Psychological Association (1997). Learner-centered psychological principles: A framework for school redesign and reform. <http://www.apa.org/ed/governance/bea/learner-centered.pdf> Retrieved August 25, 2011.

Relationship to Program Standards:

In this course, the following Educational Psychology program standards will be addressed:

Standard 3: Knowledge of Educational Research and Assessment. Candidates will demonstrate an understanding of the basic concepts, principles, techniques, approaches, and ethical issues involved in educational research.

Standard 4: Analysis, Critique, and Evaluation of Educational Research. Candidates will use their knowledge of quantitative and qualitative research methodology to critically read and evaluate quantitative and qualitative research articles.

Standard 6: Communication and Dissemination of Educational Research. Candidates will demonstrate critical thinking, oral presentation, technological, and writing skills as they are used in the profession. These include: a. Knowledge and use of APA style, b. Oral presentations, c. Poster presentations, d. Article abstracts, e. Research proposals, f. Literature reviews, and g. Technological skills.

Required Texts:

Maxwell, J. A. (2012). *Qualitative research design: An interactive approach* (3rd ed).

Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications. (*2nd edition also acceptable)

Saldana, J. & Omasta, M. (2017). *Qualitative research: Analyzing life* (1st ed). Thousand

Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Course Performance Evaluation

Students are expected to submit all assignments on time in the manner outlined by the instructor (e.g., Blackboard, Tk20, hard copy).

All written assignments should be posted through the assignment folder on Blackboard Assignments:

1. Participation 10%

During class sessions in this course, we work on learning concepts, practicing the craft of qualitative research, and reflecting and analyzing research. It is essential to your learning that you come prepared to thoughtfully participate. Please complete required readings and participate thoughtfully in class activities and discussions. More than one absence, except under extenuating circumstances, will automatically lower your participation grade. (See end of syllabus for participation rubric.)

2. Article critique 30%

You will write a critical analysis of a qualitative research article on a topic you choose to pursue for the duration of the semester. (See end of syllabus for article critique rubric.)

EDRS 621 Article Critique Assignment

The EDRS 621 (Qualitative Inquiry in Education) article critique assessment is a paper that requires analysis and critique of a scholarly article based on a qualitative research study. It satisfies the performance-based assessment for students in the Educational Psychology master's program. The assignment requires candidates: (1) to carefully and critically read a study using qualitative methods, and (2) to analyze and critique the author's methods.

Students must upload their article critiques to Blackboard in the Assignment Section in a timely fashion.

ARTICLE CRITIQUE UPLOAD REQUIREMENT (Important!)

Every student registered for any Educational Psychology course with a required performance-based assessment is required to submit this assessment to Blackboard (regardless of whether a course is an elective, a onetime course, or part of an undergraduate minor). Evaluation of the performance-based assessment by the course instructor will also be completed in Blackboard. Failure to submit the assessment to Blackboard will result in the course instructor reporting the course grade as Incomplete (IN). Unless the IN grade is changed upon completion of the required Blackboard submission, the IN will convert to an F nine weeks into the following semester.

3. Analytic exercises/memos 30%

You will be regularly completing analytic exercises/memos in response to prompts, both during class and as outside assignments that you will turn in as a collection. Some involve work with MaxQDA software (See end of syllabus for research memo rubric.)

4. Interview project 30%

You will write an interview protocol, conduct a 1 to 1.5 hour interview, transcribe the interview and write an analytic memo. Your focus for this interview must be related to your chosen research topic for the class. (See end of syllabus for evaluation criteria for interview project.)

ADDITIONAL COURSE POLICIES

Paper Format

- 1 inch margins on all sides, double-spaced, 12-point Times New Roman font.
- Include the following information: title, name, date, professor, course number.
- All papers should be proofread for spelling, grammar, and clarity errors; citation and references in APA format.
- Titles of uploaded files should include submitter's last name.

Late Assignments

Assignments are due submitted in Blackboard at or before the start of class on the assigned due date. Late assignments will be marked down by half a letter grade for each day the assignment is late. If there are questions or concerns about a particular

situation, please contact me via email in advance of the deadline.

Grading Scale

Your final grade for this class will be based on the following:

A+ = 98 – 100%	A = 93 – 97.99%	A- = 90 – 92.99%
B+ = 88 – 89.99%	B = 83 – 87.99%	B- = 80 – 82.99%
C = 70 – 79.99%	F < 70%	

Professional Dispositions

See <https://cehd.gmu.edu/students/polices-procedures/>

Students are expected to exhibit professional behaviors and dispositions at all times.

Class Schedule

(This is a tentative course and assignment schedule, which may change. The most current schedule will be available on the Blackboard site)

Date	Class Topics/Activities	Readings/Assignments Due
Session 1 Aug 26	Introduction to qualitative research <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Introduction to qualitative research-• Overview of course and syllabus	Review syllabus. Read Ch. 1 Saldana & Omasta Analyzing Qualitative Data
Sept 2 (no class)	<i>Labor Day: University Closed</i>	
Session 2 Sept 9	Analyzing Field Sites <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Understanding field relations• Observation Exercise• Writing Field Notes	Read Saldana & Omasta, Ch. 2
Session 3 Sept 16	Discuss Fieldnotes, upload to Max QDA Analyzing Documents, Artifacts, & Visual Materials <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Understanding types of Artifacts• Hands on exercise analyzing artifacts	Read Saldana & Omasta, Ch. 3 Analytic exercise 1: Field notes due
Session 4 September 23	MaxQDA session, led by Amber Zhang	Analytic exercise 2: In-class Max QDA work
Session 5 Sept 30	Discuss Max QDA work Analyzing Interviews: Preparing, Conducting, and Transcribing <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Compare types of interviews• Describe Sampling Strategies• Devise Interview Protocols• Conduct and Transcribe Interview	Read Saldana & Omasta, Ch. 4

Session 6 Oct 7	Analyzing Interviews: Condensing & Coding <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Condense Semi-structured interviews • Analyze interviews using multiple coding methods 	Read Saldana & Omasta, Ch. 5 Read Maxwell p. 104-120
Session 7 Tuesday Oct 15 *As per university policy, Monday classes meet on Tuesday for Fall Break holiday.	Analyzing Qualitative Methodologies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe Major Theoretical Premises • Identify & Describe Selected Methodologies • Group Analytic Exercise for Qualitative Research Methodologies 	Read Saldana & Omasta, Ch. 6 Read Maxwell Ch. 3 Analytic exercise/memo 3 due
Session 8 Oct 21	Analyzing Qualitative Research Design <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify & Describe Elements of Research Design • Explain How Components of Research Design Interact and Initiate Design Decisions 	Read Maxwell, Ch. 1 & 2 Bring proposed qualitative article for article critique to class
Session 9 Oct 28	Analyzing Research Ethics <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Define rules of research (consent, assent, confidentiality) • Composing IRB forms, Informed Consent forms 	Read Saldana & Omasta, Ch. 8
Session 10 Nov 4	Qualitative Research Design: Methods	Read Maxwell Ch. 4 & Ch. 5 Analytic exercise/memo 4 due
Session 11 Nov 11	Qualitative Research Design: Validity	Read Maxwell Ch. 6 Validity
Session 12 Nov 18	Analytic Synthesis <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding Analysis & Interpretation After Data Collection • Data Analysis of Interview Exercise 	Read Read Saldana & Omasta, Ch. 9 Article Critique Due

Session 13 Nov 25	Analytic Synthesis: Understanding, Interpreting, & Theorizing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selecting Qualitative data Analysis Methods • Transforming Data into Symbols of Condensed Meaning • Creating Synthesis from data corpus 	Read Saldana & Omasta, Ch. 10 Read Data Analysis and Interpretation Maxwell & Miller (2008) (on blackboard) Analytic exercise/memo 5 due
Session 14 Dec 2	Analytic Write-ups <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify techniques of effective qualitative research writing • Compose qualitative research writing that follows guidelines 	Complete set of memos due as single document, labeled with dates submitted;
Session 15: Exam period		Interview Assignment Due Dec 9

Note: Faculty reserves the right to alter the schedule as necessary, with notification to students.

Core Values Commitment

The College of Education and Human Development is committed to collaboration, ethical leadership, innovation, research-based practice, and social justice. Students are expected to adhere to these principles: <http://cehd.gmu.edu/values/>.

GMU Policies and Resources for Students

Policies

- Students must adhere to the guidelines of the Mason Honor Code (see <https://catalog.gmu.edu/policies/honor-code-system/>).
- Students must follow the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing (see <http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/policies/responsible-use-of-computing/>).
- Students are responsible for the content of university communications sent to their Mason email account and are required to activate their account and check it regularly. All communication from the university, college, school, and program will be sent to students **solely** through their Mason email account.
- Students with disabilities who seek accommodations in a course must be registered with George Mason University Disability Services. Approved accommodations will begin at the time the written letter from Disability Services is received by the instructor (see <https://ds.gmu.edu/>).
- Students must silence all sound emitting devices during class unless otherwise authorized by the instructor.

Campus Resources

- Support for submission of assignments to Tk20 should be directed to tk20help@gmu.edu or <https://cehd.gmu.edu/aero/tk20>. Questions or concerns regarding use of Blackboard should be directed to <http://coursessupport.gmu.edu/>.
- For information on student support resources on campus, see <https://ctfe.gmu.edu/teaching/student-support-resources-on-campus>

For additional information on the College of Education and Human Development, please visit our website <https://cehd.gmu.edu/students/> .

Participation Rubric

Student participation is imperative to student learning and a successful class. The following rubric outlines how student participation scores will be determined in this course. All students are expected to demonstrate specific characteristics and actions throughout the semester. The quality and quantity of these actions will determine the points assigned for participation.

Students are expected to:

- a. Be punctual, present (in mind and body), and well prepared for class.
- b. Participate fully in class activities and assignments—take an active part in small and large group discussions (without dominating conversations) and pay attention to class lectures.
- c. Make insightful comments, which are informed by required readings and demonstrate reflection on those readings. Specifically, students should come to class with questions, comments, and thoughts on the current readings.
- d. Treat class activities, group discussions, and class discussions as important components of the course, showing respect for fellow classmates and the course material.
- e. Avoid using electronic devices for personal communication or other non-class-oriented purposes during class time.

Each of these criteria will be assessed on a 5-point scale:

- 5** = Student **consistently** demonstrated the criterion throughout the semester.
- 4** = Student **frequently** demonstrated the criterion throughout the semester.
- 3** = Student **intermittently** demonstrated the criterion throughout the semester.
- 2** = Student **rarely** demonstrated the criterion throughout the semester.
- 1** = Student **did not** demonstrate the criterion throughout the semester.

PERFORMANCE-BASED ASSESSMENT
RUBRIC FOR EDRS 621 ARTICLE CRITIQUE: 28 points total

	1 Does not meet standards	2 Approaching standards	3 Meets Standards	4 Exceeds Standards
Writing and Mechanics	Writing has significant stylistic, grammatical or organizational issues AND there are significant errors in APA usage.	Writing has stylistic, grammatical, or organizational issues OR there are significant errors in APA usage.	Writing is clear and APA style has minor or no errors.	Excellent writing APA style has very minor or no errors
Description of how five components of research design are reflected in the article.	There are many inaccuracies in how components of research design are addressed AND several need further development.	There are some inaccuracies in how components of research design are addressed, OR 3 or more need further development.	Each component of research is addressed accurately. One or two need further development.	Each component of research is treated fully and accurately
Analysis of Relationships Among Design Elements	Does not analyze of relationship among design elements.	Analysis of relationships among design elements is present, but either contains inaccuracies or is not adequately developed.	Accurate account of some key relationships among design elements.	Insightful and accurate account of how key research design elements relate.
Analysis of Presentation of Findings	There is minimal analysis of the presentation of findings.	Strengths and limitations of the presentation of findings are discussed. Claims need further explication or leave key gaps	Strengths and limitations of the presentation of findings are discussed and claims are reasonable and meaningful.	Insightful accounts of the qualities, strengths and limitations of the presentation of findings. Claims are reasonable and meaningful.
Analysis of Validity Issues	Validity issues are not addressed.	Validity issues are discussed but there are some gaps or inaccuracies.	Validity issues and strategies are discussed accurately.	Careful and accurate treatment of validity issues and strategies used. Discussion extends beyond author's account
Use of Evidence to support Explanations and judgments	There is minimal use evidence to support claims.	Uses evidence to support some claims.	Uses evidence to illustrate and support most claims.	Consistently uses evidence well to explicate, support and illustrate claims

Reflection Component	There is minimal or no reflection section.	Reflective component is present but is underdeveloped or lacks connections to analysis.	Reflections are developed and have clear connections to analysis.	Reflections are thoughtfully and fully developed with clear and meaningful connections to analysis.
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RUBRIC FOR ANALYTIC EXERCISES/MEMOS

	UNSATISFACTORY	EMERGING	COMPETENT
Response to instructor's written prompt	Does not respond to question(s) or refer to the topic(s) posed in the prompt	Responds at least partially to question(s) and topic(s) in the prompt, but without specific examples or explanation.	Responds fully to all question(s) and topic(s) in the prompt with specific examples and detailed explanation.
	Only 3 or fewer memos are handed in on time. The writer does not complete all assigned memos.	At least 4 memos are handed in on time. The writer completes all memos.	All required memos are handed in on time.

Evaluation Criteria for Interview Project (20 points total)

Informed consent (1 point)

- Written clearly and outlines consent issues appropriately.
- Signed before interview.
- If interviewing a minor (under age 18), informed consent for minor and parent/guardian needed. Minor assent form needs to be written in an appropriately leveled language and be read aloud to the minor.

Coversheet (1 point)

- Contains needed information.

Interview protocol (3 points)

- Questions are open-ended and not leading
- Questions seem organized around a set of research questions but not a direct translation of those questions.
- Questions show insight into ways of getting at research questions that may be difficult for participant to articulate.

Notes during interview (1 point)

- Identify which questions were asked/topics discussed
- Notes on anything that was not recorded.

Interview self-assessment (2 points)

- Completed promptly
- Thorough and insightful reflection on all the categories

Transcribed Interview (4 points)

- Notes put transcribed portion into context
- Verbatim transcription for at least full half hour included, with Interviewer talk italicized and separate from Interviewee
- Interview shows thoughtful listening and questioning in response to interviewee's responses, not just plodding through protocol

Analytic Memo (8 points)

- Issues of reactivity/reflexivity are discussed thoughtfully and in ways specific to the interview
- Thoughtful reflections supported by examples on the strengths/weaknesses of the interview protocol
- Themes generated are insightful and well explicated and supported.
- Next steps in research are discussed and are thoughtful.