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 2023

East Building Room 121

Thursdays 7:20-10:00 PM

Faculty

Name: Dr. Anthony E Kelly

Office Hours: By appointment, online

Office Location: Thompson Hall Fairfax

Email Address: akelly1@gmu.edu

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 research 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 research skills.

Under no circumstances, may candidates/students participate in online class sessions (either by phone or Internet) while operating motor vehicles. Further, as expected in a face-to-face class meeting, such online participation requires undivided attention to course content and communication.

Technical Requirements

To participate in this course, students will need to satisfy the following technical requirements:

- High-speed Internet access with standard up-to-date browsers. To get a list of Blackboard's supported browsers see:
  https://help.blackboard.com/Learn/Student/Getting_Started/Browser_Support#supported-browsers

  To get a list of supported operation systems on different devices see:
  https://help.blackboard.com/Learn/Student/Getting_Started/Browser_Support#tested-devices-and-operating-systems.

- Students will need a headset microphone for use with Zoom if necessary.
- Students may be asked to create logins and passwords on supplemental websites and/or to download trial software to their computer or tablet as part of course requirements.
- The following software plug-ins for PCs and Macs, respectively, are available for free download:

- o Adobe Acrobat Reader: https://get.adobe.com/reader/
- o Windows Media Player:
  https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/help/14209/get-windows-media-player
- o Apple Quick Time Player: www.apple.com/quicktime/download/
- We will be using the software MaxQDA for data analysis. You will have access to a free student trial version for the duration of the class and you will need a computer on which you can run this software. MaxQDA is also available in the CEHD computer lab.

Expectations

- Course Week: Our course week will begin on the day that our synchronous meetings take place as indicated on the Schedule of Classes.
- Log-in Frequency:
  Students must actively check the course Blackboard site and their GMU email for communications from the instructor, class discussions, and/or access to course materials at least 3 times per week. In addition, students must log-in for all scheduled online synchronous meetings if such are scheduled.
- Participation:
  Students are expected to actively engage in all course activities throughout the semester, which includes viewing all course materials, completing course activities and assignments, and participating in course discussions and group interactions.
- Technical Competence:
  Students are expected to demonstrate competence in the use of all course technology. Students who are struggling with technical components of the course are expected to seek assistance from the instructor and/or College or University technical services.
- Technical Issues:
  Students should anticipate some technical difficulties during the semester and should, therefore, budget their time accordingly. Late work will not be accepted based on individual technical issues.
- Workload:
  Please be aware that this course is **not** self-paced. Students are expected to meet *specific deadlines* and *due dates* listed in the **Class Schedule** section of this syllabus. It is the student's responsibility to keep track of the weekly course schedule of topics, readings, activities and assignments due.
- Instructor Support:
  Students may schedule a one-on-one meeting to discuss course requirements, content or other course-related issues. Those unable to come to a Mason campus can meet with the instructor via telephone or web conference. Students should email the instructor to schedule a one-on-one session, including their preferred meeting method and suggested dates/times.
- Netiquette:
  The course environment is a collaborative space. Experience shows that even an innocent remark typed in the online environment can be misconstrued. Students must always re-read their responses carefully before posting them, so as others do not consider them as personal offenses. *Be positive in your approach with others and diplomatic in selecting your words*. Remember that you are not competing with classmates, but sharing information and learning from others. All faculty are similarly expected to be respectful in all communications.

- Accommodations:
  Learners who require effective accommodations to insure accessibility must be registered with George Mason University Disability Services.

Communication with professor: I try to respond to emails within 48 hours during business days. If you have not received a response from me in that time, please send a reminder. Conversely, if you send a question that you resolve before hearing from me, please let me know.

Learner Outcomes or Objectives
This course is designed to enable students to do the following:

• Develop an 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.
• Learn and use approaches to qualitative data analysis and interpretation, including categorization strategies such as coding and matrices, and connecting strategies such as case studies.
• Develop proficiency 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, and https://www.cmu.edu/teaching/principles/learning.html.

Relationship to Program Standards:
In this course, the following Educational Psychology program standards will be addressed:

Standard 2. Candidates will apply their knowledge of quantitative and qualitative research methods, including basic concepts, principles, techniques, and ethical issues, to read and critique relevant products of research.

Standard 3. Candidates will apply their knowledge and skills of quantitative and qualitative research methods, including basic concepts, principles, techniques, and ethical issues, to conduct research and/or inform practice in diverse applied settings.

Standard 4. Candidates will demonstrate oral and written communication relevant to educational psychology, including knowledge and use of APA style and professional formats (e.g., oral presentations, poster presentations, article abstracts, literature reviews, research proposals, reports).

Standard 5. Candidates will demonstrate professional dispositions relevant to educational psychology such as critical thinking, collaboration, interpersonal communication, intercultural competence, ethical leadership, professionalism, and technological skills.

Required Text:
Saldana, J. & Omasta, M. (2017). *Qualitative research: Analyzing life* (1st ed). Sage Publications.
*Note—page numbers are given for the 1st edition, but 2nd edition is also acceptable.

Recommended text:
Maxwell, J. A. (2012). *Qualitative research design: An interactive approach* (3rd ed). Sage Publications. (*2nd edition also acceptable)

Other readings as assigned.

Course Performance Evaluation

Students are expected to submit all assignments on time into Blackboard.

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 course activities, view video lectures 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 25%**
   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.

   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 35%**
   You will be regularly completing analytic exercises/memos in response to prompts, both during class and as outside assignments. You will post these in your BB journal for ongoing review, and you will turn them in to BB Assignments as a collection to be graded at the end of the term. Some involve work with MaxQDA software (See end of syllabus for research memo rubric.)

4. **Interview project 30%**
   You will identify a research question, select interview participant(s), write an interview protocol, and conduct a minimum of 1.5 hours of interviews and/or at least 1 hour of interview + field observations and/or artifact analysis. You will transcribe and code your data using Max QDA. You will write an analytic memo about your findings and your process. Your focus for this project should be related to the topic you developed in earlier memos. (See Blackboard for updated details on the project and the 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 or similar 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 unless otherwise noted. Late assignments will be marked down by half a letter grade for each day the assignment is late unless otherwise noted. 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%   A- = 90 – 92%
B+ = 88 – 89%   B = 83 – 87%   B- = 80 – 82%
C = 70 – 79%   F < 70%

Professional Dispositions

See

Class Schedule
(This is a tentative course and assignment schedule, which may change. The most current schedule will be available on the Blackboard site). Note: We will begin with the assumption that all class sessions are synchronous and meet for the full class period. However, due to the need for a lot of hands-on exercises in qualitative research we may hold occasional asynchronous "lab" style meetings for some where instructor is available for questions/individual responses during a class session but there is no formal group session. These will always be announced in class and through Bb announcements).

Date	Class Topics/Activities	Readings/Assignments Due
Session 1 **August 24** **7:20-10:00 PM**	**Introduction to qualitative research** • Introduction to qualitative research- • Overview of course and syllabus	Review syllabus. Complete Session 1 materials on Bb

Date	Class Topics/Activities	Readings/Assignments Due
Session 2 **Aug 31** **7:20-10:00 PM**	**Analyzing Field Sites** • Understanding field relations • Observation Exercise • Writing Field Notes	Read Ch. 1 Saldana & Omasta Analyzing Qualitative Data Read Saldana & Omasta, Ch. 2 Complete Session 2 Materials on Bb
Session 3 **Sept 7** **7:20-10:00 PM**	**Discuss Fieldnotes, upload to Max QDA** **Analyzing Documents, Artifacts, & Visual Materials** • Understanding types of Artifacts • Hands on exercise analyzing artifacts	Read Saldana & Omasta, Ch. 3 Complete Session 3 Materials on Bb
Session 4 **Sept 14** **7:20-10:00 PM**	**Max QDA tutorials and activities**	Complete Session 4 Materials on Bb

Session 5 **Sept 21** **7:20-10:00 PM**	**Discuss Max QDA work** **Analyzing Interviews: Preparing, Conducting, and Transcribing** • Compare types of interviews • Describe Sampling Strategies • Devise Interview Protocols • Conduct and Transcribe Interview	Read Saldana & Omasta, Ch. 4 Complete Session 5 materials on Bb **Interview project proposal and Interview Protocol Draft Due**
Session 6 **Sept 28** **7:20-10:00 PM**	**Analyzing Interviews: Condensing & Coding** • Condense Semi-structured interviews • Analyze interviews using multiple coding methods	Read Saldana & Omasta, Ch. 5 Read Maxwell p. 104-120 Complete Session 6 materials on Bb **Revised Interview protocol due**
Session 7 **Oct 5** **7:20-10:00 PM**	**Analyzing Qualitative Methodologies** • Describe Major Theoretical Premises • Identify & Describe Selected Methodologies • Group Analytic Exercise for Qualitative Research Methodologies	Read Saldana & Omasta, Ch. 6 Read Maxwell Ch. 3 Complete Session 7 materials on Bb **Bring potential qualitative research articles for article critique to class.**
Session 8 **Oct 12** **7:20-10:00 PM** **Dr. Kelly travelling for a conference. Asynchronous session.**	**Analyzing Qualitative Research Design 1** • Identify & Describe Elements of Research Design • Explain How Components of Research Design Interact and Initiate Design Decisions	Read Maxwell, Ch. 1 & 2 Complete Session 8 materials on Bb Work on your article critique.
Session 9 **Oct 19** **7:20-10:00 PM**	**Analyzing Qualitative Research Design 2** • Identify & Describe Elements of Research Design Explain How Components of Research Design Interact and Initiate Design Decisions	Read Maxwell Ch. 4 & Ch. 5 Complete Session 10 materials on Bb
Oct 26 **7:20-10:00 PM**	**Qualitative Research Design: Methods** Making a case for your methods decisions.	

Session 10 **Nov 2** **7:20-10:00 PM**	**Qualitative Research Design: Validity** What makes our data and analysis trustworthy? How might we be wrong?	Read Maxwell Ch. 6 Validity Complete Session 11 materials on Bb
Session 11 **Nov 9** **7:20-10:00 PM**	**Analyzing Research Ethics** • Define rules of research (consent, assent, confidentiality) • Composing IRB forms, Informed Consent forms • Citi-Training	Read Saldana & Omasta, Ch. 8 Complete Session 9 materials on Bb **Article Critique Due**
Session 12 **November 16**	**Revisiting Qualitative Interview analysis and introducing Analytic Synthesis** • Understanding Analysis & Interpretation After Data Collection Data Analysis of Interview Exercise	Read Saldana & Omasta, Ch. 9 Complete Session 12 materials on Bb **Transcribed interview(s) for final project due**
November 23 **No Class Thanksgiving Holiday break**		
Session 13 **November 30** **7:20-10:00 PM**	**Analytic Synthesis: Understanding, Interpreting, & Theorizing** • 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) Complete Session 13 materials on Bb **Complete set of memos/activities due as single document uploaded to Bb assignments by 11:59 PM**
		Final Projects 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 VIA should be directed to viahelp@gmu.edu or https://cehd.gmu.edu/aero/assessments. Questions or concerns regarding use of Blackboard should be directed to https://its.gmu.edu/knowledge-base/blackboard-instructional-technology-support-for-students/.

- For information on student support resources on campus, see https://ctfe.gmu.edu/teaching/student-support-resources-on-campus

Notice of mandatory reporting of sexual assault, sexual harassment, interpersonal violence, and stalking:
As a faculty member, I am designated as a "Non-Confidential Employee," and must report all disclosures of sexual assault, sexual harassment, interpersonal violence, and stalking to Mason's Title IX Coordinator per University Policy 1202. If you wish to speak with someone confidentially, please contact one of Mason's confidential resources, such as Student Support and Advocacy Center (SSAC) at 703-380-1434 or Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) at 703-993-2380. You may also seek assistance or support measures from Mason's Title IX Coordinator by calling 703-993-8730, or emailing titleix@gmu.edu.
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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, and well prepared for synchronous class sessions.
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 whether synchronous or asynchronous.
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.

RUBRIC FOR Analytic memos/On-line course activities (40 points on total set)

	UNSATISFACTORY	EMERGING	COMPETENT
Response to instructor's written prompt	Does not respond to question(s)/challenge(s) or refer to the topic(s) posed in the prompt	Responds at least partially to question(s), topic(s) or challenges in the prompt, but with limited depth (e.g., few examples or explication)	Responds fully to all question(s) and topic(s) in the prompt with specific examples and detailed explanation.
Quality of reflection/analysis/insight	Responses do not show independent reflection or analysis.	Responses involve reflection and analysis.	Responses show solid critical and/or insightful reflection and analysis.
Consistency and Completeness	Fewer than 80% of the activities are completed.	At least 80% of the memos/activities are completed.	All memos/activities are completed consistently throughout the semester

Evaluation Criteria for Interview Project
(30 points total)

Research question and conceptual context (3 points)
- Research question is appropriate for qualitative research
- Conceptual context draws on relevant scholarly literature

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)
- Interview is transcribed in full (may use auto-transcription software, but it should be corrected based on listening)
- Interview shows thoughtful listening and questioning in response to interviewee's responses, not just plodding through protocol

Coded Interview (5 points)
- Interview is coded using at least 2 coding strategies learned in course
- Max QDA report of coded data in the form you find useful.
- Summary of codes and coding process.

Analytic Memo (10 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.