Description: Qualitative Research Methods

STAFFING
Examiner: Kristine Martin-McDonald
Moderator: Lorna Robertson

RATIONALE
Inquiry into intra-personal and inter-personal human experience requires sensitive, qualitative methods and any attempts to change human action is best based upon these understandings. This is in contrast to many aspects of the physical and biological world which can be well explained by quantitative methods and can be changed by techno-rational means. These same methods, however, do not help us to understand many important aspects of the social world and the emotional/spiritual world of individuals. This Course introduces beginning researchers to the specific practices of qualitative methods of data collection, management, analysis and interpretation.

SYNOPSIS
The Course is concerned with the skills of the qualitative researcher including the researcher as instrument, participant observation, individual interviewing, focus-group interviews, grounded theorising text-based research, praxis and action research. The Course provides an overview to qualitative data analysis including thematic analysis, grounded theorising, critical incident analysis, theory-based analysis and the use of computers in qualitative data analysis.

OBJECTIVES
On successful completion of this Course students will be able to:

- identify their own values, biases and beliefs and show how these are either bracketed or related to their research process and findings;
- demonstrate integrity, sensitivity, openness, honesty and non-judgmental acceptance as a qualitative researcher;
• demonstrate beginning skills in participant observation, individual interviewing, focus-group interviews and grounded theorising text-based research;
• identify clinical practice problems which would be well suited to praxis and action research methods;
• record research data including tape recording, photographs, field notes, observations, journalling;
• manage research data and describe the benefits of using appropriate computer programs to store and manage material from literature reviews and the qualitative data generated by the researcher;
• select an appropriate method to analyse qualitative data including: thematic analysis, grounded theorising, critical incident analysis, theory-based analysis and the use of computers in qualitative data analysis.

**TOPICS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Weighting (%)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. MODULE 1 Qualitative Research Methodology - Introduction to: the philosophical foundations for qualitative research; the broad area of qualitative research design; the qualitative research process; and research ethics.</td>
<td>20.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. MODULE 2 The Skills of the Qualitative Researcher - Identifying and managing personal values 'biases' - Researcher honesty, sensitivity and non-judgmental acceptance - Recording qualitative data - Developing qualitative research skills: participant observation, individual interviewing, focus-group interviews, praxis and action research, phenomenological research, grounded theory research.</td>
<td>50.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. MODULE 3 Analysing Qualitative Data - selecting an appropriate method to analyse data, - analysing text-based research data, - the use of computers in qualitative analysis, - writing a qualitative research report.</td>
<td>30.00</td>
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**TEXT and MATERIALS required to be PURCHASED or ACCESSED:**

Books can be ordered by fax or telephone. For costs and further details use the 'Book Search' facility at http://bookshop.usq.edu.au by entering the author or title of the text.

**REFERENCE MATERIALS**

Reference materials are materials that, if accessed by students, may improve their knowledge and understanding of the material in the course and enrich their learning experience.

Beach, D. 1996 *The Responsible Conduct of Research*, VCH. NY.
Crotty, M. 1996 Phenomenology and Nursing Research, Churchill Livingstone, Melbourne.

Emden, C. 198 Theoretical Perspectives on Narrative Inquiry, Collegian, 5(2), pp 30-35.


Martin-McDonald, K. 1999 Once upon a time..Narratives & Research: Contemporary Nurse, 8(1), pp 221-226.


Neuman, W.L., 1994 Social Research Methods: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches, 2nd edn, Allyn and Bacon, Boston.


Talbot, L. 1995 Principles and Practice of Nursing Research, Mosby, St. Louis.

**STUDENT WORKLOAD REQUIREMENTS**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTIVITY</th>
<th>HOURS</th>
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**ASSESSMENT DETAILS**

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<th>Marks Out of</th>
<th>Wtg(%)</th>
<th>Required</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
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<td>40.00</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>27 Mar 2002</td>
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<tr>
<td>(see note 1)</td>
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<tr>
<td>INDEPTH INTERVIEWING</td>
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<td>20.00</td>
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<td>EXERCISE</td>
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<td>QUALITATIVE RESEARCH</td>
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<td>07 Jun 2002</td>
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<td>ASSGT</td>
<td></td>
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<td>(see note 3)</td>
</tr>
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</table>

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NOTES:
1. Further details about the due dates are detailed in the assessment section of the Course Specifications.
2. Further details about the due dates are detailed in the assessment section of the Course Specifications.
3. Further details about the due dates are detailed in the assessment section of the Course Specifications.

OTHER REQUIREMENTS
1. Attendance Requirements: It is the students' responsibility to actively participate in all activities scheduled for them, and to study all material provided to them or required to be accessed by them to maximize their chance of meeting the objectives of the Course and to be informed of Course-related activities and administration.

2. Minimum Requirements to Pass the Course: To be assured of a pass in this course, students must achieve a mark of at least 55% in each piece of assessment. Students must submit all pieces of assessment.

3. Assignments: The due date for an assignment is the date by which a student must dispatch the assignment to the USQ. The onus is on the student to provide proof of the dispatch date, if requested by the Examiner. Students must retain a copy of each item submitted for assessment. This must be produced within five days if required by the Examiner. In accordance with University's Assignment Extension Policy (Regulation 5.6.1), the examiner of a Course may grant an extension of the due date of an assignment in extenuating circumstances. This policy may be found in the USQ Handbook, the Distance Education Student Guide and the Faculty of Sciences' Orientation Handbook for on-campus students. All students are advised to study and follow the guidelines associated with this policy. An assignment, submitted after the due date without an extension approved by the Examiner, will attract a penalty of 20 percent of the assigned mark for each day (or part thereof) that the assignment is late.

4. Grading: Final grades for students will be determined by the addition of the marks obtained in each assessment item, weighted as in the Assessment Details and by considering the students' level of achievement of the objectives of the Course.