Overview
This is a core module offered to students enrolled in the Doctor of Education Program. This module introduces qualitative educational research methods with particular emphasis on critical reading, ethics and understanding of a variety of approaches to qualitative research.

Students are introduced to the various stages of the research process from the development and justification of research questions and formulation of an appropriate research design, methods of data collection and analysis.

The module is organized in such a way so as to provide an experiential process for participants to synthesize knowledge and learn through critiquing and discussing published research as well as each participant’s research. The module content is flexible and subject to change in line with the interests and progress of participants.

Teacher
Prof David Carless. Office: Meng Wah Complex Room 654. Tel: 3917 5893 Email: dcarless@hku.hk

Schedule
Date: Jan 19, 26; Feb 2, 16; Mar 2, 23 and 30, 2019 (Sat)
Time: 1:30pm - 4:30pm
Venue: Run Me Shaw 202

Learning Outcomes
By the end of this course, students are expected to:

- develop an understanding of the different purposes and paradigms that underpin different approaches and methods in qualitative research;
- choose appropriate data collection methods and analyse qualitative data to answer research questions;
- make some progress in drafting sections of the Methodology chapter of the EdD thesis;
- produce a draft ethics application demonstrating understanding of appropriate ethical procedures;
- be able to analyze and critique aspects of research methodology in a reasoned way.

Assessment
The assessment consists of two elements: a critical analysis of a methodology reading (50%); and a draft research ethics application (50%). The aims of these assignments are to help you to advance your doctoral study. Assignment 1 supports the development of your methodology chapter which you are preparing for confirmation. Assignment 2 integrates closely with the ethical approval that you need to undertake before starting data collection.

1. Analysis of a methodology reading (Approximately 1000 words)
Select a methodological reading relevant to your research which can be an article, chapter or section of a book. Write a critical summary of your chosen reading and explore its implications for your own research.

You may like to provide some of the following:
- A brief summary of the essence of the reading;
- Some discussion of what new knowledge or understandings that you have gained;
- Some analysis of the strengths and limitations of the article;
- Some comparison or positioning of the article in relation to other relevant literature;
- How you will use some of its key messages to inform your research;
- Any remaining challenges or unanswered issues;
- Any other thoughts that may help to advance your research.

2. Draft Ethics application

Develop a draft of your ethics application in line with the Faculty guidelines. This would normally include the objectives of the study; elements of the research method which involve human participants; details of the data collection; forms for informed consent. A summary of the draft research proposal is required and should be sufficient to enable a reader to judge the ethical dimensions.

According to the progress of your study, it is acknowledged that your draft ethics application may be less fully developed or incomplete. If you are still at an early stage planning your research it is hoped that you can at least show awareness of key ethical issues, such as informed consent, anonymity and secure storage of data.

Course outline

Session 1
Introduction and Research Questions Jan 19, 2019
In this introductory session, we first define qualitative research and identify its characteristics. We then survey different types of qualitative research, and examine the kinds of questions that qualitative researchers ask.

Possible Readings:
1. Merriam (2009). Chapter 1 What is qualitative research? And, Chapter 2 Types of qualitative research.

Session 2
Case study Jan 26, 2019
In this session, we examine the rationale, strengths and weaknesses of case studies. We explore some of the potentials of case studies to illuminate educational practice through a critical examination of examples of case study research. This session provides insight into some of the capacities required for assignment 1.

Possible Readings:

Session 3
Qualitative Design & Research Ethics  Feb 2, 2019
In this session we continue discussing some of the key issues in the design of qualitative research. We also focus on some of the key issues in the development of a sound ethical approval application. This session helps prepare some of the ground for your assignment 2.

Possible Readings:
1. Hatch (2002). Chapter 2 Designing qualitative studies
2. Rossman & Rallis (2012). Chapter 5 Conceptualizing and planning the research

Session 4
Purposeful Sampling and Triangulation Strategies  Feb 16, 2019
In this session we study a range of purposeful sampling strategies used in qualitative research and also examine different types of triangulation strategies. We then consider their use in our own projects.

Possible Readings:

Session 5
Methods of Data Collection (1): Interview  Mar 2, 2019
In this session, we consider some of the key issues in interview research, including the strengths and limitations of interview data and how they might be usefully combined with other research methods. These include discussion of the preparation for interviews and building of rapport in the process of interviewing research informants. An example of an interview study conducted at HKU is to be discussed.

Possible Readings:

Session 6
Methods of Data Collection (2): Observational research  Mar 23, 2019
In this session we consider how other methods of data collection, including observation, and documents, can be used in qualitative research. From critiquing some examples, we consider the applicability of the methods in our own projects.
In this session, we explore the main strategies for analyzing qualitative data. We consider coding, categorizing and managing subjectivity. We also consider the role of theory and the development of significance.

Possible Readings:
1. Merriam (2009). Chapter 8 Qualitative data analysis

Deadline and method of submission
Please submit your paper for assignment 1 by hand in class on March 23, 2019.

Please submit your paper for assignment 2 by e-mail not later than midnight May 21, 2019 to dcarless@hku.hk

References


**Online Resources**

**Bibliographic tool:**


**General**

- Research Methods Resources on the WWW
  [http://www.slais.ubc.ca/resources/research_methods/](http://www.slais.ubc.ca/resources/research_methods/)

- A Guide to Preparing Your Application for Candidacy

- The Qualitative Report - a peer-reviewed, online journal devoted to writing and discussion of and about qualitative, critical, action, and collaborative inquiry and research. [http://www.nova.edu/ssss/QR/web.html](http://www.nova.edu/ssss/QR/web.html)

**Case studies**


**Style guide**

Using American Psychological Association (APA) Format (Updated to 5th Edition), Purdue University Online Writing Lab, [http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/research/r_apa.html](http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/research/r_apa.html)
THE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG  
Faculty of Education  
Office of Research  

Coursework Assessment for MPhil, PhD and EdD Students

All coursework undertaken by MPhil, PhD and EdD students in the Faculty of Education are assessed by completion of written assignments, and by satisfactory completion of the course curriculum for which regular attendance and participation in class activities and research seminars are required. For courses requiring a minimum attendance percentage, students who fail to achieve satisfactory attendance may be required to retake the same course(s) or equivalent as endorsed by the supervisor. All coursework are assessed holistically on a pass or fail basis according to the following general assessment criteria:

- Understanding of the task and key concepts/issues involved
- Depth of analysis and/or critique in response to the task
- Use of appropriate professional and/or research literature to support response
- Structure and organization of response
- Presentation of response according to appropriate academic and linguistic conventions

Please note that the grade descriptors are designed to be used holistically, that is, it is not envisaged that separate scores will be given for each criteria. To achieve the designated grade the majority of criteria should be met. The grading system for coursework is as follows:

Grade

PASS

Demonstrate sound understanding of the task, with points and arguments presented generally relevant to the question. Adequate commentary on evidence and materials used, with some evidence of critical awareness. Adequate range of source materials consulted, with clear and critical understanding of the literature used. Good structure and presentation, with consistent and accurate referencing and control of length.

FAIL

Demonstrate inadequate understanding or misunderstanding of the task. Arguments mainly descriptive and/or contain points which require greater substantiation. Identification of main issues, but little critical awareness. Some evidence of reading and understanding of the literature, but range and/or relevance limited. Ideas not well integrated and/or presentation not well structured. Inaccuracies in spelling, word choice and grammar which impede meaning. Inconsistent referencing and length problematic.

A second opinion will be sought for all potential failures and all suspected plagiarism cases. A moderator, normally not the supervisor of the concerned student, will be appointed by the Chairperson of FHDC in conjunction with the course lecturer concerned.

Office of Research  
19 August 2010