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## Qualitative Research Methods

EDLD 760A/EDS 288A  
UCSD



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### **COURSE OVERVIEW**

Qualitative research provides a systematic way in which to explore questions about the world and about social processes in the context in which they exist. Qualitative researchers engage in inquiry processes to understand phenomena through the meaning that individuals make from their experiences. Immersion in other people's worlds is essential. To accomplish this, researchers elicit what participants say, do, and feel and look for themes that tie those reactions together. Qualitative methodologists work to understand what is going on by listening and watching intently. They ask a number of questions and observe closely to create meaning from participants' lived experiences.

### **Student Learning Outcomes**

1. Examine a variety of qualitative methods and specific methodological approaches
2. Understand the role of theory, philosophy, and ethics in qualitative research
3. Identify appropriate qualitative methods to answer a variety of research questions
4. Engage in critical conversations and writing about qualitative research methods
5. Consider both the practical and ethical implications of a qualitative research project

### **Program Student Learning Outcomes**

By the end of the program, students will be able to:

PSLO 1: Demonstrate and engage in critical analysis around creating and sustaining organizational conditions that promote socially just and equitable learning environments.

PSLO 2: Use evidence-based decision-making.

*Focus of EDLD 760A/EDS 288A:* PSLO 3: Generate and use applied research.

PSLO 4: Demonstrate and apply leadership skills and dispositions that are applicable to positively impact organizational culture and practice.

## **CSUSM SCHOOL OF EDUCATION MISSION**

The mission of the School of Education community is to collaboratively transform education. We:

- Create community through partnerships
- Promote and foster social justice and educational equity
- Advance innovative, student-centered practices
- Inspire reflective teaching and learning
- Conduct purposeful research
- Serve the School, College, University and Community

## **BASIC TENETS OF CSUSM SCHOOL OF EDUCATION CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK**

- Student centered education
- Research and theory specific to the program field inform practice
- Connections and links between coursework and application
- Strong engagement between faculty and candidates
- Co-teaching clinical practice
- Culturally responsive pedagogy and socially just outcomes

## **CSUSM School of Education attendance policy**

Students *must* participate in 80% of the course sessions to receive credit for this course. Additional absences may further impact the course grade. If the absence is predictable (e.g. professional obligation), the student should inform the instructor ahead of time. If the absence is unanticipated, the student should initiate contact with the instructor as soon as possible. Notification of an absence does not constitute an excuse.

## **CSUSM Accommodation Services**

Students with disabilities requiring reasonable accommodations are approved for services through the Disabled Student Services Office (DSS). This office is located in Craven Hall 5205, and can be contacted by phone at (760) 750-4905 or TTY (760) 750-4909. Students authorized by DSS to receive reasonable accommodations should meet with their instructor.

## **CSUSM Academic Honesty Policy**

Students will be expected to adhere to standards of academic honesty and integrity, as outlined in the Student Academic Honesty Policy. All assignments must be original work, clear and error-free. All ideas/material that are borrowed from other sources must have appropriate references to the original sources. Any quoted material should give credit to the source and be punctuated accordingly.

Academic Honesty and Integrity: Students are responsible for honest completion and representation of their work. Your course catalog details the ethical standards and penalties for infractions. There will be zero tolerance for infractions. If you believe there has been an infraction by someone in the class, please bring it to the instructor's attention. The instructor reserves the right to discipline any student for academic dishonesty, in accordance with the general rules and regulations of the university. Disciplinary action may include the lowering of grades and/or the assignment of a failing grade for an exam, assignment, or the class as a whole.

Incidents of Academic Dishonesty will be reported to the Dean of Students. Sanctions at the University level may include suspension or expulsion from the University.

Refer to the full Academic Honesty Policy at:

[http://www.csusm.edu/policies/active/documents/Academic\\_Honesty\\_Policy.html](http://www.csusm.edu/policies/active/documents/Academic_Honesty_Policy.html)

### **Plagiarism**

As an educator, it is expected that each candidate (course participant) will do his/her own work, and contribute equally to group projects and processes. Plagiarism or cheating is unacceptable under any circumstances. If you are in doubt about whether your work is paraphrased or plagiarized see the Plagiarism Prevention for Students website <http://library.csusm.edu/plagiarism/index.html>. If there are questions about academic honesty, please consult the University catalog.

### **OUR LEARNING COMMUNITY**

The following Community Agreements and Teaching/Learning philosophy will serve as the foundational principles by which we relate to each other as we learn together. As a community, we can add specifics to these principles as we need.

#### **Community Agreements**

- We speak from our own experience
- We are open to hearing others
- We share air time
- We are willing to have our thinking challenged
- We respect confidentiality
- We share experiences that are issue focused, not necessarily who said it or where
- Each of us participates using a “value added” approach by expanding upon ideas, providing examples, and/or expressing a different perspective.

## GRADING STANDARDS

### Grading Scale:

#### General Evaluation/Feedback Rubric

Does not meet standards (B or below)	Approaching Standards (A-/B+)	Meets Standards (A)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Includes some of the required elements as delineated in the syllabus.</li> <li>• Some components of the assignment are included.</li> <li>• Provides a few concrete details of the information required for the assignment.</li> <li>• Includes personal viewpoints.</li> <li>• Organization hard to follow.</li> <li>• Many mechanical errors, including APA format.</li> <li>• Hard to read.</li> <li>• Little sentence/vocabulary variety.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Includes required elements as delineated in the syllabus.</li> <li>• All components of the assignment are included.</li> <li>• Provides concrete details of the information required for the assignment.</li> <li>• Includes personal viewpoints.</li> <li>• Good organization.</li> <li>• Has few, if any, mechanical errors including APA format.</li> <li>• Holds interest – is interesting to read.</li> <li>• Some sentence/vocabulary variety.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Includes required elements as delineated in the syllabus.</li> <li>• All components of the assignment are included.</li> <li>• Provides concrete details of the information required for the assignment and makes clear connections to class discussions, readings and activities.</li> <li>• Insightful commentary using personal viewpoints supported by current learning.</li> <li>• Presents clear and logical organization of thoughts.</li> <li>• Has few, if any, mechanical errors including APA format.</li> <li>• Holds interest – is engaging and thought-provoking to the audience.</li> <li>• Uses a sophisticated scholar researcher vocabulary and sentence structure.</li> </ul>

**If you are unable to submit an assignment by the due date, it is your responsibility to contact the instructor before the due date.**

This rubric represents general guidelines we will use to evaluate your work. As a doctoral candidate it is critical that you communicate your ideas through multiple formats. The written word is a powerful demonstrator of your knowledge, skills, and disposition. Therefore, we hold high expectations of your performance, and we are committed to providing you with useful and meaningful feedback that will support your learning and continued development as an educational leader.

In general, we believe a doctoral student:

- Completes all assignments on time and demonstrates the ability to summarize, analyze, and/or reflect at sophisticated and complex levels.

- Varies sources of information for assignments, demonstrating high degree of effort in pursuing varied perspectives around important educational issues.
- Completes all the reading assignments and develops thoughtful and thorough responses.
- Produces work that reveals a strong commitment to self-discovery and learning.
- Produces work at a highly professional level in terms of both writing and content.
- Develops a high quality presentation, demonstrating significant learning around a contemporary issue.
- Presents confidently and intelligently, demonstrating effective teaching skills.
- Completes assignments in/out of class with a focus on learning and exploration, pushing him/herself to better understand the profession through quality work.
- Attends every class meeting and is fully engaged during class.
- Pushes him/herself to new understandings by participating in discussions, sharing his/her opinions, and valuing others' perspectives.
- Contributes to the positive environment of the class by respecting all members.

### **COURSE TEXTS AND READINGS**

- Required: Creswell, J. (2013). *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approaches* (3<sup>rd</sup> Edition). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.
- Required: Additional articles self-identified.

### **COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

As adult learners it is assumed that you will read the texts and articles critically, develop questions and analyses, and complete written assignments that will facilitate your own learning and class discussions. It is assumed that all students will work to their highest level since mastering research skills will enable you to conduct and complete a high quality dissertation.

#### ***Participation (20%)***

Your attendance and active participation are essential to achieving the student learning outcomes for this course. Students are expected to come prepared to discuss the readings and to engage in challenging conversations that support the further development of one's academic voice. Students should bring the textbook with them to every class.

#### ***Reflection Blog Posts—Due February 20, 24 & March 2 by 11:55PM (40%)***

You will find a qualitative research article on a topic of what you are thinking about studying for your dissertation. Read it and write a blog post that processes the article's major ideas and reflects on the systematic inquiry described within. Each reflection should contain the following elements:

1. APA citation of the article you studied
2. A summary of and overall impressions about what you read
3. Identification of sections or passages that resonated with you
4. Questions you have about aspects in the readings

You will respond to two other blog posts of your peers. Your reflection should be at least 650 words. You will receive an invitation from wordpress.com to join our class blog site: <https://qualitativeresearchreflections.wordpress.com/>. Follow the link provided in the invitation. Make sure to create a username and a password to be able to write and publish a blog post. More information will be provided in class.

***Synthesis Paper—Due March 16 by 11:55PM (40%)***

The final project for the class is writing a paper that synthesizes your understanding of the connection between research questions and methodology in terms of what you are thinking about studying for your dissertation. You may/should include your learning from Dr. Hofstetter's quantitative methods course as well. The focus of this paper will be (a) your understanding of how a researcher determines the most effective methodology for answering any given research question(s) and (b) how this learning connects to your own potential research topic. The paper should include the following elements:

1. **Problem Statement:** A description of the topic you want to study; include a discussion of why this is a meaningful topic to study. Make sure to identify the need for what you propose to do about the topic.
2. **Literature Review:** A brief review of existing research on your specific topic. Make sure to identify areas of research related to your topic.
3. **Theoretical Framework:** A set of assumptions that inform your topic and guide the research questions of your research study.
4. **Research Questions:** A set of questions you plan to investigate as part of your study.
5. **Methodology:** A discussion of what methodological approach or approaches might be best suited to explore your research questions; be sure to include the rationale behind your thinking.
6. **Summary:** A 250 words summary of numbers 1-5 (think 'elevator pitch').

Your synthesis paper should be at least 1500 words. You will create your synthesis paper in a Google Document, and will share it with me at [ssiyahhan@gmail.com](mailto:ssiyahhan@gmail.com). More information will be provided in class.

## CLASS MEETING SCHEDULE

Date	Topic	Preparations Required
February 10, 2016 WEDNESDAY 6-9 PM	Exploring qualitative methods	<b>Read:</b> Creswell Chapters 1&2
February 17, 2016 WEDNESDAY 6-9 PM	Connecting research questions to an appropriate methodology	<b>Read:</b> Creswell Chapter 4
February 20, 2016 SATURDAY 10AM-4PM	Conducting a qualitative study Qualitative data collection—interviewing, observing, document review, etc.	<b>Read:</b> Creswell Chapters 5 & 7 <b>Find/Read:</b> A qualitative study on a topic of your choosing <b>Due:</b> Blog Post 1
February 24, 2016 WEDNESDAY 6-9 PM	Analyzing qualitative data	<b>Read:</b> Creswell Chapter 8 <b>Find/Read:</b> A qualitative study on a topic of your choosing <b>Due:</b> Blog Post 2
March 2, 2016 WEDNESDAY 6-9 PM	Writing a report about the data	<b>Read:</b> Creswell Chapters 9 & 10 <b>Find/Read:</b> A qualitative study on a topic of your choosing <b>Due:</b> Blog Post 3
March 5, 2016 SATURDAY 9AM-4PM	Exploring mixed-methods (with Dr. Carolyn Hofstetter) at UCSD	<b>Read:</b> To be determined
March 9, 2016 WEDNESDAY 6-9 PM	Ethical Issues in Research Understanding IRB's role in educational research Writers' Workshop on Synthesis Paper	<b>Read:</b> Creswell, Chapters 3 & 6 <b>Due:</b> CITI Training <a href="https://www.citiprogram.org/">https://www.citiprogram.org/</a>
March 16, 2016	FINALS WEEK. No formal class meeting	<b>Due:</b> Synthesis Paper