

EDTECH 653 - QUALITATIVE RESEARCH METHODS

3 Credit Online Course (Change credits as applicable)

Instructor Information

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Course Description

(from the Graduate Catalog): Overview of qualitative research approaches in educational research. Reviews the theory, epistemological assumptions, and application of major methodologies. Focuses on developing skills in creating field notes, planning and conducting interviews, collecting relevant artifacts, analyzing data, and writing reports. Introduction to computer-assisted qualitative data analysis.

Course Outcomes

1. Compare and contrast the philosophical issues related to qualitative inquiry
2. Articulate the essential components of qualitative research, no matter the methodology used
3. Describe the features of five qualitative research traditions (Grounded Theory, Ethnography, Narrative Research, Phenomenology, and Case Study)
4. Articulate and apply, in detail, the features of one of these five research traditions
5. Review qualitative reports and evaluate their merits or shortcomings
6. Explain mechanisms of quality and trustworthiness for grounding and evaluating qualitative research
7. Create a research question that can be explored through a particular qualitative research tradition.
8. Propose a qualitative research study that carefully references one of the five research traditions, and that accounts for mechanisms of quality and trustworthiness.

Course Location and Login Information

This is an online course delivered in Moodle (<http://edtech.mrooms.org/>). The Moodle login page explains how to login to Moodle. Contact Moodle Support at moodlesupport@boisestate.edu if you have problems accessing Moodle. If you have forgotten your password, click the link below the login box, "lost password?" and you will be able to reset it.

Course Materials:

Required Course Text

Creswell, J. W. & Poth, C.N. (2018). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches* (4th ed). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Other Required Readings - Articles made available in Moodle (no purchase necessary):

Friesen, N. (2008). Chronicles of change: The narrative turn and e-learning research. *E-Learning* 5(3), 298-310.

Friesen, N. & Francis-Poscente, K. (2009). The Tower of Hanoi and the experience of lived number. In: N. Friesen *Re-thinking e-learning research: Foundations, methods and practices*. New York: Peter Lang.

Friesen, N. (2009). Genre and CSCL: The Form and Rhetoric of the Online Posting. *International Journal of Computer Supported Collaborative Learning* 2(4) 171-185.
<http://learningspaces.org/papers/Genre&CSCL.pdf>

Lincoln, YS. & Guba, EG. (1985). *Naturalistic Inquiry*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications. (pp. 289-331).

Robson, J. (2018). Performance, structure and ideal identity: Reconceptualising teachers' engagement in online social spaces. *British Journal of Educational Technology* 49(3), 439-450.

Ruey, S. (2010). A case study of constructivist instructional strategies for adult online learning. *British Journal of Educational Technology* 49(3), 439-450.

Saldaña, J. (2013). *The coding manual for qualitative researchers*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Vonderwell, S. (2003). An examination of asynchronous communication experiences and perspectives of students in an online course: a case study. *Internet and Higher Education* 6 77–90.

Weatherall, J. & White, A. (2000). A Grounded Theory Analysis of older Adults and Information Technology. *Educational Gerontology* 26(4), 371-386.

Web Center for Social Research Methods (n.d.) *Positivism & Post-Positivism*. Available: <http://www.socialresearchmethods.net/kb/positivism.php>

Strongly Recommended:

Friesen, N. (2009). *Re-Thinking E-Learning Research: Foundations, Methods, and Practices*. New York: Peter Lang. Amazon link: http://www.amazon.com/Re-Thinking-E-Learning-Research-Foundations-Counterpoints/dp/1433101351/ref=asap_bc?ie=UTF8

Internet Connectivity

You need an up-to-date computer with an Internet connection in this course.

Course Assignments

Detailed information about each assignment is posted in Moodle. Check Moodle and your Boise State email regularly each week; announcements and course updates can be posted at any time.

	Assignments	Value	Due
1	1 Page Statement: Your Understanding of Qualitative Research	5%	Sept. 1
2	Article Review & Discussion Hosting	20%	Varies
3	Proposal Abstract	15%	Oct. 28
4	Proposal Draft	20%	Nov. 19
5	Coding Exercise	5%	Nov. 11
6	Final Proposal	15%	Nov. 15
7	Discussion	20%	throughout

AECT Standards

Course assignments are aligned to the Association for Educational Communications and Technology ([AECT Standards, 2012 version](#)).

Assignments are listed by number (based on the assignments list above) in the following table under the standard they are aligned to.

	Standard 1 Content Knowledge	Standard 2 Content Pedagogy	Standard 3 Learning Environments	Standard 4 Professional Knowledge & Skills	Standard 5 Research
Creating				3,4,5	3,4,5
Using			6	3,4,5	
Assessing/Evaluating	2				1
Managing			2		3,4,5
Ethics					3,4,5
Diversity of Learners	6 (and readings)			6	
Collaborative Practice				2,3	
Leadership				2,3	
Reflection on Practice	6		6	1,2,3,4,5,6	1,2,3,4,5,6

Theoretical Foundations	1,6 (and readings)				1,6 (and readings)
Method	1,2,3,4,5,6 (& readings)		1,2,3,4,5,6 (& readings)	1,2,3,4,5,6 (& readings)	1,2,3,4,5,6 (& readings)

Grade Scale

Final grades are based on the following scale.

Grade	Points Required
A+	98 - 100%
A	93 - 98%
A-	90 - 92%
B+	83 - 92%
B	75 - 83%
C	73 - 82%
D / F	< 73%

Grading Cycle

I will provide grades and detailed feedback within 2 weeks (maximum) of receiving the assignment. My feedback and grading will be timed so that it is formative, and can be integrated into the next assignment.

Additional Information about Assignments

Describe course-specific assignment requirements such as synchronous/asynchronous delivery or how assignments will be completed/submitted.

Late Work Policy

A percentage point from each assignment, and thus from the final course grade, will be deducted for every day that an assignment is late. In the case of some assignments, delays may make it impossible for me to provide formative feedback, resulting in further grade losses. Please note that I will not accept any assignments after Dec. 13, 2017.

Technical Difficulties

On occasion, you may experience problems accessing Moodle or class files located within Moodle, Internet service connection problems, and/or other computer related problems. Make the instructor aware if a technical problem prevents you from completing coursework (by gathering screenshots and other evidence). If a problem occurs on our end, such as Moodle or EDTECH2 server failure, then an automatic due date extension is granted.

Reasonable Accommodations

Students with disabilities needing accommodations to fully participate in this class should contact the Disability Resource Center (DRC). All accommodations must be approved through

the DRC prior to being implemented. To learn more about the accommodation process, visit the DRC's website at <http://drc.boisestate.edu/new-drc-students/>.

The Disability Resource Center is located on the first floor of the Lincoln Parking Garage, on the corner of Lincoln Ave. and University Dr. at Boise State University. They are available Monday through Friday 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Mountain Time.

Phone: 208.426.1583

Email: drcinfo@boisestate.edu

Website: <http://drc.boisestate.edu/>

Privacy Information

EDTECH courses involves online delivery and for some courses public display of assignments on websites or social media spaces. In the online course, your name, email address, and Moodle profile may be visible to others who have logged into Moodle. You are advised to familiarize yourself with privacy settings on Moodle or social media sites associated with the course. Privacy settings can sometimes be adjusted to restrict certain types of information. Please contact your instructor if you have questions or concerns.

Academic Honesty

Students are expected to create original work for each assignment. Students must follow the [BoiseStateStudentCodeofConduct](#) as well as observe [U.S.copyrightlaws](#) in this course.

In the event of academic dishonesty, a complaint is filed with the Boise State Student Conduct Office with supporting documentation. This complaint remains on file and actions may be taken against the student (e.g., loss or credit, grade reduction, expulsion, etc.).

Policy for Incompletes

Incompletes are not guaranteed. However, when they are given incompletes adhere to [Boise StateUniversityguidelines](#) as follows:

Instructors can enter a grade of I—for incomplete—if both of the following conditions are present:

- Your work has been satisfactory up to the last three weeks of the semester.
- Extenuating circumstances make it impossible for you to complete the course before the end of the semester.

In order to receive an incomplete, you and your instructor must agree to a contract stipulating the work you must do and the time in which it must be completed for you to receive a grade in the class. The terms of this contract are viewable on my.BoiseState under Your Student Center To Do List. The contract time varies as set by the instructor but may not exceed one year. If no grade other than incomplete has been assigned one year after the original incomplete, the grade of F will automatically be assigned. The grade of F may not be changed without approval

of the University Appeals Committee. You may not remove the incomplete from your transcript by re-enrolling in the class during another semester. A grade of incomplete is excluded from GPA calculations until you receive a final grade in the course.

Course Schedule

Please note that students are expected to spend 9-12 hours *each week* on *each* EDTECH course during a regular academic session. The workload is approximately doubled during the compressed summer sessions.

Please see the Moodle course for further detail.

The instructor reserves the right to make changes to the schedule as needed.

Week	Topic (all refs to Creswell & Poth)	Assignment	2ndry Text	Due Date	%- tage
Aug 20- 26	Intro; Positionality & Five Approaches (Ch. 1)	Introductions	Critical Realism		
Aug 27 - Sep 2	Interpretation & "Truth;" Validation & Generalization	1-pager on your understanding of qualitative research	Saldaña; Guba	Sept 1	5%
Sep 3-9	Qualitative Design (Ch. 3)	Discussion on design and approaches;	Friesen		
Sep 10- 16	Intro. to the approaches (Skim chapters 4 & 5)	Continue discussion on design and approaches; choose approach to review		Sept 13	
Sep 17 - 23	Grounded Theory (see Table of contents, pp. xx-xxi)	Discussion led by review groups	Baldwin et al		
Sep 24 - 30	Narrative (see Table of contents, p. xix)	Discussion led by review groups	Friesen		
Oct 1-7	Ethnographic (see Table of contents, p. xxi)	Discussion led by review groups	???		
Oct 8- 14	Phenomenology (see Table of contents, p. xix-xx)	Discussion led by review groups	Friesen & Poscente		
Oct 15 - 21	Case Study (see Table of contents pp. xxi-xxii)	Discussion led by review groups	???		
Oct 22- 28	Introducing and focusing (Ch. 6) Review: Comparison Table	Submit proposal abstracts	Summary Table	Oct 28	
Oct 29- Nov 11	Analysis: Review Lincoln & Guba, 1985 & Saldaña	Complete transcript analysis exercise	Friesen (2009)	Nov 4	5%
Nov 12- 19	Complete proposal draft (Chapter 7)	Submit proposal Draft		Nov 19	20%
Nov 19 - 25 T H A N K S G I V I N G					
Nov 26- Dec 2	Writing and turning the story (Chapter 11)	Discussion on course as a whole Submit final proposal		Dec 7	15%

Boise State University Academic Calendar

Please refer to the Boise State University Academic Calendar for University dates and deadlines: <http://registrar.boisestate.edu/academic-calendar.shtml>

Graduate Catalog

Graduate Catalogs for present and prior academic years can be found online at: <http://graduatecatalog.boisestate.edu/>

College of Education -The Professional Educator

Boise State University strives to develop knowledgeable educators who integrate complex roles and dispositions in the service of diverse communities of learners. Believing that all children, adolescents, and adults can learn, educators dedicate themselves to supporting that learning. Using effective approaches that promote high levels of student achievement, educators create environments that prepare learners to be citizens who contribute to a complex world. Educators serve learners as reflective practitioners, scholars and artists, problem solvers, and partners.

Department of Educational Technology Mission

The Department of Educational Technology is a diverse and international network of scholars, professional educators and candidates who:

- Lead research and innovations in online teaching and learning.
- Model, promote, manage, and evaluate digital-age work and learning resources in educational environments.
- Inspire creativity and expertise in digital media literacies.
- Design and develop imaginative learning environments.
- Empower learners to be evolving digital citizens who advocate cultural understanding and global responsibility.
- Promote and pattern participatory culture, professional practice, and lifelong learning.
- Forge connections between research, policy, and practice in educational technology.

ASSIGNMENTS

1. How do you understand the value and validity of qualitative research?

How do you understand the value and validity of qualitative research? In this assignment, please describe in a single page of text (min. 400 - max. 500 words) your thoughts from reading the article on *Postivism and Post-Positivism*, as well as Saldaña and Lincoln & Guba. Describe your understanding of qualitative research and its value and validity in the light of these sources. Please include these 500 words as a new thread in the discussion. Please also submit it as an MSWord (.docx) document using the "Submission" tool in this section.

Please remember that your understanding of "truth" and valid knowledge is one that you're bringing to your research, not matters of religious or political conviction. We're all critical realists just in the context of this course. For further information on the grading of your one-page reflection, please see the "Writing Rubric" in the syllabus.

2. Article Review & Discussion Hosting:

This is a group assignment (groups of 3-4) to be carried out over five weeks between Sep 17 and October 21—each week involving a separate group. Form groups on your own, and add your group names and the topic to the Wiki sign-up sheet provided by Sept. 13.

Each group will produce a review of the article and method assigned for the week, and will then lead a discussion based on the review, the article reviewed, as well as the relevant part of the Creswell text. Your review and discussion should be between 1000 to 1250 words (two pages) in length, and should:

- 1) give a brief summary of the article
- 2) relate its use of method to the corresponding method as discussed by Creswell.
- 3) Evaluate the use of this method, and the results thus produced in the light of Creswell's text and others you've read thus far in the course (e.g. the Guba text from Unit 2).

Your summary, discussion and evaluation of the method should be interlinked, coherent and engaging.

Feel free to use multiple media (e.g. video, audio images, diagrams) to enliven the topic for the rest of us.

The list of topics is below; see the course schedule for the corresponding dates:

- 1) Grounded
- 2) Narrative
- 3) Ethnographic
- 4) Phenomenology
- 5) Case Study

Note that each group will receive a single grade; these are not assigned

individually. For further information on grading, see the Writing Rubric.

Pose questions for the discussion to follow, and be sure to reply to posts that made in response to your discussion and review.

3. Transcript Analysis

Most qualitative research methods require the analysis of transcripts, as discussed in the Saldaña article, using software like [Atlas-ti](#) and [NVivo](#).

The simple exercise outlined here should not take more than **two hours** or so.

We will be using the Community of Inquiry model (if you like, see: [Garrison, et al 2000](#)), which is used to analyze discussion forum contributions. It understands people's words and sentences in a discussion forum as being divided between 3 forms of presence:

- Cognitive presence,
- Social presence, and
- Teacher presence.

Community of Inquiry Coding Template

Elements	Categories	Indicators (examples only)
Cognitive Presence	Triggering Event	Sense of puzzlement (e.g. a question, "?")*
	Exploration	Information exchange (e.g. a statement introducing a new fact or observation)
	Integration	Connecting ideas (e.g. relating your statement to someone else's)
	Resolution	Apply new ideas (e.g. a new term, concept connecting many previous ideas)
Social Presence	Emotional Expression	Emoticons, expressive punctuation (e.g. exclamation marks "!", smilies, etc.)
	Open Communication	Risk-free expression (i.e. does not indicate disagreement or difference)
	Group Cohesion	Encouraging collaboration ("great response!" "what do you think?")
Teaching Presence	Instructional Management	Defining & initiating discussion topics (not applicable)
	Building Understanding	Sharing personal meaning (given this discussion, I understand this as "x")
	Direct Instruction	Focusing discussion (e.g., "x" is not so relevant, but "y" definitely is)

(Garrison, Anderson, & Archer, 2000, p. 4)

*These examples were added by Norm Friesen

Your task will be to analyze this transcript, using a protocol or 'coding template.' It breaks down the 3 types of presence and defines sub-categories for each.

Here is the sequence of steps in this exercise:

1. Familiarize yourself with the three types of presence in the Community of Inquiry model (if you're not already familiar, see: [Garrison, et al 2000](#))
2. If other people have posted their coding results on the forum, DON'T LOOK! (This is needed for the sake of step 5, inter-coder reliability).
3. Download the discussion "transcript" in the discussion forum and see the coding template in the syllabus. Try to label as many sentences as possible using one or more type of presence and (if you like) the appropriate sub category. Note that more than one

of these can apply to one sentence or comment. Use Adobe's comment tools, if you can, as follows: Yellow highlight for social presence; green underline for cognitive presence, and ~~red strikethrough~~ for teaching presence.

4. Come up with a tally of totals for each type of presence.
5. Post these totals in this discussion forum, and post the PDF showing your coding.
6. Inter-coder reliability: Compare your tallies to others', and see how close or far apart you are. Discuss the differences.

This, in a nutshell, is transcript coding,* a very important (but not necessarily universal) technique used in qualitative research, and that can but doesn't have to involve special software.

* Note that this is a "deductive' or *a priori* type of coding (i.e. using pre-determined, fixed categories); the other kind of coding is emergent, where the categories develop gradually by researchers as they code or read through the transcript. See pp. 168-175 in our Creswell text for some further discussion.)

3. Proposal Abstract

Your abstract will be 500-750 words. In writing it, please closely consult Ch. 6 in Creswell and Poth, and review the "Comparison Table" I provided. Your abstract will consist of:

1. A research question; e.g.,
 - a. "What is the relation of emerging prosocial behaviors in children and the shared use of iPads or tablets in kindergarten?" Or:
 - b. "What are possible lived experiences of a mature or continuing student starting an online course for the first time?"
2. A brief indication of the context for this question (cite the literature in this); e.g.,
 - a. The low cost and touch interface of tablet computers has made them popular with young children who are also learning about sharing and fairness
 - b. Many have been returning to college to take professional development (and other) courses online, and may be having very different experiences as "beginners."
3. The method you are proposing to use to answer your question; e.g.,
 - a. prosocial behaviors and iPads can be observed and described directly over time among a group of children, so ethnography might follow.
 - b. Lived experience is the unit of analysis for phenomenology, so it would be appropriate
4. A hypothetical setting in which your study could be carried out; e.g.,
 - a. A kindergarten class in which iPads are used that you would be able to visit regularly
 - b. One or more courses or mature students who you

might be able to talk to on a number of different occasions. etc.

5. Concerns that might arise from what you are proposing and how you might address these; e.g.,
 - a. Getting ethics clearance to observe children, whether video or photographs would be used in this setting
 - b. Selecting students who might provide a number of different kinds of experience (e.g., not just from one course or one cohort); finding others to read and provide feedback on what you've written.
For further information on grading, see the Writing Rubric.

4. Proposal Draft

Using my feedback and that of your peers, expand what you've written in the proposal abstract to a short document of 3000 words +/- 300. Focus in particular on:

- a. the context for your question (why is it important what has research shown or not shown thus far?)
- b. the method to be used (e.g., what type of ethnography)
- c. hypothetical details for data gathering **and validation**

5. Final Proposal

Revise the proposal draft based on my feedback, (again) paying particular attention to:

- a. the context for your question (why is it important what has research shown or not shown thus far?)
- b. the method to be used
- c. hypothetical details for data gathering **and validation**

6. Discussion

Participation in class discussions is required but can be completed in a flexible manner. You will be given an opportunity to directly and critically analyze the topics in this course by participating in ongoing discussions. At a minimum, your postings **MUST** be related in some way to theory and educational technology. Only posts in the Discussion Forum count toward participation credit. Criteria for discussion posts include the following:

1. Discussion responses (writings and comments) should reflect your knowledge of the subject matter through critical analysis. Discussion at a critical level means discussing things such as your opinion of the point mentioned, with reasoning components, such as why you hold that opinion, what you see different/same with the point mentioned, how you see the point consistent/inconsistent with what you have learned so far, implications for the future, consistencies/inconsistencies within the article or reading itself, and so forth. In other words, analyzing the good and/or bad aspects of the point and justifying your analysis.

2. I am looking at quality over quantity. With this in mind, each post should be between 200 and 250 words. I'm not going to count the number of words, but please try to limit yourself to no more than 250 words per response- it's very difficult to get through many long responses.
3. Please include citations and references in your responses when necessary. This does not need to be a formal citation/reference- just make sure that you give proper credit in some way.
4. It's ok to write in the first person and include personal experiences in your responses.

Examples of discussion posts may include (but is not limited to) the following:

- a. starting a new discussion thread on a topic consistent with what we are studying;
- b. responding to a question or comment posted by another student;
- c. providing information and/or commentary about a useful online resource with the link provided;
- d. responding to a question or comment posted by the instructor.

RUBRICS

Discussion Rubric:

Category	A+/A	B+/A-	B-/B	C/C+
Online Presence and Timeliness	Postings are complete and on time/early	Postings are complete and on time/early	Postings are present but not consistent	Postings are absent or consistently late
References to personal experience & literature	Use references to literature, and personal experience to support comments.	Incorporates some reference from literature and/or personal experience.	Unclear about incorporation of experience, readings etc.	Includes no references or supporting experience.
Follow-up postings	Posts thoughtful follow-up responses to others, showing clear understanding	Posts follow-up responses to others showing some understanding	Posts follow-up responses to others, but with little sign of thoughtfulness or understanding	Posts no follow-up responses to others.
Content of Contributions	Posts information and/or arguments that are on topic, relevant and thoughtful, showing careful reading and reflection.	Posts information and/or arguments that are on topic and relevant.	Posts information and/or arguments that are not entirely on topic, "correct," or relevant to discussion.	Posts information or arguments that are off-topic, incorrect, or irrelevant to discussion.

Clarity & Mechanics	Contributes to discussion with clear, concise comments formatted in an easy to read style that is	Contributes valuable information to discussion with minor errors in clarity or mechanics.	Communicates in friendly, courteous and helpful manner with some errors in clarity or mechanics.	Posts long, unorganized or rude content that may contain multiple errors or may be inappropriate.
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Writing Rubric (and instructions)

Please DO NOT submit work completed in a prior class. The APA rules that will apply to this assignment will be headings, in-text citations, references, writing conventions and style, and Times New Roman, 12 pt font. However, please ensure all of your submissions are SINGLE SPACED.

This rubric is based on the fact that the content of each of the writing assignments focuses on 3-5 points (see detailed instructions, above).

	Exceptional A	Satisfactory B	Developing C	Inadequate D/F
Content	Exceptionally focused on all of the points listed for the assignment, with all points clearly and consistently interrelated.	The paper is focused on the majority of the points listed, with these points somewhat interrelated.	The paper is focused on a minority of the points listed, with little interrelation.	The paper lacks focus, with connections with between points being irrelevant or missing.
Structure & Clarity	The points made in the paper/proposal flow together in a coherent and logical manner. It is very well structured and easy to follow.	The points made are generally structured well, but there are occasional lapses or jumps in the flow of the writing.	The points are loosely structured and it is somewhat confusing to read. There are noticeable gaps in the flow of the writing.	The writing is confusing and it is nearly impossible to understand how everything fits together.
Research Focus	The research focus is organized within the recommended structure and is meaningful and relevant to the	The research focus fits organized within the recommended and is somewhat meaningful and relevant to the	The research focus is somewhat organized but lacks relevance to the method/topic chosen	The research focus is disorganized and lacks relevance to the method/topic chosen and course.
APA Style and Formatting	References are cited in APA style with no errors. Writing follows APA guidelines.	Significant APA style errors occur one to three times in citations. Writing follows APA	Significant APA style errors occur four to six times in citations or writing does not follow APA	Significant APA style errors occur more than six times in citations and writing does not follow APA guidelines.
Length	Within length guidelines	Is below or above the min. or max. length guidelines by 10%	Is below or above the min. or max. length guidelines by more than 10%.	Is below or above the min. or max. length guidelines by more than 25%.