

**COURSE SYLLABUS**  
**SOUTHEAST MISSOURI STATE UNIVERSITY**



**Department of Educational Leadership and Counseling**

**Course No.: EA907**

**Departmental Approval August, 2013**

**Course Title:** Qualitative Tools for Applied Research in Educational Leadership

**Spring 2013**

- I. **Catalog Description:** Students will learn a number of qualitative research designs that leaders can use to critically examine research questions in their practice. (3)
- II. **Prerequisite:** Member of State-wide Cooperative Ed.D. Program
- III. **Objectives of the Course:**
  - A. Understand the philosophical traditions and theoretical underpinnings for qualitative research and their implications for understanding problems of practice
  - B. Understand several approaches to qualitative research design (e.g., grounded theory, case study, ethnography, phenomenology, narrative inquiry).
  - C. Identify data sources and methods for collecting qualitative data.
  - D. Understand the various ways of analyzing qualitative data and begin to develop data analysis skills.
  - E. Develop an understanding of how to write a qualitative research project that incorporates findings, discussion of findings, and conclusions in ways that address research questions.
  - F. Complete a research project using qualitative methods.
- IV. **Expectations of Students:**

## A. Participation

To develop and establish a learning community, active participation of all members is vital. Class participation consists of (a) preparation for each class session, (b) active and thoughtful participation in discussions based on a thorough and critical analysis of readings. Assessment of participation will occur through weekly updates, and weekly and end-of-course self and team member assessment by individual team members.

The hands-on nature of this course requires active student participation. Learning will take place in large and small-group settings as well as individually. Students are encouraged to actively share thoughts and debate theories and concepts covered in course material. Participants will be required to:

1. Read and be prepared to discuss and evaluate all assigned readings.
2. Participate fully in course activities (both in and out of the classroom).
3. Complete all individual assignments.

## B. Method Matrix and Paper

*Purpose:* The purpose of this assignment is to provide students the opportunity to identify and assess the elements of a qualitative research study.

*Readings:* Use Chapter 8 of Merten's, Research and Evaluation in Education and Psychology: information and working knowledge of methods about the article listed below.

*Instructions:* For this assignment, read the following article:

Scribner, J. P., & Donaldson, J. F. (2001). The dynamics of group learning in a cohort: From non-learning to transformative learning. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 37(5), 605-636.

The article can be accessed on ERES. After reading the article, respond to all questions in the matrix available on the Cohort Blackboard site. In addition, write a one page paper reflection on what you learned about qualitative research by reading Scribner and Donaldson (2001) and by completing the matrix. Please append your paper to the SAME document as the matrix. **The paper should follow APA format (no abstract necessary).**

The matrix will be worth 15 points and the paper will be worth 5, for a total of **20 points possible** for this assignment.

## Annotated Bibliography (30 Points)

*Purpose:* The purpose of this assignment is to critically examine literature in the field of education and to gather information that can be compiled to assist in developing a synthesis of related literature as part of the final group project.

*Readings:* Mertens, D. M. (2005). *Research and evaluation in education and psychology: Integrating diversity with quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. [Chapter 3] scholarly journal articles or in periodical indexes. Annotations are *descriptive* and *critical*; they expose the author's point of view, clarity, and appropriateness of expression, and authority of work.)

*Instructions:* Prior to completing this assignment, individuals will confer with their summer teams about the topic of their final group project. Once established, each team member is responsible for finding 5 scholarly articles and/or book chapters (empirical and/or theoretical/conceptual) related to the topic. For this individual assignment, each of the 5 articles should be annotated, providing a summary and critique of the article. The annotations should be compiled and assembled into a 3-5 page document, excluding a cover page. Only the annotations, including a complete citation in APA for each article, need to be turned into the facilitating instructor for your team.

An annotated bibliography is a list of citations to books, articles, and documents. Each citation is followed by a brief (usually about 150 words) descriptive and evaluative paragraph, (i.e., the annotation). The purpose of the annotation is to inform the reader of the relevance, accuracy, and quality of the sources cited. Questions arise about the difference between annotations and abstracts. Abstracts are the purely descriptive summaries often found at the beginning of scholarly journal articles or in periodical indexes. Annotations are *descriptive* and *critical*; they expose the author's point of view, clarity, and appropriateness of expression, and authority of work.

### C. Team Assignment

*Description:* This project will require each student team to identify an area of research interest related to an issue selected by the group (must be selected and approved by your instructional team leader by [insert date]) and to design a research strategy that employs qualitative methods.

To accomplish this each team will need to identify a problem of practice/ topic, a problem statement, research question(s) and a proposed study site (location and participants). Summer instructional team members will assist with developing research strategy and will be responsible for approving final plans prior to conducting

the research. Each student is expected to be involved in **all** aspects of research design, data collection, analysis, and preparation of the written report.

Once teams have completed the research design phase of the project, they will employ various qualitative methods such as participant observation, interviews, document analysis and creation of field notes to collect and analyze data. Analysis of data will begin as data are collected and continue until completion of the project and will include coding of the data and development of categories and themes. This may involve discussing how findings relate to existing theoretical frameworks or developing new conceptual frameworks grounded in the data.

*Careful consideration of issues of confidentiality in your investigation should be a priority.* You should assure the interviewee(s) that information shared is only for a class project, and that you will not use information (names, titles, etc.) that will make interviewees readily identifiable. You should also let them know that their participation is voluntary and that they can refuse to answer any question or withdraw at any time. You should also tell them that you will not publish or present your findings other than in the paper you will write and the poster presentation for the class project. If you feel the information you are reporting, even though in the public record, is sensitive, use pseudonyms for individuals, organizations or institutions in your report.

While not necessarily a separate task, a written research report will culminate the project. The final written document should be between 15 and 20 double-spaced pages, excluding title page, references, and appendices. The paper must conform to APA style requirements for a manuscript. Each team will maintain research archives that map the critical stages of data collection and analysis. Specifically, each team will maintain an archive consisting of samples of data collected (e.g., interview transcripts and/or interview notes, observation notes, field notes) and examples of data analysis (e.g., coding strategies, category evolution and formulation, analytic memos). The archives will **NOT** be collected, but should be made available to the IT if necessary. These archives may serve as the foundation of an audit trail and are one way to enhance the credibility of the study.

*Purpose:* The purpose of this project is to provide students the opportunity to practice and refine skills in qualitative research methods, especially in the area of research design, data collection, and data analysis. *The latter point is important for you to remember. Although we will try to provide as much experience as we can with the entire qualitative research process, constraints of time and opportunity limit our primary focus to practice in certain data collection methods and analysis. From this perspective, the experience you have this summer is limited in that it does not allow thorough exploration of a particular qualitative approach.*

Through the process of completing this project, each student should be able to practice and refine her/his skills in these areas as well as applying her/his knowledge of certain processes of data collection (i.e., from interviews, observations and

documents) and data analysis. Each student is expected to participate in the full set of methods employed to complete this project.

*Procedures:*

- Identifying data sources
- Collecting data
- Coding data
- Developing themes
- Conceptualizing findings
- Tying concepts and findings to literature and theoretical/conceptual framework
- Developing discussion/conclusions and implications (the “so what” answer)

**V. Student Learning Objectives**

- A. Students will write five annotated bibliographies in complete APA style
- B. Within a team, student will identify a topic of research interest.
- C. As team member, the student will conduct an observation related to the topic of interest

**VI. Course Outline**

**HOURS**

- A. Qualitative Research Perspectives and Overview 6
  - 1. Professional knowledge
  - 2. Individual experience and collective knowledge
  - 3. Methods of qualitative research
    - a) Explanation
    - b) Understanding personal role and impersonal role of researcher
    - c) Examination of qualitative observation and interviewing
  - 4. Experiential understanding within a social context
  - 5. Essence of qualitative approach
- B. Experiential understanding 3
  - 1. The places of Human understanding
    - a) Understanding the way things work in the social world of an organization
    - b) How does the study of *place* inform human experience?
    - c) The political connection of qualitative research
  - 2. Multiple realities

3. Inclusion of the experience of others	
C. Stating the problem	3
1. Constructing a research plan	
2. Developing the argument	
a) Why do the study?	
b) Who benefits from the study?	
c) Implications for doing the study	
D. Developing the research question	6
1. Basic research questions	
2. Information questions	
3. Questions for organizing a dissertation	
4. Questions for an organization or small study	
E. Methods	9
1. Observing	
2. Interviewing/focus groups	
3. Survey	
4. Record keeping	
5. Coding data	
F. Review of the literature	6
1. Refining the problem to be studied	
2. Concept mapping	
3. Sense making: Connections with the literature	
a) Primary sources	
b) Secondary sources	
c) Electronic tools for research	
4. Critically reviewing the literature	
a) Data	
b) Warrants	
c) Qualifiers	
d) Rebuttal	
e) Claim	
G. Links to practice and policy	3
1. Presenting to a lay audience	
2. Practical relevance of theory	
a) Practitioner	
b) Policy maker	
3. Theoretic relevance of good practice	
4. Threat related to insider/outsider research	
a) Positive and negatives for insider/outsider research	
b) Collaboration between insider/outsider research	
H. Advocacy and Ethics	9
1. All social research is advocate driven	
a) Value free social research	
b) Positionality of the researcher	
c) Awareness of social advocacies	
1. Political	

	2. Spiritual	
	3. Aesthetic	
2.	Voice for the underrepresented	
3.	Personal ethics	
4.	Protection of human subjects	
	a) Institutional review board (IRB)	
	b) Mental and physical dangers of qualitative research	
	c) Informed consent	
	TOTAL	45
Grading Scale for the Department of Leadership and Counseling		
92-100%	A	
83-91%	B	
75-82%	C	
66-74%	D	
0-65%	F	

**VII. Textbooks:**

American Psychological Association. (2009). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (6th ed.). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Creswell, J. W. (2007). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Mertens, D. M. (2005). *Research and evaluation in education and psychology: Integrating diversity with quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage

**VIII. Basis for Evaluation:**

Successful completion of all assignments is required. These include the following.

1. Active class participation (meets objectives A, B, C, D, E, F)
2. Method Matrix and Paper (meets objectives B, C, D)
3. Team Assignment (meets objective A, C, D, E, F)

**IX. Academic Policy Statement:**

Academic honesty is one of the most important qualities influencing the character and vitality of Southeast Missouri State University. Academic misconduct or dishonest is inconsistent with membership in an academic community and cannot be accepted. Violations of academic honesty represent a serious breach of discipline and may be considered grounds for disciplinary action, including dismissal from the University. Academic dishonest defined to include those acts, which would deceive, cheat, or

defraud so as to promote or enhance one's scholastic record. Knowingly or actively assisting any person in the commission of an above-mentioned act is also academic dishonesty. Students are responsible for upholding the principles of academic honesty in accordance with the "University Statement of Student Rights" found in the STUDENT HANDBOOK. The University requires that all assignments submitted to faculty members by students be the work of the individual student submitting the work. An exception would be group projects assigned by the instructor. In this situation, the work must be that of the group. Academic dishonesty includes: Plagiarism and Cheating.

X. **Student Disabilities:**

Southeast Missouri State University and Disability support Services remain committed to making every possible educational accommodation for students with disabilities. Many services and accommodations, which aid a student's educational experience, are available for students with various types of disabilities. It is the student's responsibility to contact Disability Support Services to become registered as a student with a disability. Accommodations are implemented on a case-by-case basis. For more information visit the following site: <http://www.semo.edu/ds>.

XI. **Civility and Harassment**

The University strives to offer learning experiences and opportunities designed to help students think effectively, develop the capacity to communicate, discriminate among values, and make relevant judgments. A major determinant of a successful educational experience is a shared sense of respect among and between the students and their instructor. Mutual respect for all as well as a no tolerance policy on harassment of any kind is expected. Every student at Southeast is obligated at all times to assume responsibility for his/her actions, to respect constituted authority, to be truthful, and to respect the rights of others, as well as to respect private and public property.

XII. **Knowledge Base:**

Bloomberg, L. D. & Volpe, M. (2008). *Completing your Qualitative Dissertation: A roadmap from beginning to end*. Los Angeles, CA: Sage.

Denzin, N.K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (Eds.). (2003). *The landscape of qualitative research: Theories and issues*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Hatch, A. J. (2002). *Doing qualitative research in education settings*. Albany NY: State University of New York Press.

Huff, A. S. (2009). *Designing research for publication*. Los Angeles, CA: Sage.

Patton, M. Q. (2002). *Qualitative research and evaluation methods* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Sagor, R. (1992). *How to conduct collaborative action research*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Sankaran, S., Dick, B., Passfield, R., & Swepson, P. (Eds.). (2001). *Effective change management using action learning and action research*. Lismore NSW, Australia: Southern Cross University Press.

Silverman, D. (2011). *Interpreting qualitative data, 4<sup>th</sup> ed.* Los Angeles, CA: Sage.

Stake, R. E. (2010). *Qualitative research: Study how things work*. New York, NY: The Guilford Press.

Weis, L., & Fine, M. (2000). *Speed bumps: A student-friendly guide to qualitative research*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

Wolcott, H. F. (1990). *Qualitative research methods series: Vol. 20. Writing up qualitative research*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Zeni, J. (Ed.). (2001). *Ethical issues in practitioner research*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

Questions, comments or requests regarding this course or program should be taken to your instructor. Unanswered questions or unresolved issues involving this class may be taken to Dr. Ruth Ann Roberts.