

**Educational Research I: Building a Body of Evidence with Qualitative
Methods
RMTD 420**

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Course Overview

Course Description

This course introduces students to the theory and practice of qualitative research. Course content is applicable to research and evaluation contexts in education as well as other social and human service practices. The goals of the course are the following:

- Introduce students to the landscape of qualitative research, including its historical roots, philosophical traditions, and methodological approaches (Conceptual Framework 1);
- Expose students to qualitative research studies;
- Help students acquire and refine necessary skills for doing a qualitative study, including developing research questions, generating data, and analyzing data;
- Introduce students to a variety of means of generating qualitative data, including interviews, focus groups, observations, and document analyses;
- Enhance students' critical self-reflection of their actions as social inquirers (Conceptual Framework 3 & 6)

Required Texts

Merriam, S.B. (2009). *Qualitative Research: A Guide to Design and Implementation*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass. ISBN: 0470283548

Schwandt, Thomas. (2007). *Dictionary of Qualitative Inquiry* (3rd Ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. ISBN: 1412909279

Course Reading Packet available at the Loyola Bookstore.

Grading

I will use the following grading scale for your final grade in the course:

94-100	A	73-76	C
90-93	A-	70-72	C-
87-89	B+	67-69	D+
83-86	B	63-66	D
80-82	B-	60-62	D-
77-79	C+	59 or below	F

Points will be awarded for each assignment as follows below. Boldfaced assignments are submitted individually; all other assignments are submitted in your research groups.

<u>Assignment</u>	<u>Points</u>
Encountering Qualitative Research Assignments	28
Research questions and plan	10
Protocol(s)	10
Data collection and reflection	10
Data analysis plan	5
Presentation	10
Findings and discussion (Final project)	10
Reflexivity paper (Final project)	10
Class participation	7

Points awarded for each assignment

At the end of this syllabus, you will find the criteria for awarding points for each assignment. If your assignment does not meet the minimal criteria as described, I will return your paper to you and will ask you to revise it before I assign it a grade.

Participation grade

Your class participation grade is based on your attendance and the degree to which you contribute to group and class discussions and activities.

Late assignments

Due to this course having multiple assignments, including many that build on one another, I strongly discourage late submission of assignments. Additionally, late submission of your work will result in your getting comments from me later than the rest of the class. If you need to turn in an assignment late, please do so with the understanding of these matters. It is your responsibility to arrange with me, before the due date, for the late submission of any assignment. Assignments submitted late without prior arrangement are subject to a reduction in points.

Learning Community at Loyola University Chicago and School of Education

Academic Honesty

Academic honesty is an expression of interpersonal justice, responsibility and care, applicable to Loyola University faculty, students, and staff, which demands that the pursuit of knowledge in the university community be carried out with sincerity and integrity. The School of Education's Policy on Academic Integrity can be found at: http://www.luc.edu/education/academics_policies_integrity.shtml. For additional academic policies and procedures refer to: http://www.luc.edu/education/academics_policies_main.shtml

Accessibility

Students who have disabilities which they believe entitle them to accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act should register with the Services for Students with Disabilities (SSWD) office. To request accommodations, students must schedule an appointment with an SSWD coordinator. Students should contact SSWD at least four weeks before their first semester or term at Loyola. Returning students should schedule an appointment within the first two weeks of the semester or term. The University policy on accommodations and participation in courses is available at:

<http://www.luc.edu/sswd/>

Harassment (Bias Reporting)

It is unacceptable and a violation of university policy to harass, discriminate against or abuse any person because of his or her race, color, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, disability, religion, age or any other characteristic protected by applicable law. Such behavior threatens to destroy the environment of tolerance and mutual respect that must prevail for this university to fulfill its educational and health care mission. For this reason, every incident of harassment, discrimination or abuse undermines the aspirations and attacks the ideals of our community. The university qualifies these incidents as incidents of bias.

In order to uphold our mission of being Chicago's Jesuit Catholic University-- a diverse community seeking God in all things and working to expand knowledge in the service of humanity through learning, justice and faith, any incident(s) of bias must be reported and appropriately addressed. Therefore, the Bias Response (BR) Team was created to assist members of the Loyola University Chicago community in bringing incidents of bias to the attention of the university. If you believe you are subject to such bias, you should notify the Bias Response Team at this link: <http://webapps.luc.edu/biasreporting/>

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of Loyola's School of Education is "professionalism in service of social justice." This course contributes to the realization of this framework by engaging students in the knowledge of qualitative research, skills of inquiry, and ethics necessary to be professional and just qualitative researchers. Certain methodological approaches to qualitative research, which will be introduced in this course, also specifically aim to address social inequities.

The following is the exact wording of the School of Education's Conceptual Framework:

The School of Education at Loyola University Chicago, a Jesuit and Catholic urban university, supports the Jesuit ideal of knowledge in the service of humanity. We endeavor to advance professional education in the service of social justice, engaged with Chicago, the nation, and the world. To achieve this vision the School of Education participates in the discovery, development, demonstration, and dissemination of professional knowledge and practice within a context of ethics, service to others, and social justice. We fulfill this mission by preparing professionals to serve as teachers, administrators,

psychologists, and researchers; by conducting research on issues of professional practice and social justice; and by partnering with schools and community agencies to enhance life-long learning in the Chicago area.

While this course touches on the majority of the conceptual framework standards, two assignments in this course will serve as assessments for CF 1 and 6.

Technology

In recent decades, as computing technology has advanced so have computer software and other tools to assist with qualitative research. Such tools will be introduced in this course, identifying both their strengths and limitations.

Diversity

A characteristic of qualitative research is an awareness of one's own values, beliefs, and biases. We will address diversity issues (gender, race, religion, ability, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, methodological preferences, etc.) throughout the course in our readings and discussions as they relate to those biases and to engaging in ethical research. In order to foster a learning community in the classroom, openness to and respect of various perspectives and backgrounds is essential.

Weekly Schedule with Course Readings & Assignments

Week 1 (Aug. 30): Introduction to Course, What is Qualitative Inquiry

Merriam, Ch. 1, pp. 3—19

Schwandt, T. A. (2007). *Dictionary of Qualitative Inquiry* (3rd Ed.) Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. "Qualitative Inquiry," "Meaning," and other words of interest that emerge.

Finnigan, K.S., & Gross, B. (2007). Do accountability policy sanctions influence teacher motivation? Lessons from Chicago's low-performing schools. *American Educational Research Journal*, 44(3), 594—629.

Gutsein, E. (2007). "And That's Just How It Starts": Teaching Mathematics and Developing Student Agency. *Teacher College Record*, 109(2), 420—448.

Week 2 (Sept. 6): What is Qualitative Inquiry

Denzin, N.K. (2009). *Qualitative Inquiry Under Fire: Toward a New Paradigm Dialogue*. Walnut Creek: Left Coast Press, Inc. Available at

<http://pegasus.luc.edu/vwebv/holdingsInfo?bibId=1668604>

Ch. 1: Introduction: Qualitative Inquiry as Social Justice, p. 13—20.

Ch. 5: The art of interpretation: The stories we tell one another, p. 85—102.

Peshkin, A. The goodness of qualitative research. *Educational Researcher*, 22, 23—29.

Case, K., & Hemmings, A. (2005). Distancing strategies: white women preservice teachers and anti-racist curriculum. *Urban Education*, 40(6), 606-626.

TOPIC IDEAS/GROUP ARRANGEMENTS DUE

Week 3 (Sept. 13): Philosophical Traditions in Qualitative Inquiry (Dr. Kallemeyn)

Schwandt, T. A. (2007). *The Sage Dictionary of Qualitative Inquiry* (3rd Ed.) Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. "Epistemology," "Ontology," "Logical Positivism," "Constructivism," "Realism," "Objectivism," "Subjectivism," and additional terms that emerge in the readings.

Denzin, N.K. (2009). *Qualitative Inquiry Under Fire: Toward a New Paradigm Dialogue*. Walnut Creek: Left Coast Press, Inc. Chapter 5: The art of interpretation: The stories we tell one another, pp. 102—114. Available at

<http://pegasus.luc.edu/vwebv/holdingsInfo?bibId=1668604>

Denzin, N. K. & Giardina, M.D. (2009). Introduction: Qualitative inquiry and social justice: Toward a politics of hope. In N.K. Denzin and M.D. Giardina, *Qualitative Inquiry and Social Justice*, pp. 11—36. Walnut Creek: Left Coast Press, Inc.

Available at <http://pegasus.luc.edu/vwebv/holdingsInfo?bibId=1668593>

Hand, V. (2010). The co-construction of opposition in a low-track mathematics classroom. *American Educational Research Journal*, 47(1), 97-132.

ENCOUNTER WITH QUALITATIVE RESEARCH ASSIGNMENT #1 DUE

Week 4 (Sept. 20): Methodology and Method in Qualitative Inquiry

Schwandt, T. A. (2007). *Dictionary of Qualitative Inquiry* (3rd Ed.) Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. "Methodology," "Method," and additional terms that emerge in the readings.

Merriam, Ch. 2, 3 & 4, pp. 21—83

Standards for Reporting on Empirical Social Science Research in AERA Publications

Enright, K.A. (2011). Language and literacy for a new mainstream. *American Educational Research Journal*, 48 (1), 80-118.

Week 5 (Sept. 27): Interviews (Dr. Phillip)

Merriam, Ch. 5, pp. 87—116

Kvale, Steiner & Brinkman, Svend. (2009). *InterViews: Learning the Craft of Qualitative Research Interviewing* (2nd Ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. Ch. 9, pp. 161—175

Peshkin, A. (1999). Making words fly: Developing understanding through interviewing. In C. Glesne (Ed.), *Becoming qualitative researchers: An introduction* (2nd edition), 67-94. New York, NY: Longman.

Fernandez, L. (2002). Telling stories about school: Using critical race and latino critical theories to document latina/latino education and resistance. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 8, 45-66.

ENCOUNTER WITH QUALITATIVE RESEARCH ASSIGNMENT #2 DUE

Week 6 (Oct. 4): Ethics and Human Subjects Review (Dr. Phillip)

LUC Human Subjects http://www.luc.edu/ors/irb_home.shtml

The Belmont Report <http://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/humansubjects/guidance/belmont.htm>

Hemmings, A. (2006). Great ethical divides: Bridging the gap between institutional review boards and researchers. *Educational Researcher*, 35(4), 12-18.

Howe, K. & Moses, M. (1999). Ethics in educational research. *Review of Research in Education*, vol. 24, pp. 21-60.

CPS policy <http://research.cps.k12.il.us/cps/accountweb/Requests>

FERPA <<http://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/ferpa/index.html>>

Strike, K.A., Anderson, M.S., Curren, R., van Geel, T., Pritchard, I., & Robertson, E. (2002). *Ethical standards of the American Educational Research Association: Cases and commentary*. Washington, DC: AERA. Pages 8, 44, 76, 102, 128, 152, 179—186.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND PLAN DUE

Oct. 11—FALL BREAK

Week 7 (Oct. 18): Observation

Merriam, Ch. 6, pp. 117—138

Emerson, R.M., Fretz, R.I., & Shaw, L.L. (1995). *Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes*. Ch. 2 In the field: Participating, observing, and jotting. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Jennings, J. L. (2010). School choice or school's choice? Managing in an era of accountability. *Sociology of Education*, 83(3), 227-247.

PROTOCOLS DUE

Week 8 (Oct. 25): Document Analysis (Dr. Phillip)

Merriam, Ch. 7, pp. 139—164

Hodder, I. (2003). The interpretation of documents and material culture. In N.K. Denzin & Y.S. Lincoln, *Collecting and Interpreting Qualitative Materials* (2nd Ed.) (pp. 155-176). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Honig, M.I. (2009). No small thing: School district central office bureaucracies and the implementation of new small autonomous schools initiatives. *American Educational Research Journal*, 46(2), 387—422.

ENCOUNTER WITH QUALITATIVE RESEARCH ASSIGNMENT #3 DUE

Week 9 (Nov. 1)—FIELDWORK—NO FORMAL CLASS MEETING

Week 10 (Nov. 8): Data Analysis in Qualitative Inquiry (Dr. Kallemeyn)

Merriam, Ch. 8, pp. 169—208

Corbin, J.M. & Strause, A.L. (2008). *Basics of Qualitative Research: Techniques and Procedures for Developing Grounded Theory*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. Ch. 4, Strategies for Qualitative Data Analysis, pp. 65—86.

http://www.qsrinternational.com/support_tutorials.aspx?productid=18

Spillane, J. P., Pairse, L. M., & Sherer, J. Z. (2011). Organizational routines as coupling mechanisms: Policy, school administration, and the technical core. *American Educational Research Journal*, 48(3), 586-619.

Week 11 (Nov. 15): Criteria for Qualitative Inquiry (Dr. Kallemeyn)

Required

Merriam, Ch. 9 & 10, pp. 209—264

Standards for Reporting on Empirical Social Science Research in AERA Publications

Recommended

Schwandt, T.A., Lincoln, Y.S., & Guba, E.G. (2007). Judging interpretations: But is it rigorous? Trustworthiness and authenticity in naturalistic evaluation. *New Directions for Evaluation*, 2007(114), 11—25.

Tracy, S. J. (2010). Qualitative quality: Eight “big-tent” criteria for excellent qualitative research. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 16, 837—851.

Denzin, N.K. (2009). *Qualitative Inquiry Under Fire: Toward a New Paradigm Dialogue*. Walnut Creek: Left Coast Press, Inc. Available at

<http://pegasus.luc.edu/vwebv/holdingsInfo?bibId=1668604>

Ch. 7 Reading and Writing Interpretation pp. 151—173

Firestone, W.A. (1993). Alternative arguments for generalizing from data as applied to qualitative research. *Educational Researcher*, 22, 16—24.

DATA COLLECTION & REFLECTION DUE

Week 12 (Nov. 22): Ethics, Responsibility, and Reflexivity in Qualitative Inquiry

- Fine, M. (2003). For whom? Qualitative research, representation, and social responsibility. In N.K. Denzin & Y.S. Lincoln, *The Landscape of Qualitative Research: Theories and Issues* (2nd Ed.) (pp. 167-207). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Dimitriadis, G. (2001). Coming clean at the hyphen: Ethics and dialogue at a local community center. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 7(5), 578-597.
- Koro-Ljungberg, M. (2010). Validity, responsibility, and aporia. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 16(8), 603–610.
- Stanley, C.A. (2007). When counter narratives meet master narratives in the journal editorial-review process. *Educational Researcher*, 36(1), 14-24.
- Nolen, A.L. & Vander Putten, J. (2007). Action Research in education: Addressing gaps in ethical principles and practices. *Educational Researcher*, 36(7), 401-407.

Week 13 (Nov. 29): Presentations; Data Representation

- Piper, H. & Sikes, P. (2010). All teachers are vulnerable but especially gay teachers: Using composite fictions to protect research participants in pupil-teacher sex-related research. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 16(7), 566–574.
- Eisner, E.W. (1997). The promise and perils of alternative forms of data representation. *Educational Researcher*, 26, 4–11.

ENCOUNTER WITH QUALITATIVE RESEARCH ASSIGNMENT #4 DUE

Week 14 (Dec. 6): Presentations

Week 15 (Dec. 13): Final Exam Projects DUE

Assignment Descriptions

Assignment Submission

Please submit all assignments electronically via Blackboard by clicking on the appropriate link to the assignment under the appropriate week in the Weekly Schedule. I will repost your assignments with grades and comments in Blackboard.

If you have difficulties uploading the file, then please email it to me at lkallemeyn@luc.edu. To assist with file organization, please use the following naming conventions for your assignments if you email it: [Assignment Tag]_Firstname. For example, when submitting the first assignment, I would name it **EQR_Leanne.doc**.

Encounter with Qualitative Research Assignments

#1: Characteristics of Qualitative Research [EQR1]

Identify a qualitative research article or excerpt of a book, which relates to your research interests or the research topic for your group project. (Please note: If you are unsure whether the article is a qualitative research study, you may email it to me to verify.)

The purpose of this assignment is for you to identify characteristic(s) of qualitative research in a research study. While you are reading the study, make connections to characteristics of qualitative research (or lack of) that we encountered in course readings. Develop a thesis about why this study does (or does not) exemplify qualitative research. Write a 2—3 page paper, in which you support this thesis with evidence from the study. In the process of writing the paper, integrate course readings that relate the evidence from the article to characteristics of qualitative research.

Grading Guidelines

- Paper has a clear argument or main idea (2 pt)
- Paper integrates evidence/examples from the study AND READINGS FROM THE COURSE to develop and support the argument (2 pt)
- Paper explores or describes a characteristic of qualitative research (3 pt)

#2: Purposes of Qualitative Research [EQR2]

Identify a qualitative research article or excerpt of a book about a topic or issue that may help you understand your own life experiences, whether personal or work-related. This topic DOES NOT have to relate to your research interests. For example, when I was a new mom, I read *Opting Out? Why Women Really Quit Careers and Head Home* by Pamela Stone. A couple years ago I read *Challenges of the Faculty Career for Women: Success and Sacrifice* by Maïke Ingrid Philipsen and Mary Deane Sorcinelli. You want to make sure that the author of the article/book is NOT writing from his/her own life

experiences, but is writing about the life experiences that he or she has studied among others.

NYU Press has a series called Qualitative Studies in Psychology (<http://www.nyupress.org/qualitativestudiespsychology.php>) and Qualitative Studies in Religion (<http://www.nyupress.org/qualitativestudiesreligion.php>), which may provide some possible sources.

The purpose of this assignment is for you to *experience* the extent to which and ways in which qualitative research may or may not generate and contribute knowledge. While you are reading the study, make notes about 1) new insights that you have, 2) connections or lack of connections to your own life experience and why, 3) findings that the researcher presents that you agree with/disagree with/question, and so on. Then, look through the notes you have taken, and develop a thesis about the extent to which and/or ways in which the study may or may not have generated and contributed to knowledge. Write a 2–3 page paper, in which you support this thesis with evidence from your personal experience reading the book/article. In the process of writing the paper, integrate course readings that relate your personal experience with the book/article to the literature on qualitative research.

Grading Guidelines

- Paper has a clear argument or main idea (2 pt)
- Paper integrates evidence/examples from the study AND READINGS FROM THE COURSE to develop and support the argument (2 pt)
- Paper demonstrates how qualitative research contributes knowledge (3 pt)

#3: Article Critiques [EQR3]

The purpose of this assessment is to demonstrate an understanding of research design elements of qualitative inquiry. Students are expected to include a 2–3 page *critical* review of an empirical qualitative research article that discusses at least one (and not more than four) of the following elements (based on AERA standards):

- Research Problem/Question
- Theoretical framework
- Review of the literature
- Methodology, design and logic
- Sample selection, unit of analysis
- Data collection (generation) methods
- Classification (processes of segmenting the data)
- Analysis and interpretation
- Generalization

Be sure to address both *strength(s)* and *weakness(es)* of the article. If possible, summarize your critique in a thesis statement that can be the organizing argument for

the paper. In the process of discussing and critiquing the research design elements of the article, be sure to provide evidence from the article to support your claim(s), as well as utilize course readings to describe the research design elements and substantiate your critique. Finally, keep in mind that what you choose NOT to write about also helps the reader focused on what you view as the major strength(s) and weakness(es) of the article.

Grading Guidelines

- Paper demonstrates an appropriate understanding of a limited number of research design elements (2 pt)
- Paper addresses both strength(s) and weakness(es) of the article (1 pt)
- Paper includes appropriate evidence from the article to support the critique (1 pt)
- Paper includes an integration of course readings to describe design elements and substantiate the critique (1 pt)
- Paper reflects appropriate discretion of which research design elements NOT to focus on in the paper (1 pt)
- Paper has a clear argument/thesis, good organization, and relatively no grammatical errors, typos, etc. (1 pt)

Qualitative Inquiry Project

Throughout this course, you will conduct a small qualitative study in groups of 3—4 students. This study is not meant to be a masters research project and/or a dissertation research project. I do encourage you to use this opportunity to explore a topic you are interested in pursuing for a dissertation project, as it will be a means to further understand the topic, refine research questions and plans, and develop protocols.

Please note: You will need to generate the same number of pieces of data as you have group members. For example, if you have four members in your group, you need four pieces of data.

Throughout the course, the following interim assignments and final paper will be due:

Topic Ideas [TI]: Half-page summary of research interests, including two or three topics your group is interested in exploring in a qualitative research study. Framing these interests as research questions may be helpful, although not necessary. This assignment is NOT graded.

Research Questions and Plan [RQP]: Due to the nature of qualitative research, a pre-ordinate, prescriptive research plan is inappropriate. Even still, qualitative researchers identify a place to begin, a direction in which they intend to go, and an anticipated means of proceeding. Such a plan is particularly helpful for novice qualitative researchers.

This plan should include the following:

- brief literature review that demonstrates the purpose of study and frames the research topic (1—2 pages) (2 points);
- research questions for the beginning of the study (2 points);
- overview of study methodology (3 points),
- type of data that you plan to generate, including how you will sample (2 points), and
- management plan (1 point).

Protocols [P]: For each data source that you plan to use—interview, observations, document analysis—submit a draft of a protocol. If necessary, an informed consent form should also be included, per guidelines by the Loyola University Institutional Review Board (http://www.luc.edu/irb/irb_XIX.shtml). As you develop the protocol(s), consider the following questions: How will you introduce the study to participants? What questions will you ask and/or what will you focus on observing in order to ensure you collect data that addresses your research question? Does the order of the questions matter? What will be your role or position?

Grading Guidelines

- Informed consent contains necessary components outlined by LUC IRB guidelines, and is easily readable/understandable for the intended audience (2 points)
- Protocol gives enough specificity to guide what data the researchers intend to generate, while also providing opportunity for emergent issues (2 points)
- Protocol will likely generate data that provides a wholistic, coherent, complex understanding of the phenomenon (2 points)
- Protocol will generate concrete data to address the research question (2 points)
- Protocol is well-organized, easy to use, and uses language that is understandable for the participant (2 points)

Data Collection & Reflection [DCR]: **Individually**, submit the data that you have generated, such as an interview transcript and fieldnotes. You will likely have your initial notes as well as a “cleaned up” version. As a group or individually, submit a 2 page reflection on the process of generating the data for your study. To what extent did it go as planned? What new insights did you gain? Is it necessary to rethink your research question and/or investigate additional areas of literature? What was your role or position as a researcher? In what way did you impact the data generation? Is it necessary to rethink how you generate the data? What would you do differently next time? What is your rationale?

Grading Guidelines

- Completion of “initial notes” (2 points)
- Completion of a “cleaned up” version (2 points)
- Reflection thoughtfully addresses at least one of the questions, integrating course readings as appropriate (4 points)

Data Analysis Plan [DAP]: Based on the course readings, develop a half-page to one-page description of how your group intends to analyze the data generated for the study. Considering the following questions: What techniques will you use? What will be the process of the analysis? How will you ensure validity? How do you intend to represent the findings?

Grading Guidelines

- Addresses the research question(s) (1 pt)
- Provides a way of sorting, organizing and reducing the data (1 pt)
- Provides a way of developing categories, themes, or patterns in the data (1 pt)
- Provides a way to validate findings (1 pt)
- Recognizes that the analysis process is emergent and not procedural (1 pt)

Presentations of Qualitative Inquiry Projects [P]: Prepare a 10 minute presentation about your research project. Be sure to include an overview of your research questions, overview of your design, data generation procedures, data analysis procedures, and preliminary findings. This presentation will give you an opportunity to receive feedback on your final project from your peers. Please prepare a powerpoint presentation and/or handout to support your presentation.

Findings and Discussion [FD] (group portion of final exam): Based on the data analysis and interpretations, write a 5—10 page paper, in which you represent and discuss the findings of your study. Think of this paper as a portion of a journal article.

Grading Guidelines

- Addresses the research question(s) (1 pt)
- Provides thick, rich description (1 pt)
- Provides interpretation, meaning of the data (2 pt)
- Provides a compelling argument of the themes, categories discussed (1 pt)
- Provides evidence that the researchers triangulated data, validated findings (1 pt)
- Form and organization of the paper reflect the intentionality of representation (1 pt)
- Appropriately addresses generalizability (1 pt)
- Appropriately acknowledges the limitations of the study or findings (1 pt)
- Well-written, relatively free of typos and grammatical errors (1 pt)

Individual Final Exam Project: Reflexivity [R]

Based on your experiences doing the small study and the readings in the course, write a paper where you practice reflexivity. In addition to submitting this on Blackboard, this paper must also be submitted in LiveText for a core assessment. Choose ONE of the following approaches to reflexivity and write a 3-5 page paper where you practice reflexivity. Because this is a reflexivity paper, it MUST be written in first person. How you organize and structure the paper is up to you. Feel free to be creative in your approach. For example, you may choose to do so in the form of a story (e.g., refer to the article by Dunbar), you may organize it chronologically, by topic, or another way you find meaningful. This paper is NOT a reflection on your learning experience during the course.

This portion of the exam will also need to be submitted in LiveText for a core assessment.

Critical Self-Reflection

Reflexivity is the "process of critical self-reflection on one's biases, theoretical predispositions, preferences, and so forth...It can point to the fact that the inquirer is part of the setting, context, and social phenomenon he or she seeks to understand" (Schwandt, p. 260). The following questions may be helpful in stimulating your thinking:

- What was your role with participants (i.e., complete-observer, observer-as-participant, participant-as-observer, complete participant)? How did this role affect the data you generated and analyzed? (refer to the Dimetriadis article in week 5 for an example of reflexivity on researcher role)
- What are your perspectives, biases, etc. on what you are studying? How did these perspectives, biases, etc. affect your study, including the formation of the study, data generation, data analyses, data representation and so on? Did your perspectives change over the course of the study? If so, in what ways?

Inquiry as Action

Schwandt also writes the following about reflexivity. "...all accounts (in speech and writing) are essentially not just about something but are also doing something. Written and spoken accounts do not simply represent some aspect of the world, but are in some way involved in that world." While this quote refers to the accounts of research, the same can also be said about the process of doing a qualitative inquiry. As researchers, we are not just generating data without interfering with the world around us, we are also doing something with the social world. The chapter by Fine in Week 4 demonstrates this type of reflexivity. The following questions may also be helpful in stimulating your thinking:

- Did the research process and/or representation stimulate and facilitate action or social change? If so, describe this. If not, describe what you can do to facilitate this process.
- Were/was the participant(s) in the research empowered to act as a result of participating?
- Were you concerned with the extent to which participant(s) developed a greater understanding or appreciation for the topic of your study? If so, describe this. If not, what could you do differently?
- Were you concerned with how you were representing your research participant(s)? Was the participant's own constructions enhanced or made more informed and sophisticated as a result of participating in the research?
- Have you considered how your data representation may be used/misused by intended and unintended audiences? Describe these considerations.
- At Loyola, we emphasize the importance of social justice. In what ways did your study "do" something to support social justice and address social inequities?

Grading Guidelines

- Awareness of researcher's identities (option A) or responsibilities (option B) (2 pt)
- Understanding of how identities/responsibilities affected the validity of the study (2 pt)
- Good understanding of the process of doing qualitative research (2 pt)
- Ability to be self-critical; honesty and willingness to admit faults (2 pt)
- Well-written, organized, coherent, concise (2 pt)