

**The TEFL University PHD Course**

**Module 3**

**Module Notes:**

Make sure that you save your course-work as you go along!

You must also add your full name to the end of the file name of this document before you start. For example; with this module which is currently saved as:

phd-module3-TEFL-712-yourname

To change the file name, simply go to the top left of your screen, and click on **File**, **Save As**, then change the name of the file by simply adding your name to the end of the existing file name and save the module to a folder on your computer (‘My Documents’ for example). As an example; if your name were **Jane Mortimer**, you would save the file as:

phd-module3-TEFL-712-Jane-Mortimer

**Submitting your completed modules**

Once you have completed a module, you may use the link below to re-visit the course download/upload area, where you will find the **drop-box** to send your completed work back to us. Please note that grading will not commence until all modules are fully completed:

<http://www.thetefluniversity.com/phd-course-download.html>

**TEFL 712 - Qualitative Research**



**Course Description**

This course is intended for graduate students planning to conduct qualitative research in a variety of different settings. Its topics include: Case studies, interviews, documentary evidence, participant observation, and survey research. The primary goal of this course is to assist students in preparing their dissertation proposals.

**Course Goals**

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

1. Understand the epistemological issues of qualitative research
2. Develop the ability to discern the relevance of qualitative data
3. Understand and confront the ethical challenges of doing fieldwork
4. Be familiar with (some of) the different styles of qualitative research and develop an openness to the diversity of the social sciences
5. Identify the articulation of theory and methods in modern classics.

**Required reading:**

**Textbook (required):**

Flick, U.. An Introduction to Qualitative Research, 4th ed. New York: Sage, 2009.

Available for download at:

<https://www.uni-due.de/imperia/md/content/kowi/hermeneutics.pdf>

Alternative download link:

<https://drive.google.com/open?id=1FMJXVvEyxFpHY4RiSPyxE5ve0BaP23Ey>

Qualitative Research Methods: A Data Collector’s Field Guide. Family Health International, 2010.

Available for download at:

<http://www.ccs.neu.edu/course/is4800sp12/resources/qualmethods.pdf>

Alternative download link:

<https://drive.google.com/open?id=14LUJCmkqeMhBbbhdJaPNIH2efMoN2zmd>

**Academic Integrity**

All work submitted must be your own or must be properly documented. Collaborative work and work previously submitted in another class must be approved in advance.

**Assignment Descriptions**

The course is practice intensive and operates under the philosophy ‘learning by doing’. With this in mind, students will be required to produce nine writings which emphasize different qualitative research methods.

**Essay #1** ***Philosophy of social science***

Focal points:

* Philosophical commitments of social science
* Positivist vs. (and?) interpretivist approaches
* Behavioral assumptions in social science research

Write a brief memo about how one's assumptions about human behavior, and various social, economic and political processes, shape one's approach to research. What questions you ask, what kinds of data you collect, what "findings" you find interesting are all shaped by these assumptions. What are your own underlying assumptions? Where do you stand on the positivist vs. interpretivist divide? Why?

**You may start your essay below**

**Essay #2** ***Causation, explanation, and mechanisms***

Focal points:

* What is causal explanation?
* Can qualitative research establish causality?
* How can qualitative research reveal mechanisms?

Write a short paper (3-4 pages will suffice) on any research article or book that you believe provides a convincing explanation: what questions did the author pose, what alternative explanations were considered, what method was employed, and why in your opinion do you think the proposed explanation is convincing?

**You may start your essay below**

**Essay #3** ***Research discovery and design***

Focal points:

* Discovering a research question
* Designing qualitative research
* Triangulation

Write a brief memo describing your own research question. How did you "discover" this question? Describe the process. How do you propose to design a research project around this question?

**You may start your essay below**

**Essay #4 *Case studies***

Focal points:

* What is a case?
* Value of case study research
* The problem of case selection
* Comparative case method

Choose a book or major article that employs a case study for testing a theory. (Do not choose the same book or article as used for the previous assignment.) How did the author decide what village, town, factory, or institution should be selected for the study? Do you think the criteria were appropriate? Is it a "crucial" case for the theory? Can any generalizations be drawn from the case? How does the author define and limit the unit for study? Might the choice of other units lead to different results? Answer these questions in the form of a brief three or four page paper.

**You may start your essay below**

**Essay #5 *Interviews and documentary evidence***

Focal points:

* Interviews as social events
* Issues of language and power
* Using documentary evidence

Imagine that you want to answer the following research question: What determines success in academia? To carry this out, you decide it is worthwhile to collect the knowledge, opinions, and beliefs of current and aspiring academics. Your assignment is to develop a questionnaire and interview both a faculty member and a student in your department. Write a brief memo describing your interviews. How did you choose your interview subjects? How did you motivate them to provide you with the information you needed? How did you deal with stereotyped answers, evasiveness, lying? Please attach your questionnaire to the memo. How does the author define and limit the unit for study? Might the choice of other units lead to different results? Answer these questions in the form of a brief three or four page paper.

**You may start your essay below**

**Essay #6 *Participant observation***

Focal points:

* What is participant observation?
* Thick description
* Under what conditions is this approach feasible?

Attend a public meeting and write a brief report on what you observe. (Examples: a town council, League of Women voters meeting, a protest rally, etc.). Your task is to come up with observations and insights not ordinarily offered by journalists. You might, for example, devise a method for ascertaining the social composition of the audience; a measure of audience response to the speakers; tell us why people came to the meeting; give a content analysis of themes or metaphors presented by the speakers; tell us something about the symbols employed in the event; provide a kind of ethnographic description of the event (a la Geertz and the Balinesian cockfight); provide a "discourse analysis"; analyze the event as a "play," a "fight," a "religious" revival, or whatever else appears to be an appropriate metaphor. Use your imagination and ingenuity.

**You may start your essay below**

**Essay #7 Survey research project**

Write a 3-4 page research proposal that could draw from existing survey data. You may want to compare attitudes in two or more countries, propose a study of changing attitudes within a single country, examine the relationship between social class, ethnicity, gender, or age to a particular set of attitudes. In your memo be precise as to the questions you propose to answer, hypotheses you wish to test, and the suitability of the data for your proposed study.a "discourse analysis"; analyze the event as a "play," a "fight," a "religious" revival, or whatever else appears to be an appropriate metaphor. Use your imagination and ingenuity.

**You may start your essay below**

**Essay #8 *Doing fieldwork***

Focal points:

* Gaining Access
* Maintaining field notes
* Ethics of fieldwork

Write a brief essay discussing the potential ethical issues raised by your proposed research project. What are the issues? How do you propose to resolve them?

**You may start your essay below**

**Essay #9 Research proposal**

Prepare a 1 or 2 page single-spaced summary of your research proposal. The summary should briefly indicate the research question, the hypotheses, the methods to be employed, and what the expected contribution of the research would be to the body of literature related to your topic.

**You may start your essay below**

**Evaluation**

Essay # 1 - 5%

Essay # 2 – 10%

Essay # 3- 10%

Essay # 4 - 10%

Essay # 5 - 10%

Essay # 6 - 10%

Essay # 7 - 10%

Essay # 8 - 10%

Essay # 9 - 25%

Total 100%