

1.0 Course Work Brief

Doing a live project is the most critical step to get to know the processes and nuances of doing qualitative research. There are six parts in this document:

First, are two choices for the course work. All course work will be completed in groups. In class we will agree the size of the group. Please review the choices given below and we will discuss in class to help you arrive at a fit between the project and the group.

Second, is the brief for the first part of the project i.e., the proposal.

Third, is the brief for the second part of the project that focuses on data collection and initial analysis.

Fourth, is the brief for the third and final part of the project that focuses on putting the work together as a whole.

Fifth, the individual report

Sixth, group assessment

1.2 Choices

The two choices are given in the following sections. These both seem fairly specific but these projects still need careful specification to allow effective execution. Please note the data collection method will be interviews. This is not as constraining as it sounds.

1.2.1 Understanding the benefits of service relationships.

Topic focus

Much is made in the mainstream service management literature and by firms of wanting relationships with their customers. How are the benefits of relationships understood? Culture effects how customers think about (service) relationships so you may want to make your study mono cultural.

Issue to consider (a few)

- What has been done on this topic before?
- How is your project going to contribute to either managerial or theoretical understanding?
- Where will be you collect data from - what practicalities does this raise?
- What activities drive costs in the project? Clearly there are “guestimates” (guess + estimates) to be made here.

PhD extension

I expect these groups to emphasize positioning within the literature. You should also provide conceptual as well as practical support for the method.

1.2.2. The meaning of work

Topic

Work is central to our lives. As we move beyond the practical day-to-day of our computers, meetings, travel and so on what does work mean? This project is concerned with the deep meanings individuals attribute to work. Culture is also informs the specific and logically coherent explanations people form about their work.

Issue to consider (a few)

- What is work?
- How to penetrate deep into meanings informants attribute to work?
- What has been done on this topic before?

PhD Extension

As above you should be concerned with positioning within the literature both in terms of explaining the project objectives and in reporting findings. You should also consider the methodological challenges of this project.

1.2.3 Others

Since the numbers are large, for a graduate class, it will not be possible to run individual projects. However, if you have a suggestion that you want to make as a group then feel free to discuss it with me.

2.0 Brief 1 – Research proposal (Due on 15th Oct.)

2.1 Background

The first part of the project is about defining your project. The research proposal is a vehicle to do this. We will cover the detail of the proposal in class.

2.2 What should be done before class?

Please follow the guidelines I discuss in class. This will lead you to create a comprehensive, professional and *practical* style proposal for the project you intend to do. For the PhD groups you should ensure depth in the theoretical aspects. Please add your first thoughts on:

- Method
- Sample
- Time scale
- Problems you anticipate in completing the project. (We can discuss.)

The proposal uploaded to the website for *morning of the 15th October*. Please do not show up if the work is not uploaded! You should also prepare a PPT of c.10-15 minutes on your project. The PPT should also be uploaded to the website *before class*. The aim is for us *all* to engage with our own and others projects to maximize learning.

2.3 What should be done in class?

Please come ready to present as a group. This will be in the afternoon of class three. In class you should prepare peer reviews of other groups work. Peer review forms are found at: <http://www.j--s.net/support/> Please aim to make your comments helpful and objective. Saying, “your idea is very vague” is not as helpful as saying, “We are not clear about your research direction. Your research questions (p. 5) are confusing: question one makes sense to us but we don’t know what you mean by question two”.

NOTE: Please label these as: [targetgroupname]_[yourgroupname].docx These should be uploaded at the end of class – before leaving.

2.4 Evaluation

I will give feedback based on the presentation and proposal document. This will be posted to the web along with the peer review notes.

3.0 Brief 2 (Due 10th December)

3.1 Background

The objective of this review is to:

- Describe the process you have gone through so far in your project. We are reviewing the process from start of the project through to data collection and initial steps in the analysis process.
- To demonstrate your theoretical understanding of the process that you have gone through so far. You may want to point out where your approach differs from the theoretical ideal. The purpose is to demonstrate understanding and learning rather than showing a perfect process.

3.2 What should be done before class?

- Please submit your report and slides before class.
- You should incorporate a theoretical basis for your approach. Remember some of the key topics we have covered in class (e.g., developing research questions/objectives, sampling, interview & observation preparation and process, rationalizing and explaining the research process).
- How are your data forming categories?
- Discuss how you change your approach in the future to increase the robustness of your method.

3.3 What should be done in class?

- Groups should prepare a presentation that can last for a maximum of 10-15 minutes.
- In class you should prepare peer reviews of other groups work. Peer review forms are found at: <http://www.j--s.net/support/> Note comments above on file names.

3.4 Assessment

As above, feedback will be posted to the web.

4.0 Brief 3 – putting it all together as a final report

4.1 Background

The objective of this final review is to:

- Present the work on your project from objectives/questions through method to findings.
- Emphasis is on presenting qualitative findings and demonstrating quality in the process of your research.
- Integrate relevant theory to your explanations.
- Demonstrate how the project has developed through the course.
- PhD groups should attempt to fit their findings to relevant theory.

4.2 What should be done before class?

- Please submit your report and slides before class.
- The report can include bullet points for brevity in some sections. It should be long enough to explain your work. Think efficiency. PhD students this is a good opportunity to focus on redundancy in your writing style.
- Please include your research questions – just for a reminder.
- You should major on the analysis process and share findings from the project. You should be using the *language* and *terms* of qualitative research.

4.3 What should be done in class?

- Groups should prepare a presentation that can last for a maximum of 10-15 minutes.
- In class you should prepare peer reviews of other groups work. Peer review forms are found at: <http://www.j--s.net/support/> Note comments above on file names.

4.4 Assessment

- As above, feedback will be posted to the web.

5.0 Individual report

5.1 Background

In qualitative research the researcher becomes an instrument integral to the process of analysis and to developing understanding about the topic under study. The purpose of this short report is to draw out your process of becoming a qualitative researcher.

The report should:

- Explain what you have learned as an individual.
- Highlight two or three theoretical aspects, new to you, that you have understood that you have understood from the class.
- This report is a maximum of two pages.
- Save as [yourname].docx

5.2 Assessment

I will be looking for accounts of how you as individuals have developed sensitivity to the nuances of handling qualitative data. I am also concerned with your personal understanding of the theory you have learned in and out of class.

6.0 Group assessment

Individuals in the each group act to peer review *each other* using the template on the web. This in only seen by me. It should be labeled as [yourname]_[yourgroupname].docx.