

UNIVERSIDAD PONTIFICIA BOLIVARIANA
SCHOOL OF EDUCATION AND PEDAGOGY
FACULTY OF EDUCATION GRADUATE PROGRAM
GRADUATE DIPLOMA IN ELT

QUALITATIVE RESEARCH FOUNDATIONS
Raúl A. Mora, Ph.D. & Polina Golovátina-Mora, Ph.D.

Instructors

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Schedule: Fridays, 18:00 to 22:00; Saturdays: 08:00 to 13:00

Office Hours: by appointment

Course Overview

The fields of ELT, teacher education, linguistics, and literacy, just to name a few, have gradually moved from just using a quantitative paradigm, which emphasizes larger samples and the use of statistical analysis, to the inclusion of a qualitative research paradigm. Qualitative researchers are more concerned about the in-depth comprehension of the educational phenomena under study. An emphasis on the time one spends in the field, the need for multiple sources and realities, and the interaction between researchers and participants are hallmarks of what this kind of research entails. The graduate structure of the English Area (comprising both the Graduate Diploma in ELT and the MA in Learning and Teaching Processes in Second Languages) ascribes to this qualitative paradigm as the one that best enables us to explore and comprehend educational phenomena in our field.

In the context of this Graduate Diploma, we operate under the assumption that all our students are novice researchers interested in making sense of the different problems and issues that surround their everyday practice. In this sense, qualitative research becomes an alternative to understand the different phenomena that take place in our classrooms and provide feasible solutions to improve the quality of instruction and learning. Part of this understanding implies defining what research means, discussing and narrowing down a problem, crafting a research question, and establishing the conceptual base for a research proposal. This is the background under which this course operates.

The course *Qualitative Research Foundations Seminar* is part of the three-course sequence of the research component of this graduate program. In this first part, through class discussions and readings from respected scholars in qualitative research, students and the instructor will discuss the meaning of research, the statement of a problem and research question, and the conceptual underpinnings of a research proposal. These elements will prepare students to engage in the methodological considerations of research design during the *Research Practicum*.

During this course, students are encouraged to share their different experiences as researchers, with the understanding that this is just the beginning of a journey in their evolution of their research practice. In addition, we cannot forget that we are in the context of a graduate program in English Education and that students in the program are interested in improving their own practice as researchers. Therefore, a constant reflexivity (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992; Mora, 2011, 2012) about how to apply these contents and ideas to our work with students in the Colombian context will be a constant feature throughout the course.

Course Objectives

1. To introduce students to the basic elements of qualitative research and what it means to conduct educational and classroom research.
2. To recognize the basic conceptual elements that comprise a research proposal
3. To provide spaces of reflexivity for graduate students to discuss their own practices as researchers and the kind of research in which they should engage for their and their students' benefit.

Assignments

This course will have three main assignments, as follows:

Statement of Research. Students will write a 1-2-page statement where they define what research means to them, why it is important to conduct research in their classrooms, and what kind of research approaches they will consider as the basis of their future research proposals (30% of the grade)

Research Proposal Outline. Students will draft a document where they will think about a particular research problem they wish to explore as their final degree project. They will also write a research question that illustrates their articulation of the statement of the problem. Finally, they will present a detailed outline that covers the elements we discussed in the course and how they will fit the actual proposal. (40% of the grade)

Forums. Given the bimodal nature of this seminar, having forums for discussion is an important part of our work. You will find three discussion topics for every week on Moodle which I will post no later than the Monday after our class. You are supposed to access Moodle and respond at least twice, once to the general question and once to one of your classmates (I encourage you to respond several times and engage in discussions with other classmates). I will read the forums on Thursday night and will make sure to address the most heated topics in our discussions. (30% of the grade)

Expectations

Classwork. We expect all students to be on time every week. If, for some reason, you cannot be in class, please notify me as soon as possible. Make sure to talk to either your other

classmates or me to make up for the work. No assignments will be accepted after the due date without a proper excuse. The deadlines are set well in advance so check your personal or work schedules to ensure there are no conflicts. If you foresee a conflict, talk to me immediately so we can make proper arrangements. All work is to be submitted electronically via e-mail at raul.mora@upb.edu.co. In order to ensure I can reply to you promptly, please include the letters QRF in the subject line of any messages you send me, whether questions or assignments.

Participation. Since all students in this class are teachers and this is a graduate-level course, I expect a high degree of professionalism and ethical behavior from all of you. You must be prepared to participate in every class. This includes reading the assigned readings and documents and bringing all required resources at all times. All of you should be ready to raise questions and issues as the result of your reading and the interactions with your instructor and each other. If you disagree with any ideas in class, feel free to say so in a proper fashion. To me, the classroom is a community of learners and scholars. Respectful interactions are important for the success of the academic exercises in which we will engage.

Methodology. Students will engage in class work for 4 hours on Friday and 5 hours on Saturday. In addition, you might need at least another 4 hours a week to work on the readings and assignments for the course on your own.

Ethical guidelines. All assignments are to be original work. As a scholar, I abide by the highest standards of academic integrity, including strong stances against cheating and plagiarism. Guidelines against cheating and plagiarism in this course will follow any internal guidelines that UPB has set in place for academic integrity, as well as existing Colombian copyright legislation, such as Ley 23 de 1986, specifically Article 31 (<http://www.cerlalc.org/documentos/colo23.htm>) and Ley 1032 de 2006 (http://www.unal.edu.co/dib/cip/pi_ley_1032_2006.html). Please make sure to get yourselves acquainted with these laws.

Resources

All classroom resources are available online on the Moodle site the instructor has set up for this course. To access the course, look for the course “Research Foundations Seminar Medellín 201301”. The password to access the course is **research2013**. It is your duty to ensure you can access the site and resources. Also, it is your responsibility to download the resources for every week. In addition to online resources, you are supposed to have a notebook/journal with you at all times. We will do extensive note-taking during the course.

Technology

If you happen to have a laptop, you can bring it to class as well. It is advisable to download the readings to your hard drives before the class. In case that you cannot bring your own laptop, please make sure to print the readings (I encourage you print on both sides of the sheet, print 2 pages per side of the sheet, or use scrap paper). Regarding the use of cell phones

and smartphones, I have a **no-phoning, no-texting** policy in class. We only meet for a few hours on Fridays and Saturdays; so, unless we are talking about life-or-death situations in your lives (which may happen), I expect not to see any communication devices in your hands.

Class Schedule

Week	Topics	Assigned Readings (all available on Moodle site)
1 April 12 Instructors: Dr Mora Dr Golovátina-Mora	What is research?	To read before class: Lankshear & Knobel (2004), Chapter 1 In-class reading: Yin (2011), pp. 26-31
	Qualitative vs. Quantitative Research	To read before class: Yin, pp. 3-6 Stake (2010), p. 15-16 In-class readings: Qualitative and Quantitative Tracks (R. Stake) Hatch (2002), pp. 6-11 & 34-35 Follow-up reading: Silverman & Marvasti (2008), Chapter 2
1 April 13 Instructors: Dr. Mora Dr. Golovátina-Mora	Why Action Research? Why Case Study? Why other approaches?	To read before class: Hatch (2002), pp. 20-34 Yin (2011), p. 17 In-class readings (in small groups): Burns (2009) – Action Research Hood (2009) – Case Study Murray (2009) – Narrative Inquiry
		Follow-up readings Bell (2001), Chapter 1 Lodico, et al. (2010), Chapter 2
Before Week 2		Statement of Research is Due Forums 1A and 1B Due
2 April 19 Instructor:	Locating and defining a problem: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statement of the problem • Research questions 	To read before class: Bell (2001), pp. 28-32 Stake (2010), pp. 71-77

Dr. Golovátina-Mora		<p>In-class reading: Maykut & Morehouse (1994), Chapter 5</p> <p>Follow-up reading: Lankshear & Knobel (2004), Chapter 3</p>
<p>2 April 20</p> <p>Instructor: Dr. Golovátina-Mora</p>	<p>Situating the problem within a conceptual and empirical base:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conceptual framework • Literature review 	<p>To read before class: Ely, et al. (1997), pp. 227-231 Yin (2011), pp. 61-65</p> <p>In-class readings: Taylor & Procter (n.d.) Yin (2011), pp. 93-96</p> <p>Follow-up reading: Randolph (2009)</p>
Before Week 3	Forums 2A and 2B Due	
<p>3 April 26</p> <p>Instructor: Dr. Mora</p>	Research Design	<p>To read before class: Berg (2001), pp. 28-33</p> <p>In-class reading Lodico, et al. (2010), pp. 160-168</p>
<p>3 April 27</p> <p>Instructor: Dr. Mora</p>	Choosing participants and sites	<p>To read before class Yin (2011), pp. 114-121</p> <p>In-class reading: Walford (2001), Chapter 3</p>
Within 1 week after end of module	Forums 3A and 3B Due	
	Statement of the problem and research question DUE (Students will receive feedback prior to Research Practicum. We will continue working on the problem and question during Research Practicum)	

References

- Bell, J. (2001). *Doing your research project: A guide for first-time researchers in education, health and social science (4th Ed.)*. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.
- Berg, B. L. (2001). *Qualitative research methods for the social sciences (4th Ed.)*. Boston, MA: Allyn and Bacon.
- Burns, A. (2009). Action research. In J. Heigham, & R. A. Croker (Eds.). *Qualitative research in applied linguistics: A practical introduction (pp. 112-134)*. New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan.

- Ely, M., Vinz, R., Downing, M., & Anzul, M. (1997). *On writing qualitative research: living by words*. London, UK: The Falmer Press.
- Hatch, J. A. (2002). *Doing qualitative research in education settings*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.
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- Lankshear, C. & Knobel, M. (2004). *A handbook for teacher research: From design to implementation*. New York, NY: Open University Press.
- Lodico, M. G., Spaulding, D. T., & Voegtle, K. H. (2010). *Methods in educational research: From theory to practice* (2nd Ed.). San Francisco, CA: Josey-Bass.
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- Randolph, J. J. (2009, June). A guide to writing the dissertation literature review. *Practical Assessment, Research & Evaluation*, 14(13), pp. 1-13
- Silverman, D. & Marvasti, A. (2008). *Doing qualitative research: A comprehensive guide*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Stake, R. E. (2010). *Qualitative research: Studying how things work*. New York, NY: The Guilford Press.
- Taylor, D. & Procter, M. (n.d.) *The literature review: A few tips on conducting it*. Retrieved from <http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/advice/specific-types-of-writing/literature-review>
- Yin, R. K. (2011). *Qualitative research: From start to finish*. New York, NY: The Guilford Press.