

*Qualitative Research: Methods and Analysis* provided the foundational skills necessary for embarking upon a qualitative study. In this course Dr. Taylor-Dunlop explained that qualitative research should be “rich, thick and deep.” As the term itself implies, qualitative research is about finding the meaning in numerous statements by locating patterns, themes and discrepancies. It is not about amassing large stockpiles of data and looking for trends. The process is about observing subjects and uncovering the statements that reveal what is truly going on in the scenario observed.

For example, once a researcher has completed a focus group and individual interviews the synthesis process begins. The researcher compares and contrasts these data. This analysis of the findings guides the researcher in drawing conclusions and finding meaning in the statements.

Our first assignment was to collect data by observing a single subject and documenting our observations onto the field note template created by Dr. Taylor-Dunlop. We coded the observation using Theoretical Notes (TN), Observational Notes (ON), and Methodological Notes (MN). This process allowed us to practice methodology which will be useful in future qualitative research.

Our next assignment was to identify a problem which we observed in our professional capacities. We created questions for a focus group followed by more in-depth questions for individual interviews. The responses were critiqued to uncover patterns, themes, and discrepancies.

The course introduced us to the required skills as qualitative researchers. The resources and insights received from Dr. Taylor-Dunlop will prove invaluable as we navigate through our doctoral studies.