

Qualitative and quantitative research differs in many ways. The research community tends to look at qualitative research in a less favourably though. Qualitative research refer to the “what, how, when, and where of a thing – its essence and ambience” (Berg, 2001). It describes characteristics that quantitative research, which uses statistics and other data, has a difficult time in doing. To illustrate, it is difficult to describe the odours of a classroom, which are fairly standardised in schools. The reason qualitative research has not gained the confidence of researchers is that there are many methodologies to conducting this research. Many books only focus on one, usually their favourite method, which limits an overall perspective of this approach. One such approach is the triangulation research methodology – using multiple perspectives in order to come to a conclusion. This is used extensively in “surveying, map making, navigation, and military practice” (Berg, 2001). From our online discussion, many of us use this method without even realising it. Some of us use it in our professional practice as teachers and coaches. The degree we use it depends on our knowledge of the subject.

Qualitative research is not uncontrolled as some might suggest. In fact, it is quite rigorous with a great deal of checks and crosschecks. The theory behind qualitative research comes from symbolic interactionism. This theoretical school of thought suggests that meanings derive from the social process of people or groups of people interacting (Berg, 2001). It is through what people do and how they interact with one another and their surroundings that give meaning to this process. This process requires a copious amount of work. “The tediousness and persistence required to copy verbatim others work as to not misrepresent them in your final analysis is what surprised me the

most”, as one online discussion participant said (Wiseman, 2002). Qualitative research in many ways overcomes the sterile statistical techniques used by quantitative researchers by offering more than numbers; it offers a closer perspective of the situation by the meanings of the individual’s experience.

### Assignment 1b

“Rigorous and systematic.” This statement has proven true time and time again whenever I read qualitative research literature. Before this course, I didn’t see qualitative research as being as scientific as quantitative research. After collecting, gathering, listening, and reflecting on the information that has presented itself. I believe now that qualitative research is so stringent in its guidelines and so methodological that is difficult not to consider it as scientific. I also know now that it is a far better research strategy to answer a particular phenomenon in a social setting. It is so much more than data from a questionnaire and far more intrusive. Qualitative research is not about finding the right answer for a particular phenomenon, but to bring out what cannot be seen in the social setting. This in turn challenges other researchers to look for other answers and also allows the researched to gain a deeper understanding of their social setting thus enabling them to grow and improve.

Growth and improvement is what this class has been about. I can clearly see Blooms Taxonomy at work here. In the beginning stages, we struggled to define some of the elements that make up qualitative research such as being transparent, open, neutral, etc... With the ongoing online discussion, we pieced together these elements and applied them to our daily situations in order to show comprehension. Looking at the different discourses and showing which one we took illustrates this. The latter stage of this course

has meant more than understanding and applying, the three papers has made us analyze, synthesize, and evaluate what we have learned about qualitative research. Describing the tenets of good qualitative research, evaluating a qualitative research paper, and evaluating our struggles has made this learning process evolve. I am now more judgemental when I read research. I am now more interested in research. I am now a new person. I am.