

This is the final step of our learning process in EDER 603.01 – Introduction to Interpretive Inquiry. Our first task was to do a literature review of the tenets of good qualitative research. This paper was done using current literature, discussion postings, and self-reflections. Our second task was to complete a critique of a qualitative research article from an electronic refereed academic journal. This paper was also done using self-reflections of task 1. This final step requires us to self evaluate our learning process and to pose three questions that we struggled with. This paper will present this final step of our learning process.

Our first task was a process of collection and selection – What did I do? This process required us to search through literature and discussion postings to write a paper on what we thought were the tenets of qualitative research. There were many things that appeared to be important in the qualitative research paradigm. In fact, my list consisted of eleven elements. Through feedback from the professor, other students, and self-reflection, I decided it was in my best interest in this assignment to limit my tenets to five statements. The challenge of finding eleven elements in a research paper would have been more difficult than finding five elements. This struggle for control of which direction the paper went was a large part of my self-reflection. I struggled on this point because it was either doing the paper using my own creativity or letting my colleagues and professor determine how this paper developed. I believe this is what many qualitative researchers go through in deciding what questions to ask in their study. Because they need to be neutral, it is imperative that research guides the researcher and not the other way around. Using leading questions, which in some respect is controlling

the research rather than allowing the questions to develop from the social setting, is detrimental to the qualitative research tradition.

Our second task was a process of reflection – What did I learn? Using a refereed qualitative research paper was a crucial step in turning the process of collection and selection into a higher form of learning. According to Bloom’s Taxonomy, we would call this the analysis stage – the thinking skill that requires us to examine, take apart, classify, predict, and draw conclusions. Through this process, I questioned how any qualitative research could be reproduced. It has been stated in literature that qualitative research inherently cannot be objective. In fact, qualitative researchers have turned their focus to achieve greater validity with their work. So how do we reach this level of validity without jeopardizing our credibility?

Our final task was a process of projection – What will I do next? This is according to Bloom’s Taxonomy, the part where we appraise, assess, or criticize on the basis of specific standards or criteria. We are, in fact, assessing ourselves using our own standards that we created task 1 and 2. This process carries reflection into the future which is important because we are now taking what we have learned in the past and using it in the future to foster growth and improvement. I can say I have learned immensely from this course. It is especially exhilarating to come to this course after finishing the quantitative course because qualitative research is much more “livelier”. We are taking human emotions and feelings and using it to understand a social setting. I struggled to understand during this learning process why researchers do not combine their efforts in looking for answers in a social setting? I believe it would lessen the bias and decrease the workload and time. Nevertheless, qualitative research requires genuine people skills

as well as a creative writing skills. This to me is truly an art. For people who do not see it this way, I suggest they look at the work of Waitzkin's (1991) as suggested by Dr. D. Dodsworth. It is full and thick with description and is like a study within a study. It obviously took lots of time and intuitive skills to create such illuminating work.

In short, research will no longer look the same to me. I will be carefully scrutinizing research whether it is for a research paper or just information on the news. I am definitely grateful I took this course and the quantitative research methods courses first. It will help me appreciate research to a larger extent than if I jumped in without knowing the traditions related to each of these paradigms. Instead of reading what the author is saying, now I am reading for what the author means.