

## **Description**

This was the fourth unit of the Research Methods and Professional Practice Module. In this unit we did a deep dive into the different qualitative data collection methods. The goals of this unit were to learn all about out case studies, focus groups and observations (what they are, advantages, disadvantages etc).

For this unit we were required to read multiple extracts from chapter 2 of the book Projects in Computing and Information Systems: A Student's Guide (Dawson, 2015), a case study on Qualitative research methods (Prita, 2021), chapter 2 from the book Evaluating the Organizational Impact of Health Care Information Systems (Kaplan & Maxwell, 2005) and the article on case study research in software engineering (Wohlin, 2021).

We had one formative activity and one seminar preparation activity we had to complete in this unit of the module. The formative activity for this unit was to submit an outline for the literature review we have to submit in unit 7. The seminar preparation activity for this unit was to analyse the ethical issues involved in a given case study.

## **Feelings**

I felt the formative for this week (the literature review outline) was a lot as I had to read through over 15 academic articles on assistive technologies. After reading through the academic articles, I noticed there was a lot of overlap between them. Due to this and the wordiness of each paper I found this to be quite a tedious process.

I believe the feedback gained from the formative activity will prove to be hugely beneficial as it will allow me to further improve my assignment allowing me to maximise my grade. No other modules did this and I am not really sure why as it helps to maximise the students' grades.

Just as with the previous units there were mistakes in the references on the learning platform and the reading list for the module didn't match up with the reading list on the learning platform. This caused me a great deal of confusion and is not up to the standard I would expect in postgraduate studies. I am not sure who is responsible for ensuring the learning platform is up to date but they clearly haven't done their job.

As I will have to write up multiple research proposals for my doctorate applications, I believe this will be the most important and relevant module to date. Additionally, I believe this unit will prepare me effectively for my dissertation.

## **Evaluation**

Throughout the unit I developed a deeper understanding of qualitative research methods and improved my critical analysis skills. The formative activity for this unit was particularly beneficial, as it provided me with feedback on how I could improve the literature review assignment due in unit 7 of the module. The only real negative of this unit was, the errors in the reading list that caused a great deal of confusion and affected my overall learning experience.

The main area where I could have improved during this unit of the module was with my time management as I have been one week behind due to the high workload in this module and beginning the module whilst still completing the previous module due an extenuating circumstance. It seems as if every time I begin to catch up with the module there is a module artifact that takes a lot longer than expect so I fall behind again. I have noticed that the suggested time taken to complete the activity on the learning platform is never consistent with how much time I actually spend on each activity.

## **Analysis**

This unit reinforced the importance of time management and planning when there is a lot of reading to do. Additionally, the overlap in the academic articles highlighted the need for a critical analysis to identify unique contributions without becoming overwhelmed. The formative activity allowed me to benefit from the iterative feedback received.

## **Conclusion**

Over the course of the unit, I learnt a lot about the most common qualitative research methods. Although the workload for the unit was heavy, as has been the case for this module in general I believe the feedback from the formative activity will be hugely beneficial for my final literature review. As I had never done a research module prior to this, this was a module where I expected to learn the most.

## **Action Plan**

If I were to redo this unit of the module, I would have tried to allocate my time better so that I wouldn't have fallen a week behind earlier in the module as it has proved near impossible to catch up with the ever-increasing workload whilst managing my other commitments. Whilst I couldn't have planned for being ill I could have perhaps managed my time better to minimise its impact.

For the upcoming literature review assignment, I will spend additional time summarising each source focusing on how each source differs.

## **References**

Gibbs, G. (1998) Learning by Doing: A guide to teaching and learning methods. Further Education Unit. Oxford Polytechnic: Oxford.

Priya, A. (2021) Case Study Methodology of Qualitative Research: Key Attributes and Navigating the Conundrums in Its Application. *Sociological bulletin*. 70(1): 94–110.

Kaplan, B. & Maxwell, J. A. (2005) 'Qualitative Research Methods for Evaluating Computer Information Systems', in: Anderson, J. G. & Aydin, C. E. *Evaluating the Organizational Impact of Healthcare Information Systems*. New York: Springer New York. 30–55.

Wohlin, C. (2021) *Case Study Research in Software Engineering—It is a Case, and it is a Study, but is it a Case Study?* Information and Software Technology.