

## **Description**

This unit was the third unit of the Research Methods and Professional Practices module. This unit focused on the different data collection methods as well as the different methods and methodologies used in research.

For this unit we were required to read an extract from chapter 2 in the book 'Projects in Computing and Information Systems: A Student's Guide' (Dawson, 2015), the article from the British Research Methodology on Research Design (BRM, 2018), the article from question pro on research (QuestionPro, 2021) in addition to watching the lecture from Sam Newington on research methods and methodologies (University of Liverpool, 2019) and going through the interactive methods map on research methods from Sage (Sage, 2021).

This unit consisted of two formative activities, a lecture cast, a lecture and a seminar preparation activity in addition to all the required reading. The formative activities for this unit were the summary post for the collaborative discussion on ethics and the portfolio activity related to the research proposal for the second assignment. The lecture cast for this unit focused on surveys and interviews in research and pre and post testing to prove or disprove a hypothesis. During the lecture Dr Outram went over the activities, we were expected to complete by the end of unit four as well as the different research and data collection methods so that we could begin working on the upcoming assignment. The seminar preparation activity we had to complete prior to the lecture was a peer review activity on AI research we had to compare research papers that used different research methods and had to answer the following questions; are the research questions and objectives in line with your thoughts on the topic, do they contribute to the collective body of knowledge, was the research methodology, data collection method and analysis appropriate, does each paper support its claims and conclusions with evidence and how could each study be enhanced.

## **Feelings**

The inconsistencies on the learning platform caused me a great deal of confusion as the reading list contained duplicate entries from a previous unit and didn't match up with the reading list for the module. I wouldn't have expected to see this on a postgraduate course as it suggests a lack of care and attention to detail.

I was perplexed by Dr Outram's contradiction when it came to referencing as she stressed the importance of not using sources without a date but then used them in multiple places on the learning platform.

I noticed that a lot of the references on the learning platform didn't match up with the referencing guide provided by the university and some of them were incorrect (I.E they had the incorrect year). This is a worrying sign as it suggests the learning platform was put together in a rush and not double checked for correctness.

I felt as if the amount of reading for this unit was excessive as it's not realistic to expect part-time students to read so much in one week especially if they have other commitments.

I was disappointed by the participation of the other students throughout the entirety of the collaborative discussion as very few people actively participated in the collaborative discussion. While this worry trend is something I have noticed throughout the entirety of my postgraduate degree I would have expected more participation especially at the beginning of a module.

Again, I didn't receive the lecture slides in advance like I am supposed to according to my reasonable adjustment plan. This left me rather disappointed as what is the point of having a reasonable adjustment plan when it is never followed by the lectures. The idea behind receiving the lecture slides early is to allow me to be better prepared for the lectures and to save me the time I would spend rewatching the lectures to make notes. Due to the heavy workload of the unit to date this is rather inconvenient. I hope this won't be a regular occurrence in this module as receiving the lecture slides early is extremely beneficial.

Again, it seemed like Dr Outram was just reading off the slides during the lecture and the slides were very wordy. I would have expected Dr Outram to add some of her own insights as I didn't really gain any real value from attending the lecture, I could have just read the slides myself. I am concerned that if this continues the attendance in the lectures will continue to fall.

I feel as if the lectures could have been scheduled much better as 9:00 AM lectures are likely to have very poor attendance due to time zone differences. Other lecturers at least made an effort to accommodate international students and students with other commitments by having lectures at a reasonable time. I consider this very worrying as anyone working in the country where the university is based is unlikely to be able to attend the lectures due to their typical working hours.

### **Evaluation**

The aspects of the unit that I feel went well were; all module objectives were achieved, my ability to read and understand technical documents improved as I had a lot of reading to do for this unit of the module.

While Dr Outram is good at keeping on top of the students making sure nobody falls behind there is a lot of room for improvement in their presentation style as whenever you attend the lectures all Dr Outram does is read off the slides.

I was rather disappointed as I had high expectations for the module however after not receiving the lecture slides early for any lectures to date and noticing the sub-par attendance to the lectures, the sub-par participation in the collaborative discussions and the high number of mistakes on the learning platform I have significantly lowered my expectations for the rest of the module.

## **Analysis**

As I am planning on applying for PHD's learning how to do a research project is vital as a significant part of any doctorate is the research proposal.

## **Conclusion**

Over the course of the unit I learned about the research onion, the differences between quantitative research and qualitative research, the purpose of research, the different types of research, the different research strategies, the differences between secondary and primary research, the threats to reliability, the different types of validity and the different Quality criteria. As I had never done a research module prior to this, this was a module where I expected to learn a lot.

## **Action plan**

If I was to redo this unit of the module, I would have managed my time better in the previous module and planned for being ill so I wouldn't need to manage the workload of two modules for the first week as due to this I fell behind in this module and have been struggling to catch up due to the heavy work load.

## **References**

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

Dawson, C. (2015) *Projects in Computing and Information Systems: A Student's Guide*. Harlow: Pearson.

British Research Methodology (BRM). (2018) *Research Design*.

University of Liverpool Academic Skills. (2019) *Introduction to research methods and methodologies*.

QuestionPro. (2021). *What is research?*

Sage. (2021) *Sage Research Methods: Methods Map*.