

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY MONTEREY BAY

Time: Monday 4:00-7:50

Location: Bldg 18, Rm 156

OFFICE HOURS: TUESDAYS 2:00-4:00PM

OR BY APPOINTMENT

Prof. Nicholas Meier

nmeier@csumb.edu

<http://www.nicholasmeier.com/>

OFFICE: Bldg. 3, Rm. 159

O: 831-582-3536 h: 831-688-2708

updated 1/20/10

MAE: 622 Qualitative Research Spring 2010

Course Description

This course is designed to give students a conceptual overview of traditional qualitative and teacher action research using ethnographic methods, with an emphasis on helping students understand and describe the points of view of individuals living and working in multicultural settings. Moreover, as the basis for facilitating beneficial change in their classrooms, schools, or communities, participants use ethnographic and/or historical research skills to design their action thesis projects and complete their proposals.

Topics To Be Covered include a consideration of:

Purposes of qualitative research; qualitative research strategies; ethical issues in qualitative research; tools for conducting qualitative research; organizing qualitative data; analyzing qualitative data; validity and reliability in qualitative research.

Learning outcomes include:

- Students will understand under what circumstances qualitative research is appropriate.
- Students will be able to demonstrate knowledge the ethical considerations of qualitative research.
- Students will be able to conduct a qualitative research project.
- Students will be able to select the research tools appropriate to their project.
- Students will be able to demonstrate the ability to analyze qualitative data.
- Students will be able to write a qualitative research paper using an appropriate format.

REQUIRED READING (TEXTS):

Mills, G. (2002). Action research: A guide for the teacher researcher (3rd ed.): Prentice Hall. ISBN: 013172276X

Additional Readings on CSUMB Library eReserve (password m622)

For further resources related to this course and other educational topics:

Web Resources: <http://www.nicholasmeier.com/Websites2.html>

Books: <http://www.nicholasmeier.com/favoritebooks5.html>

COURSE POLICIES

ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION.

You are expected to attend class and to be well prepared to participate. This means that you have read and reflected on the assigned readings and are clearly involved in group discussions and activities. Absences, early departure from class, excessive tardiness, or not respecting the length of break time will negatively influence your grade. Whenever possible please inform the instructor in advance if you know you will be absent or late.

SUBMISSION POLICY: All assignments must be typed (unless otherwise specified), 12 point serif font (e.g. *Times*). Assignments must be delivered through the online course system based on assignment instructions. **Please** use your name in the title, and the name of the assignment **as the title** of the document (e.g. Smith_Interview.doc).

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY, PLAGIARISM and CITING WORK

Any form of academic dishonesty, such as cheating, fabrication or falsifying information, or plagiarism **WILL** result in serious repercussions. To avoid plagiarism, be sure to include a works cited section in any academic paper. It is important to acknowledge where you are drawing your insights, inspiration, or ideas. If the material is copied directly from the readings then both quotation marks and text citations should be used. For example, "...the quoted material you have chosen..." (Ayers, 1991, p. 52). If you are paraphrasing or putting the material (ideas) into your own words then (Ayers, 1991) should follow the material. Failure to do so constitutes plagiarism, **PLAGIRISM** and plagiarizing **WILL** result in either failing the course, or at a minimum mean an unacceptable paper. For more details, see the University Academic Integrity Policy at <http://policy.csumb.edu/site/x20830.xml>.

LATE ASSIGNMENTS

If you need an extension on a assignment you **MUST** notify the instructor in **ADVANCE** of the due date. Late assignments will **NOT** be accepted without prior (that is, by the due date) agreement from the instructor. Failure to result in a zero grade for that assignment, and if it is a major assignment for the course, a failing grade for the course. Authorized late assignments **WILL** receive a 10% reduction in grade for each two days late, up to a 50% grade reduction.

INCOMPLETES:

The purpose of an incomplete is to allow students who face an emergency or illness toward the end of the semester to complete their work after the semester is over. If this happens to you, please contact me as soon as you can. Unless there is a compelling reason, you will not be given an incomplete for reasons that don't relate to an emergency or illness. Rather, you will earn the grade based on the points you have accumulated by the end of the semester. If you are granted an incomplete, we will work out a schedule for turning in missing work, and you will be expected to stick to that schedule. Any incompletes that are granted must be finished by the end of the next semester, or the "inc." reverts to an F. You will not be able to enter the next of your program without removing the incomplete.

ELECTRONIC ACCESS TO COURSE MATERIALS AND COMMUNICATION:

Important class documents and communication will be posted electronically. Once you register for the course, you will be automatically enrolled in iLearn (<http://ilearn.csumb.edu>). iLearn is an electronic tool that can be adapted for a variety of instructional purposes, including on-line discussions, the archiving of important course related documents.

EMAIL

I will send all email to your CSUMB email address. Getting your CSUMB is a **REQUIREMENT** of this course, as well as being Department and University policy. If you do not regularly check your CSUMB mailbox then you will need to set the preferences in that system to forward your mail to your primary email address. Not checking your email is *not* an acceptable reason for not being aware of information

that was provided in that form.

USE OF WRITTEN WORK

I retain the right to use work written for this class for teaching and research purposes unless you notify me otherwise. Any work that is used in such a manner will be done so confidentially — that is, names or other aspects that would identify the author will be removed. If you do not wish your work to be used in such a manner, you need to instruct me in writing (email is acceptable).

STUDENT COMPLAINTS

If you have a problem with the instructor or other department faculty, you are encouraged to first attempt to solve the issue directly with that person. If that is not possible, or the issue is not resolved satisfactorily, please use the Student Complaint Procedures. The Student Complaint Procedures for the Department of Teacher Education at CSU, Monterey Bay are intended to provide a clear and responsive process for addressing complaints that may arise among students participating in Departmental Programs. Furthermore, this process is designed to encourage and respect the abilities of students and faculty/staff to resolve issues in a constructive manner. A copy of the complaint procedures can be obtained from the Program Handbook.

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

There will be two main projects you will be working on in this course. There will be a group research project that will be done by the whole class. The other is work toward preparing your proposal for your individual research study.

Much of the group project work will be done in class. By doing the project together I can model and scaffold the process of doing and writing a qualitative research project, and we will be learning from each other. The end product will be an actual research paper that hopefully can be submitted for publication. Because we are doing a group project, active class participation and attendance is particularly crucial.

For your individual research project most of the actual work will take place outside of class, however class lectures, discussions and readings will be oriented to preparing you to carry out these assignments. We will be sharing some of these in class as well to gain from the feedback from our classmates.

1. Observation (for the group research project)

During this observation, use the concepts and methods you have been reading about and hearing about in class. These tools should guide your observation. For example, you should be observing using such concepts as culture, holistic perspective, emic and etic perspective, nonjudgmental orientation, symbolism, and so on. You should also be using such methods as participant or non-participant observation, relying on written information as is available. You will be taking detailed notes.

You want to bring back a description of what you saw with enough detail that the reader feels like they were there or pretty close anyway. Therefore, a description of the place or context, the people and what they were wearing to the degree that it is helpful for an understanding of the context and to bring veracity to the picture. More to the point—what were they doing.

Provide a write up of your notes. These notes should be primarily the thick description of everything you say, with minimal inference and interpretation. If you do have inference or interpretation, please identify it clearly as such. You may want to include some tentative interpretation or analysis at the end as an analytic memo to provide a written record of these ideas for further discussion and development as the study progresses.

2. Interview (for the group research project):

To do this paper you are to conduct an interview of 30 to 60 minutes. Unless the participant objects, the interview is to be audio-recorded. This interview will be used as data for the group project. Before the interview you should have a set of questions that will guide you (these will be developed together as a class). However, remember that these are guidelines, and to use your intuition and follow the lead of the

interviewee in tailoring, adapting, and changing your questions as the interview takes place. Think about the suggestions from the class readings in preparing for and engaging in your interview. Furthermore, it is important to respect the time frame agreed upon at the beginning of the interview. About 5 minutes before the end, you probably want to get to some concluding questions.

For this assignment you are to provide a transcript of the interview. If you were not able to audio record the interview, base the transcription on the detailed notes you took during the interview, using exact quotes where possible, and paraphrasing where such exact quotations are not possible. Again, you may want to include some tentative interpretation or analysis at the end as a sort of memo or notes to provide a written record of these ideas for further discussion and development as the study progresses.

3. Initial Findings/Analysis paper (for the group research project) (800– 1,200 words)

In this paper you are to write up the results of our findings based on your interview and observation. It should be organized to tell the story of the data. However, it should *not* be a chronological retelling of the events themselves, but rather a summary of the major ideas that you draw from the data, organized around those ideas, using pertinent quotations to substantiate the points. Like any good essay, an introductory paragraph and a concluding paragraph will generally make the paper stronger. **Write this as if you were writing the findings section of a qualitative study based on this observation and interview.**

4. Human Subjects Form (individual topic)

You are to have completed a human subjects form for your proposed study. The form is available at the following link: <http://grants.csumb.edu/site/x3358.xml>. Submit the completed form to me as a word document. Include consent and/or assent forms as well as any protocols or other instruments where appropriate.

5. Methods (individual topic)

The methods section should be 2 to 4 pages in length. The methods section provides the details about how you plan to conduct your study in as much detail as possible. Where does the study take place? How was the site chosen? Who are the participants? How were they chosen? What methods were used to collect the data? What methods were used to analyze the data? For the purposes of this class this must be in the form of qualitative research.

- Restatement of research question.
- Research method: What method are using (e.g. qualitative case study; participant action research...). Why is this the most appropriate method given your question and your role?
- Procedures: If this is an action research project, or there is an intervention, describe the process or method of the action or intervention.
- Setting: What is the context, place that you are studying. Why is this an appropriate setting in which to study your research question. This is *not* just the place where the interviews are done.
- Participants: Who are the people that are part of your study—do not name individuals, but rather describe their role in setting, how many there are, and if the study is of a subset, how you selected that subset, as well as any other relevant attributes of the participants. Why are these the appropriate people for your research question?
- Data Collection: Type of data to be collected (e.g. observations, interviews, school newsletters, other artifacts). How the data will be collected (e.g. how many people interviewed, who they are, of what length. How many observations, when and where...). You might describe why you are using the methods.
- Data Analysis: This tends to be the most difficult section to write. Here you describe how plan to go about sorting, categorizing, analyzing and generally making sense of the data. Did you come to the study with pre-set categories and coding scheme, or will they come after collecting the data, or a combination of the two? Will you use cards, charts, computer programs to help you organize the data? How will you make sense of the data once you have it organized? Are you using a particular conceptual framework to understand the phenomenon being studied.

7. Findings and Conclusions (group research project)

a. Findings (≈1500–3000 words)

This is the meat of a research paper. This is where you describe what you found based on the observations and interviews done by the class, and discuss and interpret those findings. The organization of this section will be based on the themes that you developed in doing the research. The analysis in this section stays at the level of the findings from your research.

- Restatement of the research question.
- Summary of main findings.
- Introductory paragraph that describes and outlines the findings section.
- Subsections on each of the major findings. Here you state the findings. Use the data (observations and quotations, etc) to support, illustrate and give evidence for this findings. Then conclude by explaining how this data supports and demonstrates your claim (data never speaks for itself).
- Conclude by summarizing again the major findings.

b. Conclusions (≈400–800 words)

Here is where you move from the specific findings to the implications of those findings. Some areas that can be discussed here:

- Generalizability: What implications might this have for those in similar situations or for similar populations (need to make these in tentative language)
- Connect your findings to previous research. How did this research confirm, disconfirm and/or extend previous research findings.
- What questions did this research raise for further research?
- What implications did your findings have for your own practice?
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*number of words guidelines are given only as suggestive as to what is typical, rather than as actual requirements.

Course Readings Bibliography:

- Boswell, L., & Nugent, P. (2002). Freeing the child: Using action research on visual learning strategies to develop children with autism. Paper presented at the AERA.
- Casale-Glannola, D. (2005). Aid: An inclusion resource for student teachers, cooperating teachers, and supervisors. *Teaching & Learning: The Journal of Natural Inquiry & Reflective Practice*, 19(2), 77-99.
- Martin, R. A. (2004, April). Case study of an action research project. Paper presented at the American Education Research Association, San Diego, CA.
- Meier, N. (2001). Peer writing response groups in a language minority classroom. *Teaching & Learning: The Journal of Natural Inquiry & Reflective Practice*, 16(1), 7-16.
- Meier, N. (2006). Decision making in schoolwide professional communities (chapters 3). Unpublished Dissertation, Stanford University.
- Merriam, S. (1988). Writing the case study report. In *Case study research in education* (pp. 185-206). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Mills, G. (2002). *Action research: A guide for the teacher researcher* (2 ed.): Prentice Hall.
- Pardo, L. (2006). The role of context in learning to teach writing. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 57(4), 378-394.
- Peshkin, A. (1991). In search of subjectivity—one's own. In *The color of strangers, the color of friends* (pp. 285-295, appendix): University of Chicago Press.
- Peshkin, A. (2000). The nature of interpretation in qualitative research. *Educational Researcher*, 29(9), 5-9.
- Peoples, S. (2008). *Gang culture within the classroom*. Unpublished Thesis, California State University Monterey Bay,.
- Sirin, S. R., & Fine, M. (2007). Hyphenated selves: Muslim-American youth negotiating identities on the fault lines of global conflict. *Applied Developmental Science*, 11(3), 151-163.
- Smith, I. (2000). Culture clash in the English as a second language classroom: Russian students in America. *The CATESOL Journal*, 12(1), 93-116.
- Smith, J. S., Malkani, J., & Dai, D. Y. (2005). Student perceptions of the case method in educational psychology and its impact on teaching and learning. *Teaching Educational Psychology*, 1(1).
- Staples, L. (2003). To what extent can regional art and literature serve as an academic framework to connect csumb freshmen to their off-campus housing? (methodology). Unpublished Master's Thesis, California State University Monterey Bay.
- Whitin, P. (2006). Meeting the challenges of negotiated mathematical inquiry. *Teaching & Learning: The Journal of Natural Inquiry & Reflective Practice*, 21(1), 59-83.
- Young, P. (2003). 'rapid writing ... Is my cup of tea': Adult high school students' use of writing strategies. *Teaching & Learning: The Journal of Natural Inquiry & Reflective Practice*, 17(2), 66-79.

Regarding the University Mandatory Work Furlough:

For the academic year 2009-10 CSU employees are required to participate in a Furlough Program initiated by CSU Chancellor Reed to help offset the \$564 million revenue shortfall of the California State University. Most faculty, staff, and administration members have been assigned a furlough equivalent to two work days per month, during which time we are prohibited by contract from doing CSU-related work. On three occasions during the fall semester the entire campus will be closed and in other instances campus administrative offices will be closed. Similarly, on several occasions faculty will be required to be absent from campus and from doing CSU related activities. Consequently there will periodically be times during the semester when I am unavailable for consultation by phone or e-mail or in person during normal office hours.

Moreover, because we will be required to have less classes than normally, we cannot proceed as if it were business as usual. According to the Preamble of the CSU 7-28-09 Furlough Agreement with the California Faculty Association, "cuts of this magnitude will naturally have consequences for the quality of education that we can provide." In this light, I will adjust course assignments (homework, readings, quizzes, tests, etc.) to reflect an equitable and proportionate reduction to the amount of classroom time lost.

Furlough Days (campus closed)

Tuesday, January 19

Friday, February 15

Wednesday, November 25

Additional furlough days on which I will be unavailable:

Friday, March 5

Monday, March 8

Tuesday, April 6

Friday, May 7

GRADING

Your final grade will be based on:

<u>Points</u>	<u>Assignment</u>	<u>Due Date</u>
15	Observation Assignment (group project)	
	Interview Assignment (group project)	
	Preliminary findings Analysis	
10	Human Subjects Form (individual study)	
30	Methods Section (individual study)	
30	Findings and conclusions (group project)	
15	Participation	Ongoing

Grade Distribution

<u>Grading Scale</u>		
A+ 100-99	A 98-93	A- 92-90
B+ 89-87	B 86-84	B- 83-80
C+ 79-77	C 76-74	C- 73-70
D+ 69-67	D 66-64	D- 63-60

DISABILITIES

Students with disabilities who may need accommodations should contact me by the third week of class. You are invited to visit during office hours, make an appointment by calling 582-3536, or email me at nicholas_meier@csumb.edu. You should ALSO, contact: Student_Disability_Resources@csumb.edu; Phone: 831/582-3672 voice, or 582-4024 fax/TTY; <http://sdr.csumb.edu>

