

Evaluation UV9102A and B 2023

The course in Qualitative Research Methodology gives an introduction to the fundamental principles of qualitative methodology and their applications. The course provides concepts and tools needed to consider the adequacy and suitability of different qualitative research methods relevant in the field of educational sciences.

The Qualitative Research Methodology course comprises two parts: an introductory part A which gives an overview of the current main directions in qualitative research and the standards for assessing the quality and credibility of such research, and part B which expands upon this and deals in-depth with qualitative data and different forms of analysis.

Part A is to provide an overview of different approaches to qualitative methodology and strategies for analysis and synthesis that draw upon these traditions. It also includes an informed discussion of how the credibility and quality of qualitative research methods can be assessed. The course gives priority to the issues of transparency, validity and reliability, as these apply to different qualitative methodologies.

Part B draws on the theoretical and methodological concepts of the basic section, and elaborates on these by exploring three main categories of qualitative data in-depth, i.e. interview data, observational data, and documents. This section discusses the relationship between different research problems and kinds of data, as well as contrasting different qualitative analytical approaches.

The 2023 version of both courses draws on the very positive experiences and feedback from prior courses. We had 23 participants attending part A, and 19 who also attended part B. In both courses, the group was active, well-prepared and asked many relevant questions during the course days. Some of the key success criteria that we also included this year are:

- a broad approach to qualitative methods with carefully selected literature
- a combination of theoretical and practical insight tailored to PhD candidates who are new in the field
- a combination of group work in carefully chosen groups (with methodological and institutional variation as key criteria) and more traditional lectures
- Key researchers in the field participate as experts on specific methods (Karseth, Silseth, Arnseth and Klette in 2023).

- Paper assignments (in both part A and B) that build directly on work done in the course
- An assignment where the PhD candidates share their own research design and methods, and receive feedback in groups.
- For part B we also organized a voluntary joint social event – Pizza at Union

As in previous years, the course leaders Monika and Marte have attended all sessions and tried to link to the different lectures by others involved in the course. We evaluated the course during each day, with a final oral feedback session in the end of part B. This year the feedback can be summarized in these points:

- The candidates appreciated the overall organization of the courses, and the variation between formats, as well as the different groups
- Talking about their own project was seen as particularly meaningful for several of the candidates, while others considered the critical readings of published articles as the “highlight of the course”
- The course was successful in providing an overview of a complex field, according to candidates
- The informal pizza gathering at Union was greatly appreciated and something we should keep doing
- The organization of all the literature in thematic or topic related groups works well, but some students would also like to know more about the links between specific lectures and the literature
- It was suggested that we next year could make the presentations written before the course available, so that all participants could get more familiar with each others work – something we will definitely consider doing in 2024
- Some candidates suggested that we should differentiate between texts you absolutely have to read, and those we recommend you read. This is also something we may consider for the 2024 course