This course provided the framework for a qualitative study. According to Bogdan & Biklen, “data are both the evidence and the clues”(p117). Dr. Taylor-Dunlop explained how qualitative research is “rich, deep and thick.” (Taylor-Dunlop, 2011 class notes) The course introduced us to necessary skills in collecting data for qualitative research.

As researchers, we gathered data to uncover patterns, themes and discrepancies. Once the researcher has completed the focus group and individual interviews the synthesis process begins. The researcher then compares and contrasts data. This analysis of the findings will ultimately guide the researcher in drawing conclusions and making recommendations.

Our first assignment was to collect data by observing a single subject and documenting our observations onto the field note template created by Dr. Taylor-Dunlop. We coded the observation using Theoretical Notes (TN), Observational Notes (ON), and Methodological Notes (MN). This process allowed us to practice methodology which will be useful in future qualitative research.

Our next assignment was to identify a problem which we observed in our professional capacities. We created questions for a focus group followed by more in-depth questions for individual interviews. The responses were critiqued to uncover patterns, themes, and discrepancies.

The course introduced us to the required skills as qualitative researchers. The resources and insights received from Dr. Taylor-Dunlop will prove invaluable as we navigate through our doctoral studies.