Approaches to Virtual Qualitative Research: An Online Module Series

Adoption Guide for Instructors and Supervisors

Introduction
The module series is a combination of both theoretical and practical learning. The modules explore how research could be conducted virtually to support the current and emerging research needs of students as well as in supporting those currently teaching qualitative research methods.

This adoption guide will familiarize you with the contents of each module (outlined in Appendix A) and the suggested process for adopting the modules offered in this series, within your course(s). These modules may be used in full or in part and in ways that best suit your pedagogical needs.

If you have any questions after reviewing this guide and the Module Series’ OWL site, please contact Constance Kyle (cvukson@uwo.ca).

Who Are These Online Modules For?
These online modules were created for:
- instructors of graduate-level courses to use or customize within their courses. Use within undergraduate-level course may be requested.
- supervisors of graduate students to use or customize as a guide to support their students in their thesis/dissertation work

What are the Overall Goals of the Online Modules?
This module series will:
- introduce various approaches to virtual qualitative research for learners to leverage within their existing or future research projects
- guide learners in building research skills and critical thinking
- explore how the virtual and non-virtual research methods intertwine—this is important for research development as virtual interactions are now embedded within everyday life
- give opportunities for learners to critically consider ethical, pragmatic, equity, and quality considerations when utilizing each research approach, which, in turn, can guide independent research projects
What is the Purpose of the Online Module Series?

These “standalone” online learning modules focus on topics that instructors of qualitative research methods courses may be unable to explore in-depth within their existing courses. Instructors can choose to incorporate all or some (or parts) of these online modules (potentially as part of the credit towards your course).

This module series can also be used by supervisors of thesis students to assist their students in their research or for professional development.

Accessing the Module Series

Incorporating one, some, or all online modules (or parts of them) into your course is as simple as sharing the OWL site link with your learners and informing your learners of which modules to complete—see the summary of the adoption guide for step-by-step instructions. BEFORE sharing the link to the module series (OWL Site) with your learners, review the modules yourself and choose what modules or parts of a module you want your learners to complete.

All instructors and learners must pledge to a Teaching and Learning Use Agreement before the lesson materials in the OWL site become visible. The pledge is available via a link in the “Module Series” tab in the OWL site. Please ensure learners are aware of this.

To self-enroll in the OWL site hosting the module series and to view the modules directly, click the link below. This is the SAME link that you will share with your learners to self-enrol.

https://owl.uwo.ca/portal/site/62d5b9ea-69d3-446e-ae79-9fa069a7219a

How Do I Integrate These Online Module(s) with My Course?

These modules are available for you to use directly or to customize in whatever way best suits your course, teaching and learners’ needs. The following are example strategies for integrating any module within your course.

1. Determine how you will incorporate the module(s) into your course.
   For example, will the module (or parts of it that you choose) be required as part of the credit towards your course or will they be provided to learners as a supplemental learning resource?
   • If completion of a module (or parts of it) are required for credit purposes, you may wish to assess your learners to ensure they have achieved the intended module learning outcomes. How you assess learning is completely up to you. For example, you may decide to assess learning with a nongraded or graded activity, assignment, discussion, and/or examination.
   • For your ease, these modules offer several assignments and discussion topics that you are welcome to use as is or to customize in a way that better suits...
your course needs. These activities and additional materials are available in the “Instructor Resources” tab in the OWL site.

2. Introduce the online module(s) to your learners and explain how the assigned module(s) relate(s) to your course learning outcomes (if applicable) to emphasize the value of the learning. An introduction can be shared via an announcement post made in your own OWL course site—a sample post is provided in Appendix B. Alternatively, you may find the following items helpful to include in an introduction post or announcement to the online module(s):
   - identify the assigned modules or parts of modules that learners must complete
   - share the OWL site link for learners to self-enroll
   - clarify dates by which they should complete the modules and any activities or assignments.
   - specify if learners must submit assignments (if applicable) to you via your course OWL site or other means (Ensure that learners are not submitting assignments in the Module’s OWL site).

3. Give opportunities for learners to discuss what they learned in the module to deepen their learning. See the available discussion topics and questions for online discussions in the “Instructor Resources” tab.

4. If applicable, provide feedback to learners about completed assignments or exams that connect to the learning.

5. Encourage learners to provide their feedback about their learning experiences with the modules by pointing them to complete the survey in the “Feedback Survey” tab.

6. Invite learners to complete the unassigned modules available in the series as supplementary learning if you feel this would be beneficial.

Please complete the feedback survey pertaining to your experiences as an instructor integrating the module(s) into your course or as a supervisor of thesis students. There is only one Qualtrics survey available in the “Feedback Survey” tab, but different questions will be asked depending on whether you select if you are an instructor-supervisor or learner within the Qualtrics survey.

Your feedback and your learners’ feedback will help SPGS consider how to improve the modules in the future.

For Instructors - Are There Other Suggested Considerations for Incorporating These Module(s) and How Might They Be Customized Further?

Teaching Presence While Learners Complete the Assigned Modules
Consider posting introductory and summary announcements for each module assigned. A sample announcement is available at the end of this guide.

Resources
Review all lesson materials, subtopics and industry videos (TedTalks or YouTube videos) to ensure they meet your course and teaching needs, and your learners’ needs.
• The lesson materials, required readings, and supplementary resources for each module can be customized to better suit your needs. If there are materials or subtopics already covered in your course, you can inform your learners to skip these subtopics or industry videos. You can also change the required readings as well.

• Consider incorporating a guest speaker with expertise or experience with virtual qualitative research within your discipline or field. The modules often discuss general empirical examples of the method or methodology being explored. Including field-specific examples that better reflect your course needs, program, or paradigmatic approach will improve the learning experience.

Activities
Review any embedded module activities (i.e., reflexive journaling, multiple choice, drag and drop activities) to ensure they meet you and your learners’ needs. Some of these activities may be found embedded within the interactive lesson videos. You can inform your learners of which activities to complete. We recommend encouraging learners to complete all of these self-assessment activities as they will help learners reflect on the lesson materials while completing the modules.

Alternatively, you may choose to treat the activities offered in the modules as graded assignments. For example, you might decide you want learners to submit responses to the reflexive questions sprinkled throughout modules as a reflexive journaling assignment (or part of one). Or you may request that learners provide you with a screenshot of their scores for any multiple choice or drag and drop activities.

Assignments
For your ease, several assignments were designed for each module that specifically align with each module’s learning outcomes. You may choose to incorporate them in graded or nongraded ways. These assignments can be implemented directly as is by uploading them into your OWL site or customized prior to uploading them to your OWL site (as mentioned previously). The files for all assignments created for each module are available within the Instructor Resources tab within the OWL site.

Key Considerations for Directly Incorporating Assignments from the Modules
• There are sometimes up to three options for assignments within each module:
  o You may opt to allow learners to choose between the menu of assignments OR provide one of the options to all learners to complete (as an example).
• It is recommended that you upload all relevant materials (instructions and rubrics) to your course’s OWL site rather than directing your learners to access the materials from the Instructor Resources tab since all the modules’ assignments are hosted there and your learners may become confused as to which assignment they need to complete.
• Clarifying submission and formatting guidelines for the assignments may be helpful.
• You may wish to adjust assignment rubrics (if you choose to use them).
• Determine if assignments are to be completed individually or in a group—adjust the assignment instructions as needed. Note that most of the assignments are currently structured to be completed individually.
• Consider if there is a need to provide tutorials and tool options for assignments (for example, do you want to allow learners to communicate using multimedia like audio files in discussion forums? Do they need instructions from OWL Help to know how to use discussion forums or assignment tools?)
In grading the assignment(s), you may wish for a peer review model, in which revising assignment files to reflect this may be necessary (since the current assignment files are structured for direct grading by an instructor).

- Additional considerations if incorporating peer review:
  - You may wish to activate the peer review feature in the assignment tool within OWL and ensure its settings are as preferred (e.g., anonymous versus not, can review feedback or not, etc.). If you are unfamiliar with this feature/tool, consulting the WTS Help Desk may be beneficial.
  - Assigning at least 3 learners per peer review with the average of the 3 grades being assigned as the “final grade” is a peer review model that you may wish to use.
  - Including a rubric to guide learners in grading can be helpful to ensure consistency and comfort
  - Crosschecking the differences between the 3 grades that are creating the average yourself (or having your TAs [if applicable] do so) is recommended. If a large deviation between grading is found, this can be a cue for an instructor or TA to possibly override the grade instead.

- Example peer review instructions:
  - “Once you are assigned discussion contributions to peer review, use the rubric below to grade each discussion contribution that you are assigned.”
  - “After completing peer review grading, submit your rubrics and grades to the peer review tool.”

**For Supervisors - How Can My Thesis Students Use These Modules?**

Supervisors may find the modules helpful for introducing students to various approaches to qualitative research and data analysis that might aid them in completing their thesis research. Supervisors can share the OWL link (above) with their students to self-enrol. Ensure your students complete the Teaching and Learning Pledge and that they know which module(s) or module elements to complete.

Supervisors are welcome to use any of the modules’ assignments (available in the “instructor resources” tab). Some assignments include creating an outline for a research proposal, which may benefit thesis students planning their research and could be graded on a pass or fail basis using the rubrics provided (or customized ones) as an example.

Please complete the feedback survey and encourage your thesis students to complete the feedback survey available in the “Feedback Survey” tab.
Contacts for This Module Series

Course Administrator
Constance Kyle
Administrative Assistant, School of Graduate and Post-Doctoral Studies
Constance can answer any questions that you have about the module series and adopting them into your course or for supervisors of thesis learners. Contact her directly at cvukson@uwo.ca.

Course Maintainer
Lorraine Davies
Associate Vice-Provost, School of Graduate and Post-Doctoral Studies
Lorraine coordinates updates to this module series. Any feedback or suggestions are welcome. Please offer feedback through the Qualtrics survey available in the Feedback tab within the Module Series OWL site or contact her directly at davies@uwo.ca.
# APPENDIX A: What is Offered in Each Module of the Online Module Series at a Glance?

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Modules</th>
<th>Learning outcomes</th>
<th>Learning Activities</th>
<th>Assignments:</th>
<th>Required Resources</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Foundations in Virtual Qualitative Research</strong> <em>(1 week of about 8 hours of student effort)</em></td>
<td>By the end of this module, learners should be able to:  * Recognize the need to adapt existing qualitative research methods and methodologies to incorporate virtual approaches.  * Identify and describe various methods and methodologies for conducting virtual qualitative research.  * Identify and distinguish the various research paradigms.  * Situate their research interests within a specific paradigm to inform the types of questions asked, methodologies used, and anticipated research outcomes.  * Understand and distinguish processes for generating new data using virtual qualitative methods and gathering pre-existing data that can be analyzed using virtual qualitative methods.  * Critically evaluate strengths and limitations of virtual research approaches.  * Examine ethical (and potentially ethical), logistical, and equity considerations when utilizing virtual research methods and methodologies.  * Critically assess and apply new learnings from this module within the scope of their research interests.</td>
<td><strong>Self-Reflection Activities (1 Hr)</strong>  Self-reflection questions are integrated throughout this learning.  <strong>AND</strong>  <strong>Reflexive Journaling (1hr)</strong>  Learners consider:  * How has this learning expanded your understanding on virtual qualitative research?  * Did the learning challenge some of your own assumptions about virtual qualitative research? Why or why not? If yes, in what way?  * How has this learning impacted/influenced your research interests and potential research plans?</td>
<td>Option 1: Critical appraisal of a research article that uses a virtual research approach  Option 2: 10 minute individual or group presentation  Option 3: Outline for research proposal</td>
<td>3 required articles/book chapters <em>(3 Hrs)</em>  * Lee, R. M., Fielding, N. G., &amp; Blank, G. (2017). Online research methods in the social sciences: An editorial introduction. In N. G. Fielding, R. M. Lee, G. Blank, The SAGE handbook of online research methods (pp. 1-12). SAGE Publications.  * Eynon, R., Fry, J., &amp; Schroeder, R. (2017). The ethics of online research. In N. G. Fielding, R. M. Lee, &amp; G. Blank (Eds.), The SAGE handbook of online research methods (pp. 1-17). SAGE Publications.  * Marotzki, W., Holze, J., &amp; Verstandig, D. (2013). Analysing virtual data in Flick U. (Ed.) The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Data Analysis. SAGE Publishers Ltd: City Road.</td>
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<td>Modules</td>
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<td>Social Media Research Part I - Foundations</td>
<td>By the end of this module, learners should be able to:</td>
<td>Self-Checks (.5 hours; no marks)</td>
<td>Option 1: Critical appraisal of a research article that uses social media research</td>
<td>Required Readings (2 hrs)</td>
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<td>for social media research</td>
<td>• Define social media and identify how pre-existing social media data can be used in qualitative research.</td>
<td>Multiple choice (10 questions indicated throughout video lessons. These multiple choices are for learners to self-assess their learning of the material and will not be graded.)</td>
<td>Option 2: Outline for research proposal</td>
<td>• The SAGE Handbook of Social Media Research Methods by Sloan and Quan-Haase, 2016. Chapter 1 (pg. 1-9) and Chapter 2 (pg. 13-26).</td>
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<td>(1 week of 7-8 hours of student effort)</td>
<td>• Formulate research questions that can be investigated using pre-existing data.</td>
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<td>• Qualitative and Mixed Methods Social Media Research: A Review of Literature by Chareen L. Snelson (2016).</td>
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<td>• Critically evaluate the strengths and limitations of Social Media Research</td>
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<td>OPTIONAL – schedule a guest speaker (1 hr)</td>
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<td>Custom Video Presentations (1.5 hrs)</td>
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<td>Industry Videos (YouTube + Ted Talks; 1 hr)</td>
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<td>Subtopics</td>
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<td>• What is social media?</td>
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<td>• Social Media within Academic Research</td>
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<td>• Social Media Research</td>
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<td>• Different types of social media platforms</td>
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<td>• Collecting data online versus generating data online</td>
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<td>• Why social media data is different from traditional data</td>
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<td>• The types of questions that can be answered using social media data</td>
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| Social Media Research Part II - Key considerations when designing research using pre-existing social media data (1 week of 7-8 hours of student effort) | By the end of this module, learners should be able to:  
- Recognize known ethical issues surrounding the use of these data and identify potential ethical issues.  
- Identify key considerations for data collection.  
- Critically evaluate the strengths and limitations of Social Media Research  
- Structure research projects to be ethically responsible. | Self-Checks (.5 hours)  
Multiple choice (10 questions indicated throughout video lessons. The multiple-choice questions are for learners to self-assess their learning of the material and will not be graded.) | Option 1: Critical appraisal of a research article that uses social media research  
Option 2: Outline for research proposal | Required Readings (2 hrs)  
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| Social Media Research Part III - Methods and methodologies for analyzing pre-existing social media data. (1 week of 7 – 8 hours of student effort) | By the end of this module, learners should be able to:  
• Critically evaluate the strengths and limitations of different methods/methodologies for analyzing social media data.  
• Plan to use virtual methods/methodologies to analyze pre-existing data.  
• Structure research projects to be ethically responsible. | **Self-Checks** (.5 hours)  
Multiple choice (10 questions indicated throughout video lessons. The multiple-choice questions are for learners to self-assess their learning of the material and will not be graded.) | Option 1: Critical appraisal of a research article that uses social media research  
Option 2: Outline for research proposal | Required Readings (2 hrs)  
• Pennington, D.R. (2016). Coding of Non-text data in Sloan, L., & Quan-Haase, A. (Eds.). *The SAGE Handbook of Social Media Research Methods*. SAGE Publisher Ltd: City Road.  
• Schreier, M. (2013). Qualitative content analysis in Flick, U. (Ed.). *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Data Analysis*. SAGE Publications Ltd: City Road  
OPTIONAL – schedule an expert guest speaker (1 hr)  
Custom Video Presentations (2 hrs)  
Industry Videos (Ted Talks; 0.5 hr) |

**Subtopics**  
• What is content analysis?  
• Key considerations when using content analysis  
• What is discourse analysis?  
• How do you conduct discourse analysis?  
• What is sentiment analysis?  
• How do you conduct sentiment analysis?  
• Analysis of non-text digital images  
• Qualitative approaches for analyzing digital images  
• Qualitative approaches for analyzing social media videos  
• Qualitative approaches for analyzing social media sounds  
• Qualitative approaches for analyzing music and audio  
• What is data sonification analysis?
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<td>Doing Ethnography Online (1 week of 9 hours of student effort)</td>
<td>By the end of this module, learners should be able to:</td>
<td><strong>Self-Checks/Self Reflection Activites (0.5 hrs)</strong> Questions for self-reflection as well as self-check activities are integrated throughout this learning. <strong>AND</strong> <strong>Reflexive Journaling (1hr)</strong> Learners consider: - How has this learning expanded your understanding on doing ethnography online? - Did the learning challenge some of your own assumptions about virtual qualitative research? Why or why not? If yes, in what way? - How has this learning impacted/influenced your research interests and potential research plans?</td>
<td>Option 1: Critical appraisal of empirical research article that uses online ethnography: Option 2: A written overview of one method within online ethnography research Option 3: Individual/Group PowerPoint Presentation of one research article/project that has used online ethnography</td>
<td><strong>Required Readings (4 hrs)</strong> - Hart, T., 2017. Online Ethnography. In The international encyclopedia of communication research methods, 1-8. John Wiley &amp; Sons, Inc. - Hine, C. (2017). Ethnographies of online communities and social media: Modes, varieties, affordances. In N. G. Fielding, R. M. Lee, G. Blank, The SAGE handbook of online research methods (pp. 1-16). SAGE Publications. - Taylor, T. L., Boellstorff, T., Nardi, B., &amp;., Pearce, C. (2013). Participant observation in virtual worlds. In. T. Boellstorff, B. Nardi, C. Pearce, T. L. Taylor, Ethnography and virtual worlds: A handbook of method (pp. 65-91). Princeton University Press. Doi: 10.1515/9781400845286. <strong>Custom Video Presentations (40 minutes)</strong> <strong>Subtopics:</strong> - What do we mean by doing ethnography online? - Common terminologies for doing ethnography online - How do paradigmatic values inform ethnographic research? - What types of data can be generated when doing ethnography online? - What types of methods can be used with doing ethnography online? - Defining the field, understanding culture and data analysis within ethnography - Logistical, ethical, equity, and quality considerations</td>
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| Virtual Participatory Action Research (1 week of 9 hours of student effort) | By the end of this module, learners should be able to:  
- Recognize the definition, central tenets, and principles of participatory action research  
- Recognize the paradigmatic values informing virtual participatory action research  
- Identify and describe various methodologies and methods that can be utilized within virtual participatory action research  
- Critically and innovatively consider how various methodologies and methods can be used within virtual PAR projects  
- Critically examine ethical, logistic, and equity challenges and potential considerations when carrying out a virtual participatory action research  
- Critically appraise participatory action research projects using digital methodologies for quality addressing the central tenets and principles of participatory action research  
- Innovatively propose ways in which existing participatory action research projects can be carried out virtually  
- Critically assess and reflect on new learnings within the scope of their research interests | **Self-Checks/Self Reflection Activities** (0.5 hrs)  
Questions for self-reflection as well as self-check activities are integrated throughout this learning.  
AND  
**Reflexive Journaling** (1Hr)  
Learners consider:  
- How has this learning expanded your understanding on participatory action research and virtual participatory action research?  
- Did the learning challenge some of your own assumptions about virtual qualitative research? Why or why not? If yes, in what way?  
- How has this learning impacted/influenced your research interests and potential research plans? | Option 1: A written critical appraisal of a research article that uses a virtual participatory research approach:  
Option 2: A written overview of one methodology within virtual participatory research  
Option 3: Individual/Group PowerPoint Presentation of one research article/project that has used participatory virtual research | **Required Readings & Webinar (4 hrs)**  

**Custom Video Presentations (1 hr)**

**Subtopics**  
- What is Participatory Action Research?  
- Principles of Participatory Action Research  
- Children with Disabilities as Co-researchers: A PAR that utilizes Participatory Filmmaking  
- Virtual Participatory Action Research: Definition, Methodologies, & Methods  
- How can we utilize highlighted methods and methodologies for virtual PAR? An Overview of Research Phases  
- Logistical, Ethical, and Equity Considerations
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<td>Foundations in Coding and Interpretation</td>
<td>By the end of this module, learners should be able to:</td>
<td>Self-Checks/Self Reflection Activities (1Hr)</td>
<td>Option 1: A written critical appraisal of a research article</td>
<td>Required Readings &amp; Webinar (3 hrs)</td>
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<td>- Critically assess the strengths and limitations of using computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS) in qualitative research.</td>
<td>AND</td>
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<td>• Birt, L., Scott, S., Cavers, D., Campbell, C., &amp; Walter, F. (2016). Member Checking: A Tool to Enhance Trustworthiness or Merely a Nod to Validation? Qualitative Health Research, 26(13):1802-1811.</td>
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<td>- Identify approaches to interpreting data.</td>
<td>Discussion (1Hr)</td>
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<td>Custom Video Presentations (3 hr)</td>
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<td>- Identify and devise strategies to address ethical, logistical and equity challenges to data analysis.</td>
<td>Students consult and discuss with their peers’ about data interpretations</td>
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<td>Subtopics</td>
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<td>- Critically appraise interpretations of data for rigour and quality.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• What is Data Analysis?</td>
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<td>- Apply core components from this module to transcribe, code and interpret your own data or existing datasets.</td>
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<td>• What is Transcription in Data Analysis?</td>
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<td>• What is Coding?</td>
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<td>• What is Computer-Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software?</td>
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<td>• I Have My Codes—Now What?</td>
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<td>• What is Logic Reasoning in Data Analysis?</td>
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<td>• What is Interpretation in Data Analysis?</td>
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<td>• What Ethical, Logistical, and Equity Considerations Should I Make When Interpreting Data?</td>
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<td>Arts-Based Research</td>
<td>By the end of this module, learners will be able to:</td>
<td><strong>Self-Checks/Self Reflection Activities (0.5 hrs)</strong>&lt;br&gt;Questions for self-reflection as well as self-check activities are integrated. AND <strong>Discussion (1Hr)</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Option 1:</strong> Students discuss with their peers’ questions pertaining to the rigor and quality of arts-based research <strong>Option 2:</strong> Students discuss with their peers questions about various TedTalks or other videos shown in the lessons.</td>
<td><strong>Option 1:</strong> A written critical appraisal of a research article that uses an arts-based research approach <strong>Option 2:</strong> Draft an outline of an arts-based research proposal <strong>Option 3:</strong> Reflexive Journaling</td>
<td>Required Readings &amp; Webinar (3 hrs)</td>
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|                              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |                                                                                                                                                                |                                                                                                                                                      | - What are the Foundations of Arts-Based Research?  
- The Strengths of Arts-Based Research  
- What are the Different Types of Arts-Based Research?  
- What are the Different Genres in Art-Based Research?  
- What are the Ethical, Logistical, and Equity Considerations When Using ABR?  
- How Do I Evaluate Arts-Based Research? |                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                      |
APPENDIX B: Sample Announcement Post to Introduce Modules within Your OWL Course Site

Note: The yellow highlighting below indicates pieces that need to be updated prior to sharing the announcement with learners.

Dear class,

Welcome to Week #: [name of module/unit/topic]. I hope you enjoyed a restful weekend. For this week, you will navigate to Approaches to Virtual Qualitative Research.

Once you’ve self-enrolled in this OWL site, you will need to navigate to the Learning and Teaching Agreement in the left toolbar to sign a pledge to gain access to the modules that I’m assigning to you.

After completing the pledge, please complete the following online module(s) by [date]:

- [Name of module]
- [Name of module]

This learning will support you in building your understanding and skills in conducting qualitative research by:

- [insert module outcomes from OWL site]
- [insert module outcomes from OWL site]
- [insert module outcomes from OWL site]

Achieving these outcomes will help prepare you to successfully complete the following upcoming activities and assignments in our course:

- [list activity or assignment and its due date]
- [list activity or assignment and its due date]

As you go through these assigned online modules, please ensure that you fully absorb the learning by:

- carefully following the lists of To Dos within the module(s)
- planning your week accordingly to keep your learning on track
- ensuring that you complete the self-directed activities and assessments within.

Overall this learning is important because [insert personal rationale for adopting the module series that connects to your course and your learners’ needs].

If you have any questions or concerns as you complete the learning, please contact me directly.

Please feel free to share any feedback about your learning experience. The link to an anonymous feedback survey is accessible through the “Feedback” tab in the Modules’ OWL site—your sharing will help us to continue to improve the learning experiences for future learners!

Thank you and happy learning,

[instructor name]