INTRODUCTION TO RESEARCH

UNIVERSIDAD DE CALDAS
FACULTAD DE ARTES Y HUMANIDADES
MAESTRIA EN DIDACTICA DEL INGLES

INTRODUCTION TO RESEARCH (G5F-0325)

Professor: Odilia Ramírez Contreras
E-mail: maestriaucaldas@yahoo.com

1. COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is the introduction to the research component of the master’s program and it will provide an overview of the principles and practice of the most common approaches used in EFL / ESL research, including both qualitative and quantitative methodologies. The course intends to discuss the strengths and possible weaknesses of some research methods, their ethical and validity-related issues, sampling, data collection, and some basic data analysis and writing techniques pertaining to research methods. The focus of the course is to introduce participants to the meaning and use of qualitative research in EFL and ESL settings and provide hands-on practical and realistic experience of varied qualitative data collection techniques. Attention is paid to developing the skills and knowledge needed to conduct observational procedures in real teaching contexts.

As an introductory stage, this course constitutes the foundation to equip graduate students with the tools to carry out research in the Colombian EFL context and to educate themselves as self-critical individuals participating, collaborating, and reflecting as active members of this regional teaching community. This course gives participants the opportunity to engage in a variety of learning activities such as workshops, oral presentations, group discussions, observational tasks, in which the sharing of ideas and experiences will enrich practitioners’ teaching artistry and encourage them to put qualitative research methods into practice. This course is weighted to practical sessions with which students will gain observational and interviewing skills, construct and administer questionnaires, and design their first research proposal.

2. GOALS

At the end of the course, the students will:

2.1 Have an understanding of the nature of research in language teaching settings.
2.2 Discuss ethical issues implied in qualitative research.
2.3 Be aware and critical of their teaching practices and, through reflection and self-assessment, grow professionally.
2.4 Have an understanding of the most common quantitative and qualitative research methods.
2.5 Identify topics, issues, and specific research problems or concerns through reflective discussion of class phenomena based on different data collection techniques.
2.6 Develop the skills required to undertake participant and non-participant observations, conduct interviews, facilitate focus groups, complete diaries/journals, and design questionnaires.
2.7 Conduct basic data analysis in order to determine the assumptions underlying qualitative data collection approaches.
2.8 Familiarize with qualitative research methods, including case study, ethnography, and action research, and the use of primary sources of information.
2.9 Develop research questions on the basis of data collection procedures.
2.10 Develop effective methodologies in conducting research in particular classroom practices in order to start defining research proposals.

3. METHODOLOGY

The course will be conducted through different teaching-learning activities in which participants, both professor and students, will take turns to lead discussions and contribute to the analysis of current issues in classroom research; among them:

- Group discussion
- Problem solving tasks
- Oral presentations
- Data collection assignments
- Diary/Journal completion
- Research proposal design

Most readings and assignments are to be completed before each corresponding session, and students are expected to critically draw their own conclusions in relation to their own experiences, needs, and research proposals.

4. CONTENTS

UNIT 1: Research foundations

1. Introduction to the nature of research
2. Ethical issues in research
3. Types of research designs
4. Classroom observation
5. Keeping research diaries or journals
6. Constructing questionnaires


Chapter 1 The nature of research


Chapter 2 Issues related to data gathering


Chapter 1 The selection of a research design


Chapter 3 Participant Observation


Chapter 7 Asking people about themselves: Survey Research
INTRODUCTION TO RESEARCH

UNIT 2 Approaches to Research

1. Quantitative Research
2. Qualitative Research
3. Characteristics of Qualitative Research
4. Ethnography
5. Case Study
6. Action Research
7. Mixed Methods procedures
8. Observational and non-observational data collection techniques
9. Interviews


Chapter 5 Designing a quantitative study
Chapter 6 Qualitative Research


Chapter 2 Finding your Focus


Chapter 3 Ethnography
Chapter 4 Case Study


Chapter 2 Definitions and processes: Action Research


Chapter 10 Mixed Methods Procedures


Chapter 4 Observational techniques for collecting action research data
Chapter 5 Non-observational techniques for data collection


Chapter 4 In-depth Interview
6. EVALUATION

Classwork (tasks, classwork, role-plays, discussions, etc.)

Data Collection Instruments (Diary entries, observations, questionnaire, protocols, etc.)

Oral presentations (Research methods, research proposals, reading reports)

Project: First draft of Research Proposal

Total 100%

REFERENCES


ADDITIONAL REFERENCES


