UNIVERSITY OF KENT

DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY

SP602 Researching People with Learning Disabilities 2009

Module Convenor

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Module Tutors

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Module Secretary

Ms Trish Barton, Tizard Centre, Hut 2, Room 2, ext. 7955, Email: P.M.Barton@kent.ac.uk

Time and Location

Spring Term, Fridays, 10:00 – 12:00, Seminar Room Hut 4, Tizard Centre

Summary Intended Learning Outcomes

- Establishing a rapport with a person with learning disabilities in a service setting
- Knowledge of work based service settings for people with learning disabilities
- Understanding the meaning of work for a person with learning disabilities
- Ability to use and critique qualitative and participatory methodology using experiential knowledge
- Achieving confidence and competence in research design, interview techniques and data analysis
- Understanding of ethical issues involved in interviewing people with learning disabilities, i.e. informed consent
- Ability to write an ethics proposal
- Skills in dissemination of findings both to an academic institution via a report as well as to a wider community via presentations

Introduction

The Tizard Centre

The Tizard Centre is one of the leading academic groups working in services for people with learning disabilities, mental health needs and the elderly in the UK. The Centre has an
extensive programme for consultancy and research, both nationally and internationally, as well as providing short courses, undergraduate and postgraduate degree and diploma programmes at the University of Kent. Further information about the Centre’s work can be obtained from the Centre Business Manager, Tizard Centre, Beverley Farm, University of Kent, CT2 7LZ. Tel: (01227) 764000 ext: 4144. Fax (01227) 763764; Email: tizard-info@kent.ac.uk

FORMAT OF THE MODULE

The module is a 12 week course, taught in weekly 2-hour sessions on Fridays between 10.00 a.m. – 12.00 a.m. in Hut 4, Tizard Centre, Beverley Farm. The first session is on the 23rd January 2008. Students are expected to attend all sessions and a record of attendance will be kept. The main teaching methods utilised will be lectures and discussions with an emphasis on individual, pair and small group work for practice skill development in the clinics.

During the first few weeks of term students will attend the Friday morning teaching sessions which will provide an introduction to research methods, research with people with learning disabilities, the importance of work, ethical issues in research, methods of interviewing, data analysis and interpretation. Contact will be made with a volunteer during the initial few weeks and interviewing will take place, probably between weeks four and eight. Clinic sessions will assist students in preparing and analysing their interview data and presenting the findings in the form of a report as well as disseminating results with service users to other students (possibly from local schools). There will be opportunities to discuss any issues raised from visiting services and from interviewing. Students will have the opportunity to view past projects and discuss the project report requirements in depth or raise any questions relating to the writing up of the report. An evaluation of the course will take place during one of the final sessions.

Assessment

Your attention is drawn to the following information to be found on the departmental website:

- Regulations relating to coursework deadlines
  www.kent.ac.uk/psychology/studying/learning-resources/assessment.htm#deadlines
- Guidelines on plagiarism and duplication of material
  www.kent.ac.uk/psychology/studying/learning-resources/plagiarism.htm
- Guideline Criteria for Assessment of Stage 2 and 3 Undergraduate Work
  http://www.kent.ac.uk/psychology/studying/learning-resources/criteria2.htm

Assessment details

This course is assessed by the submission of two pieces of written coursework: a Literature Review and a Project Report as follows:

a) A Literature Review 1500 words in length, and ethical proposal which will count for 20% of the final result.

b) A Project Report 5000-6000 words in length, which will count for 80% of the final result.

Two copies of both pieces of written coursework must be submitted. The literature review and project must be submitted to Kate Scott or Vicky Ward in the Student office of the Department of Psychology, Room KM1.13, Keynes College, Tel: (01227) 764000 ext. 7061. The course convenor’s name should be included on the cover sheet, which should also state the number of words in the coursework. Both pieces of written coursework are due in by:
- Literature Review – Friday 27<sup>th</sup> February 2009 by 12 noon to Psychology Dept, Keynes College
- Project Report – Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> April 2009 by 12 noon to Psychology Dep, Keynes College

Both pieces of written work must be submitted on their respective submission dates.

The Literature Review

This review is worth 20% of the final module mark and consists of a summary and critical discussion of the literature on work and people with learning disabilities and on ethical issues concerning researching people with learning disabilities. It should be 1,500 – 2,000 words in length. Reviews more than 500 words over the limit will have 5 marks deducted and those more than 1000 words over the word limit will have 10 marks deducted. High marks will be given to work that makes reference to the breadth of literature suggested in this module outline, and shows an ability to synthesise this literature for the purposes of undertaking a new contribution to the field.

This review may be used as the predominant part of the literature review required for the project report described below. This is a strategy for helping students to manage the workload of the course more effectively by ensuring they are conversant with the literature before embarking on the empirical part of the study. This literature review should be set out in a manner similar to literature reviews in academic journals and be referenced in the same way as the project report below. The review must be typed in Arial or Times font size 12. Spacing should be either 1.5 or double. Side margins should be 2.5cms in width. Typing should be on one side of the paper only.

The date for submission of the literature review is Friday 27<sup>th</sup> February 2009 at 12 noon.

Further guidance on this review will be provided in class sessions. These will be returned with marks and feedback within approximately 3 weeks to enable students to make use of this for the writing of the final project report.

Title of Literature Review:

*With reference to the relevant literature describe the issues faced by people with learning disabilities in relation to work. Pay particular attention to both methodological and ethical issues. Submit an ethical checklist with your essay (the checklist will not be included in the word count).*

The Project Report

The second piece of work is worth 80% and consists of a project report of between 5,000 and 6,000 words in length, the requirements of which are set out in detail below.

*Write a project report outlining an intervention used to enable people with learning disabilities to understand both formal and informal ‘rules’ associated with work. The report should provide information collected from a person with learning disabilities using a semi-structured interview. Reflections on collecting, and analysing data as well as supporting participants to disseminate the results (via presentations and posters) will also be included. The ethical issues involved should be considered and a critical evaluation of both the data and methods used to collect it provided.*
Notes for Guidance

1. Write your project assuming that the reader knows nothing about the topic or the process that you went through. This means that you should describe and explain clearly WHAT, WHY, HOW and WITH WHOM you conducted the project, WHAT the findings were, HOW they might be interpreted, and WHAT conclusions may be drawn from them. You can assume that the reader is familiar with the language and concepts of psychological research.

2. Do not name anywhere in the project either the specific location in which the study was conducted, or any individuals who participated. These must be anonymised.

3. The convention for research reports is to use passive, impersonal forms as "It has been argued..." or "It was found that..." For this report when reporting your experiences in gathering material for the project it might be more appropriate to use the first person as there may be times when expressions such as "I think" or "We found that" are acceptable. This is because of the qualitative nature of the methodology and need to include one's own biases, power dynamics and influences on the interview process within the report itself (reflexivity).

4. The normal format for reporting a piece of work of this kind would include:

   1. Title
   2. Abstract
   3. Introduction
   4. Method/Process
   5. Findings and dissemination
   6. Reflexivity
   7. Discussion
   8. Conclusion
   9. References
   10. Appendices

   **Title**
   This should contain in one sentence the briefest possible specific description of your project. Do not be vague.

   **Abstract**
   This should be a brief (no more than 200 words) description of what you did, what you found and what you concluded. Leave writing this to the very end.

   **Introduction**
   This brief section should provide an overview of the context of this piece of research, what you did in the research and the reasons for doing it drawing attention perhaps to a significant aspect of the study which set it apart from previous work in the area. Make reference to other similar research if possible. As with all research paper introductions it is a brief summary of the research and what was found.

   **Literature Review**
   This section should describe the background and context to the project in terms of existing relevant research and literature. Ensure you substantiate any factual assertions with references. It is here that you can use the review you wrote for the first assessment as this will become the basis for this section. Ensure that you reference sources fully in a recognised style, e.g., Harvard.

   **Method/Process**
   This should provide a "nuts and bolts" account of exactly what you did and why. This section needs to be thorough and precise so that the research process is transparent to your readers.
Findings and how you have disseminated these
The main function of this section is to describe precisely what your findings were and how they were obtained e.g. methods of data analysis. Note: some tables and other raw data should be included as an appendix rather than being in the main text of this section. Make sure you clearly label all tables and graphs so that they make sense on their own independent of the text. Do not begin to interpret your data in this section. You will also need to briefly report on how your results were disseminated.

Reflexivity
Here you need to write about how your expectations, prior knowledge, attitudes to people with learning disabilities, biases etc affected the interview situation, process, power dynamics and end results. You also need to reflect on the dissemination process here.

Discussion
This is where you should interpret your findings and identify any conclusions that may be drawn from them. It is also the place in which you should discuss the impact of the method chosen on the findings. You will also need to discuss how the dissemination process has added to the research report. Make sure that the conclusions you draw are valid i.e. fit your findings!

Conclusion
A final conclusion to the report to sum up.

References
Make sure the list is comprehensive and accurate. For all work cited in the text (but not for work studied which is not cited) full details should be given at the end of the paper, as in the references given on the module reading lists which follow (i.e. authors, date, title, source, pages).

Throughout the text the following conventions should be used; Primary source material used in written work i.e. material that you have actually read should be referenced in the conventional way quoting the name and date in the text, as in the following examples:

Regardless of the type of interview, there is always an image of the research subject lurking behind persons placed in the role of interview respondent (Holstein and Gubrium, 1995).

Sociolinguist Charles Briggs (1986) argues that the social circumstances of interviews are more than obstacles to respondent’s articulation of their particular truths.

Secondary sources, which you have not read directly but have been quoted in a text you have read, should be referenced in the text as follows:

Writing up findings from interview data is itself an analytically active enterprise (Brown, 1992, cited in Reissman, Hart and Propp, 1987).

Appendices
They may be useful for presenting information which may be too detailed to be included in the main body of the text e.g. raw data or detailed transcriptions.

Confidentiality / Anonymity
The name of the person interviewed and their place of work should not be used at any point in the project report, including the appendices. 5 marks will be taken off any project that has breached participant confidentiality / anonymity.
Please note: The report and all the associated material must be typed.

Writing up your project is a substantial piece of work. Avoid the temptation to pad it out - it will be long enough anyway. The essential requirements are that it should be concise, clear and comprehensive. **The project should be between 5,000 and 6,000 words in length. Projects that vary from this by 500 words will have 5 marks deducted. Projects that vary from the word limit by 1000 words or more will have 10 marks deducted.**

**Submission Details**

The report must be completed and handed in by **12 noon on Thursday 9th April 2009 to the Psychology Student Admin Office in Keynes.** Although the lecturers will try and help you complete the work as the course progresses students need to ensure they keep up to date with work set in order for this deadline to be realistic.

No projects will be accepted after the deadline except in exceptional circumstances which must be negotiated with the module convener and the student’s tutor.

**Two copies of the project report must be submitted to the Psychology office.**

Students should note that marks given for projects are not negotiable and will not be changed by special pleading.

One copy of the project report is retained in case of inspection by the external examiner and the other is available to be picked up by the student once marked.

**Module Evaluation**

You will be asked to provide feedback on this module by completing a module evaluation questionnaire. The questionnaires will be considered at a special meeting of the departmental Learning and Teaching Committee and the minutes of the meeting will be published on the departmental website at www.kent.ac.uk/psychology-local/minutes/ltc/index.htm.

**Main Texts –**

Rachel I’ve put these in alphabetical order and added a couple of my own references on interviewing people with learning disabilities

Di Terlizzi, M (1997) Talking about work: I used to talk about nothing else, I was excited and it got a bit too much for my parents. *Disability and Society* **12**, 4, 501-511,


future aspirations. *Disability and Society*, **17**, 7, 741-758


**Teaching Programme:** The following timetable is presented to provide milestones by which to finish work. However unforeseen issues related to fieldwork sometimes occur which means the sessions may vary in order. All Lectures taught by Dr Michelle McCarthy.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Session</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>23(^{rd}) January 2009</td>
<td>Introduction to module Introduction to topic i.e. the importance of work to people with learning disabilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30(^{th}) January</td>
<td>Qualitative methodology including having a go at interviewing each other and transcribing the tape</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6(^{th}) February</td>
<td>Interviewing people with learning disabilities including preparing (mentally and practically) for ‘going into the field’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13(^{th}) February</td>
<td>Research ethics, including completing an ethics proposal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20(^{th}) February</td>
<td>READING WEEK - Fieldwork: 1(^{st}) meeting with participants, establishing rapport, gaining consent and interview. Remember to Transcribe your tape!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27(^{th}) February</td>
<td>Clinic – how do I code data? how do we disseminate findings?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6(^{th}) March</td>
<td>Clinic – analysis of data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20(^{th}) March</td>
<td>Clinic – writing up report preparing for presentations and writing up reflections</td>
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<tr>
<td>27(^{th}) March</td>
<td>Finish writing up project</td>
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<tr>
<td>3(^{rd}) April</td>
<td>Dissemination – presentations to Tuck By Truck</td>
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<tr>
<td>9(^{th}) April</td>
<td>Submit Project to Psychology Dept. by 12 noon</td>
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<tr>
<td>10(^{th}) April</td>
<td>Good Friday – no lecture,</td>
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**Session 1**
This session is an overview of the structure of the module and the aims. We shall discuss the small-scale research project that the module is structured around. We will also investigate the importance of work to the quality of life of people with a learning disability and the particular issues faced by individuals in gaining and maintaining work including understanding and abiding by the rules and regulations at work.

**Reading for this session**
N.B. All readings listed will be invaluable for the writing of your project report and for the understanding of issues raised in class. It is therefore recommended that you read at least one but preferably more of the references given before each class in order to get the most from the classes and help for your writing up of the literature review and the project report.


Beyer, S. (1993) Supported employment, the fragile truth, LLAIS, 28, Spring 15-17


Ell, K (1996) ‘Social Networks, Social Support and Coping with Serious Illness: The Family Connection’ Social Science and Medicine, 42, 2, 173-183


Schwabenland, C. (1999) Introduction In Relationships ;in the lives of people with learning difficulties The Elfrida Society

Session 2:

In this session we shall explore the meaning and utility of qualitative research, comparing its merits to those of a more quantitative approach. We will also critically explore the issues of reliability and validity in relation to qualitative vs quantitative methods. We will begin to formulate an open-ended interview to help us ask people with learning disabilities what they understand by rules in their workplace, and what they think they should be. In class you will have a go at interviewing each other and learning about the pitfalls of transcribing tapes.

Session 3:

NB: During the course of this week, you are expected to get in contact with your potential interviewee to introduce yourself, the project and ascertain their willingness to participate and any resources you might need to aid the interview process
In this session, we focus on finalising the interview about rules of the organisation/work place. We will also contemplate how best to interview someone with a learning disability and discuss “setting the scene” for fieldwork, introducing yourself as interviewer and obtaining valid consent. Access to the field and appropriate resources to go with the interview will also be chosen. The rationale and use of keeping a diary, i.e. reflexivity will be introduced and we will discuss how best to code data. The same literature as outlined in Session 1 is relevant to this session.

**Reading for this session:**


Session 4:

N.B. YOU SHOULD HAVE CONTACTED YOUR INTERVIEWEE AND SET UP YOUR DATES FOR SUBSEQUENT INTERVIEWS BEFORE THIS SESSION.

In this session we will highlight the ethical considerations of doing research with people with learning disabilities, in particular looking at boundaries and power. Ethics committees will be introduced and we will complete an ethical checklist in class. You will later submit this checklist with your literature review.

READING WEEK – is fieldwork week – we expect you to have interviewed your participant and to have transcribed your tape before session 5!

Session 5.

THE CLINIC SESSIONS

These clinics are practice based and will focus on developing key skills in researching. Your interviews will provide the data that we will use to explore analysis, interpretation, reliability and writing up. Most work will be done in pairs and small groups.

In this session we will code the data and discuss how best to disseminate findings.

Reading for this session


Session 6

NB: You should have interviewed your participant and transcribed the tape!

In this particular clinic we will concentrate on analysis of your qualitative data using the qualitative tool ‘thematic analysis’ to draw out key themes from the interviews (i.e. the grounded theory approach). We shall also investigate the qualitative considerations we covered theoretically in previous sessions such as power dynamics, reciprocity and consider the important aspect of reflexivity which re-conceptualises the whole notion of ‘bias’ in the traditional sense. Any problems or concerns from the interviews will be given the opportunity to be aired. We will explore what the findings tell us so far. Finally we will discuss issues around supporting and involving participants to disseminate the findings using posters.

During the following week you need to visit your participant once again and support them to make posters of the ‘rules of work’

Reading for this session


Session 7: You must have supported your participant to have developed their own set or ‘work rules’ by the end of this week

CLINIC

In this session we will conclude on the findings and discuss ways of presenting them in the report. We will also concentrate on the reflexive data and how it might usefully be inputted into the project. We will discuss the ‘writing up process’ and students will have the opportunity to begin the practice of writing up in the class. We will begin to prepare for the presentations in session 10. Past project reports will be available for viewing for the sole purpose of illustrating appropriate layout.

Session 8.

In this session there will be a review of the whole research process from beginning to end and an opportunity to reflect on the main difficulties and successes of the process. Students should be prepared to get the most out of this session by being clear about any concerns and queries related to the writing up of the report so these can be used as the basis for discussion/feedback. In this session, the limitations of the study will be discussed and main conclusions reached.

Session 9: Following on from the previous week, this session will be devoted to the writing up process, checking that everyone has all the components necessary for the report due in on the 9th April. Final preparations will be made for the presentation session the following week. There will also be an evaluation of the module.

Session 10: Presentations to service organisation and any other interested parties

Dr Rachel Forrester-Jones
December 2008