

Welcome to the Communications module  
of EADM 894.

Your instructional team for this module:

Matt Arsenault (BA student, English, UofS)  
Liz Miller (MA student, English, Uof S)  
David Parkinson (Professor, English, UofS)

You are welcome to ask questions at any point during this seminar, which (with short breaks at 10:00 and 11:00) will likely take up the full three hours scheduled in the program.

The text of this presentation is available to you on request. To request a PDF, write to me at [david.john.parkinson@usask.ca](mailto:david.john.parkinson@usask.ca).

The Communications module focuses on a specific task.

In small teams (four people usually),

identify a framework and focus,

frame a research question,

select a method to design a project,

following this method, carry out your research

and write **and present a pitch**.

Your focus will *likely* be related to your experiential learning with locally-based organizations:

[Innovation Place](#)

[Whitecap Development Corporation](#)

[Greater Saskatoon Chamber of Commerce](#)

[Westcap Management](#)

[Canadian Light Source](#)

[Solido](#)

[City of Saskatoon](#)

To carry out this task successfully,  
you will need to have taken the following preliminary steps:

identify a theoretical framework within which to locate your study

select a method you will follow

establish roles, procedures, and goals within your research team

One purpose of today's seminar is to offer some advice in taking these steps.

A larger purpose for today's work is to direct you to carry out your research and prepare your final communication about its design, implementation, and results.

## Some basic questions

What is your theoretical grounding?

e.g., structural functionalism . . . feminism . . . conflict theory . . .  
symbolic interactionism . . . utilitarianism . . .  
organizational theory —  
contingency, situational, social network analysis . . .

For example, “My grounding is in situational theory, and especially situational crisis communication theory . . . **because** . . .”

Be prepared to start with [wikipedia.com](https://www.wikipedia.com)!

Record and cite your textual sources!

What is your method?  
quantitative? qualitative? mixed?

“Qualitative researchers stress the socially constructed nature of reality, the intimate relationship between the researcher and what is studied, and the situational constraints that shape inquiry. Such researchers emphasize the value-laden nature of inquiry. They seek answers to questions that stress how social experience is created and given meaning.”

Denzin, Norman K. and Yvonna S. Lincoln. “Introduction: The Discipline and Practice of Qualitative Research.” In *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research*. Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln, eds. 3rd edition. Sage, 2005, p. 10.

Quoted at: University of Southern California. USC Libraries. “Organizing Your Social Sciences Research Paper: Qualitative Methods.” *Research Guides*.  
<http://libguides.usc.edu/writingguide/qualitative>. Consulted 6 August 2018.

Three elements of qualitative design:

naturalistic (without manipulation, study focuses on real-world situations)

emergent (understanding deepens as situations change)

purposeful (sampling is aimed at insight)

For this slide and subsequently, the following excellent source was widely used:

University of Southern California. USC Libraries. "Organizing Your Social Sciences Research Paper: Qualitative Methods." *Research Guides*. <http://libguides.usc.edu/writingguide/qualitative>. Consulted 6 August 2018.

What method are you likeliest to use for the present study?

e.g., concept mapping . . . literature review . . .  
textual or linguistic analysis . . . survey . . . heuristic reasoning . . .  
questionnaire . . . structured interview . . . focus group discussion . . .  
  
direct observation . . . site visit . . .

## Principles underpinning the analysis of qualitative data:

- unique case orientation — the first level of analysis — “being true to, respecting, and capturing the details of the individual cases being studied”

(probably as far as the analysis can go for the present study — but see also *inductive analysis*, *holistic perspective*, and *context sensitivity*)

- voice, perspective, and reflexivity — the researcher “owns and is reflective about her or his own voice and perspective”

Whatever the method, what does success entail?

Sufficiently thorough preparation:

- preliminary research into the subject of study

- identification of a key focus

- careful design of investigative materials (such as interview questions)

Sufficient care and responsiveness in execution:

- consistency of approach,

- accuracy of note-taking (and other records of observation),

- and adaptability to changing circumstances or unexpected discoveries.

A successful study also depends on *informed consent*.

Specific information should be provided to research subjects (including interviewees) before they participate in a study.

This information should be provided in writing, on a form to be signed and dated by each participant, as follows:

## Informed Consent for Participants

1. The study involves research for the purposes of completing the requirements of EADM 894 at the University of Saskatchewan. This research involves a site visit and informal interviews. The research will be reported at a symposium on campus on 17 August.
2. Risks or discomforts are limited as far as possible. If an embarrassing or uncomfortable situation occurs during observation, the researcher may be obligated to document it.
3. No benefits, financial or otherwise, are offered to participants in the study.
4. If participants prefer, they may respond in writing to questions.
5. Participants will be identified by their official titles.
6. The risk of participation is deemed minimal; it does not exceed the probability of harm or discomfort ordinarily encountered in daily life.
7. Questions about this research project may be directed to Professor David Parkinson, University of Saskatchewan ([david.john.parkinson@usask.ca](mailto:david.john.parkinson@usask.ca)).
8. Participation is voluntary; refusal involves no penalty; the participant may discontinue at any point without penalty. Right is reserved to remove any participant from the study.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Dated \_\_\_\_\_

# Intermission

## Elements of excellent field notes:

1. Descriptive information: accurate documentation of factual data: date, time, settings, actions, behaviour, conversations
2. Reflective information: your own thoughts, ideas, questions, and concerns as you are conducting the observation

How do you achieve such excellence?

Prepare: prepare yourself by studying the organization in advance.

Practice: test out your note-taking skills in advance of the visit; plan out the structure of your notes (chronology? themes? specific prompts?).

Be precise: identify specific qualities by referring to objective, measurable characteristics. Describe the physical setting, the social environment, the participants; quote key phrases exactly.

Focus on the problem: arrive knowing your key question; keep your attention on the information that pertains to this question.

Record your insights and responses: don't assume you will just remember that thought that comes to you spontaneously during the visit! *Preliminary analysis is crucial.*

Register any impact you may have had on the situation you observed.

Take the **site visit** as an example of a potentially worthwhile method, in which reviewers examine an institution's self-study, interview staff, and conduct a first-hand review of the structure and effectiveness of the institution, with reference to its **vision and mission**, **priorities**, **strategy**, **programs**, **activities**, and **challenges**.

The site visit may produce decisions or recommendations — having to do, for example, with potential for investment or partnership.

When relying on direct observations,

**beware:**

the participants may have had the opportunity to customize their routines . . . just for you.

Now to turn from your process to your intended outcome.

The goal:

Each research team will make their **pitch**

(no more than **five minutes** with Q&A following)

at the Symposium on Friday, 17 August.

To reach this goal, you will be guided by your instructional team

— as a reminder, here are our names again:

Matt Arsenault (BA student, English, UofS)

Liz Miller (MA student, English, Uof S)

David Parkinson (Professor, English, UofS)

What should the **pitch** include?

1. A *title* for your study that answers these questions:

What are you studying?

What is the main focus of your findings?

2. Introduction: a brief *critical comment* on current theoretical and methodological thinking relevant to the topic you are studying

3. Your main *research question* —

3–4 sentences identifying the issue your study is designed to address and the evidence you are considering.

Here is an example of the core question on which this section might focus:

“What is Saskatchewan organization **X**’s immediate potential for international commercial partnership?”

#### 4. Your *motivation*:

2–3 sentences answering these questions —

What led you to choose this topic and focus on this aspect?

Why should this particular area be of special interest to your audience at this time?

5. The method to be used in carrying out the study together with some justification of your choice (4–5 sentences) — as discussed earlier.

## 6. A refinement of your perspective:

4–5 sentences that show something meaningful and persuasive about the focus and method you have selected, *as your experience has proven.*

It is highly valuable to offer a key finding here. This can be the climax of the **pitch**.

## 7. Your conclusion:

2–3 sentences reflecting on your project, its limitations,  
next steps . . .

In writing the **pitch**, you are preparing a script for a spoken presentation.

In the symposium, you and the other members of your team will be reporting on the way you worked together to carry out your research:

your selection of a theoretical framework,

how you came up with your question,

your choice and use of a method,

a key sample of your work,

and some preliminary conclusions.

The symposium will call for your careful preparation of your findings and special attention to the clarity and conciseness of your communication.

It won't work just to read out your full text.

You will need to address your audience.

Each member of the team will need to play a speaking role.

If you are using projected slides (not required or recommended), you can use no more than **two**.

# Intermission

You have only **five minutes** – really.

The chairperson will stop you if you go over time.

Questions will be limited; you will be expected to answer briefly.  
Again, time will be limited.

What are the goals of this exercise?

The presenters are audible and poised.

Their speech is emphatic and well-modulated.

The presentation displays the work of the whole team.

The question is clearly stated, well-focused,  
answerable, and worthwhile.

The motivation creates a strong personal connection  
between the team and the audience.

The method is shown to be well-chosen and effectively employed.

The key example provides a suitable climax.

What questions need to be answered affirmatively?

Was the presentation well-paced? completed within five minutes?

Did the presenters demonstrate strong teamwork?

Did the team answer questions clearly and authoritatively?

Did the team show that they have taken a substantial step toward answering an important question?

## Schedule of activities

- In the workshop this afternoon,  
prepare a team **resumé** and **contract** (more on this shortly),  
frame the research question,  
and select a method.
- In the workshop and clinic next Wednesday afternoon and evening,  
draft the **pitch** — and by the end of the evening,  
send your draft to your instructional team for review.
- In the clinic next Thursday evening,  
rehearse your oral delivery of the **pitch**.  
(This is the time for tough comments.  
Friday is the day for performance and celebration.)

Can we achieve that celebratory goal by next Friday?

It is your instructional team's commitment to guide you in doing so.

It is up to you to make timely use of our offer of advice and assistance.

What other resources do you need to complete your project?

It is your responsibility to let us know as promptly as possible.

Once you have formed groups, it is time to prepare two documents:  
the **resumé** and the **contract**.

Each of these documents should be agreed to by each team member.

Sending me (at [david.john.parkinson@usask.ca](mailto:david.john.parkinson@usask.ca))  
each of these documents as e-mail attachments  
with the messages cc'd to each team member  
will indicate that the group has reached unanimous agreement.

## 1. Résumé (with contributions from each group member):

- names of group members
- your academic specializations and interests
- preferred subject(s) for project
- relevant skills
- constraints? concerns?
- roles (create, challenge, coordinate, communicate)?

## 2. **Contract** (each group member contributing):

- Focus, question, and motivation:
  - What subject do we want to focus on?
  - What question are we considering asking about this subject?
  - What interests us in this subject?
- Goals:
  - What are our team goals for this project?
  - What do we want to accomplish?
  - What skills do we want to develop or refine?
- Expectations:
  - What do we expect of one another in regard to attendance at meetings, participation, frequency of communication, the quality of work, etc.?

## Evaluation

In EADM 894, the broader goals are

- (1) to expose students to leading foreign educational institutions
- (2) to facilitate interaction and networking with academics, business leaders, and policy makers.

Specifically, this course is designed to produce advances in the following areas:

- knowledge sharing
- research collaboration
- economic development
- business partnership development
- other collaboration opportunities

Within these indicators, the learning outcomes for the Communications module can be described thus:

- development of skill in analyzing, understanding, and engaging with new models of research collaboration, economic development, and business partnership
- increase in confidence, articulateness, and adeptness in engaging with academics, business leaders, and policy makers
- increase of skill and insight in analyzing the models and practices studied
- demonstration of competence in communicating questions, perceptions, opinions, and judgements

Here are the activities that can be measured as indices of overall success in the Communications module:

- articulation of research skills
- demonstration of overall communication skills  
(composition; oral delivery; response to questions)

For the last two activities, each of you will receive an evaluation that takes the following elements into account:

### Preliminary

- resumé (**complete tonight**) and contract (**complete Thursday night**)
- research, and writing (focus in workshops and clinics;  
**complete by the evening of 15 August**)
- rehearsal in the clinic **on 16 August** (prepared? professional?  
co-operative? effective?)

## Final

- symposium (17 August)

Were the presenters audible and professional?

Did the presentation display the work of the whole group?

Was the research question focused? answerable? important?

Was the motivation compelling?

Was the method apposite, well applied, and productive?

Was the illustrative example illuminating?

Was the presentation cohesive? well-paced? complete on time?

Did the group answer the audience's question persuasively?

The evaluations for this module will be conducted by its instructional team.  
This evaluation will feed into the overall assessment for EADM 894.