# BUS 2017 Dissertation proposal methodology section.

If you are undertaking qualitative research for your final year dissertation, then the section in your dissertation proposal should include the following discussions:

# Gaining access and sample selection.

If you are undertaking research in an organisation e.g. the place you work, then you must remember for ethical reasons not to name the organisation, instead simply give it a ficticious name or call it organisation X. You will need to discuss whether you have already been granted access by the organisation or whether you will be asking for access to undertake your research. You will also need to discuss your sample population and how you chose it. For an undergraduate qualitative project you will need somewhere between 3 and 5 participants to interview, and usually these are chosen through a purposeful sampling technique.

# Documentary data analysis.

What constitutes **documentary data?**

* Newspapers,
* journals,
* magazines,
* books,
* company web sites,
* audited accounts,
* wikis,
* blogs,
* Emails/ letters,
* diaries,
* notice boards, etc.

**Analytically focused documentary data**

This is data you collect specifically for the purpose of research, e.g. research diaries.

**Analytically filtered documentary data**

This is data from a broader reference base and is not originally created in relation to your research e.g. literature reviews.

**Primary documentary data**

Materials including interview transcripts, diary notes, anything directly produced for the research.

**Secondary documentary data**

E.g. newspaper article which can become primary if the newspaper article forms the basis of a research problem and is used to prompt focus groups or semi structured interviews.

## Where to start documentary data collection:

Newspapers often give ideas and can provide some factual data but is mainly politically slanted commentary.

* Check out organisation websites against what newspapers say.
* Look for research in newspapers then go to the original research materials.

This can help formulate questions for research and interviews.

Take care when using company generated materials; are they going to tell you the complete story which includes negative and potentially harmful materials?

Checking out an organisation before commencing research is essential as it makes you better informed and could illustrate particularly difficult areas you may wish to avoid when you are trying to gain access.

When inside an organisation with consent much more documentary data will be available:

* minutes of meetings,
* internal emails,
* notices on boards,
* sayings and cartoons on desks,
* your own diary,
* internal magazines etc.

**Issues surrounding documentary data analysis:**

* When was the document written?
* Who wrote it and why?
* Who paid for it?
* What is the document for?
* Who is the intended audience?
* Was it published?
* What were the responses to it?

## Reflexivity in Research.

The extract below is taken from:

**Wheeler, P. (2012) Sightless vision: reflections on a paradox, Culture and Organisation, 18:4, 285-304**

“Reflexivity as a methodological process has been defined as research that turns back upon and takes account of itself (Clegg and Hardy, 1996). Within the reflexive process researchers are required to consider two aspects of reflexivity; first the situated nature of knowledge production - that is, the political, social and institutional forces in play alongside the constructive effects of language (Alvesson et al, 2008, 480) - and second through an engagement with the problematic subjective influences of researchers and how their presence can influence the research process (Cunliffe 2004).”

# Key references:

Bryman,A. Bell,E.(2011) Business research methods. Oxford University Press. Oxford.

Cameron,S Price,D (2009) Business research methods : a practical approach. London : Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development,

Saunders,M Lewis,P and Thornhill, A. (2009) Research methods for business students. . Harlow : Financial Times Prentice Hall.

Silverman,D (2010) Doing Qualitative Research: A Practical Handbook. London : SAGE

Silverman,D (2011) Interpreting Qualitative Data: A Guide to the Principles of Qualitative Research. Los Angeles, London : SAGE