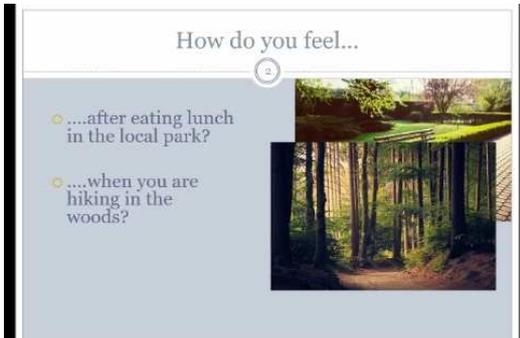




- ✦ Week 1 (w/b 19th September): Introduction to the background literature & qualitative research methods [↗](#)
 - ✦ This week you will gain an overview of what is expected in the mini project at the practical induction session. Use this week to familiarise yourself with the topic and the literature surrounding it. In the document "**Nature connectedness topic review**" you will find a literature review which should help you focus on the area of interest. This is a starting point and you are encouraged to go beyond this and find other relevant information. Support for searching for literature can be found in the **GU library moodle sites**.
- During this week you could also familiarise yourself with the different methods of collecting data qualitatively. Focus groups are only one method of data collection, there are many more. So have a look through these and consider why different methods might be more useful for certain things than other methods. Check out the texts in the **GU library reading list** for the qualitative mini project.
- A useful video clip with is a tutorial on qualitative research methods should give you a very good introduction to the differences between qualitative and quantitative research and the advantages of qualitative research some some kinds of research.
- ✦ **Main Tasks: Outline of the project**
 - ✦ Nature connectedness topic review [↗](#)
 - ✦ Reading List: Qualitative methods [↗](#)
 - ✦ Literature related to poor sleep [↗](#)
 - ✦ **Additional Information: The different types of qualitative research**
 - ✦ tutorial on qualitative research methods [↗](#)
 - ✦ Methods of qualitative research [↗](#)
 - ✦ Introduction to the project & Qualitative Research Methods Forum [↗](#)



Course code	PSYCH4057, PSYCH5031, PSYCH5055	
Title of course	Qualitative Research Methods Mini Project	
Course lead contact	Dr Maxine Swingler (maxine.swingler@glasgow.ac.uk)	
No of credits	10 credits (PSYCH4057). Comprises 25% of 40 credit course (PSYCH5055), & 50% of 20 credit course (PSYCH5031).	
Level of course (UG/PG) & year	UG and PG taught (MSc conversion course)	
No. of students	200-250 across 3 cohorts	
Platforms used (please tick all that apply)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moodle • Skype • GoogleDocs 	
Multimedia content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Text • Video – Camtasia screen recordings or mini-lectures • Video – recorded whole lectures 	Learning activities
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forums • Podcasts • Readings • Formative learning activities • Peer feedback • Written report (3000 words)

<p>Describe your online learning approach.</p>	<p>Undergraduate honours psychology students and PGT psychology students worked in small groups on a qualitative research project over a 10-week period. Blended delivery consisted of a weekly online digest of tasks and resources, three face-to-face teaching sessions, and communication with supervisors via synchronous and asynchronous discussion boards. Study-abroad students (around 20) worked remotely in small groups, collecting data using online focus groups as outlined by Stewart & Williams (2005). The project is assessed via an individual research report.</p> <p>Stewart, K. & Williams, M. (2005) Researching online populations: The use of online focus groups for social research. <i>Qualitative Research</i>, 5(4), 395-416.</p>
<p>Why was this online approach taken? i.e. what issue was it trying to solve?</p>	<p>The aims of the present project were to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use a blended learning approach to facilitate students' transition to independent project work ahead of final year projects/dissertations. • Use a structured approach of weekly tasks to facilitate group project work within a large and diverse cohort. • Deliver project supervision remotely to undergraduate students studying abroad.
<p>What advice would you give to other teachers taking this approach for the first time?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide an introductory lecture (15 mins or so) outlining what you expect from the students, in terms of using online resources, working independently, and deadlines. • It is more challenging to deliver the project to study-abroad students who feel overwhelmed by the move to a new university – and with no face to face communication. For these students regular emails (e.g. once a month) to see how things are going, and synchronous online Question and Answer sessions were helpful.
<p>What student support needs should be taken into account? i.e. how did you support their transition into this way of learning?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluation of the students' experience suggested that online materials and discussion boards were effective in supporting students. However, high levels of traffic on discussion boards highlighted students' reliance on staff (rather than student) replies to forum posts, and the frequency of forum posts suggested that students were not always completing activities on a weekly basis. • Study-abroad students faced challenges in balancing the project with the workload of the host university. To support this transition, we introduced flipped teaching and synchronous and asynchronous online support. This resulted in an increase in student satisfaction and grades compared to the previous year. • To help keep groups focused on completing the tasks week by week, in 2016-17 we introduced formative feedback to the class on their project materials at a mid-point in the 10 week project. This was positively received, and helped students stay on task, but the timeline for providing feedback to all groups was tight. • To facilitate peer support and reduce reliance on staff, Level 3 UG students had the option of receiving/providing peer feedback on student drafts of their project reports using AROPA. Students who completed peer feedback felt this was beneficial, although only 1/3 of the class participated.

What are the lessons for the institution and the sector from this work?

- The blended approach worked well in this context. If discussion boards and weekly activities are managed, these can aid students' transition to independent learning.
- The experience of study abroad students (online approach) was overshadowed by the workload of the students' host university and the new environment; this suggests that these students may benefit from further support in this transition, and an information session on the expectations of the distance mini project before students depart for their host university.

Future developments include the course being delivered wholly online as part of an MSc conversion course in Psychological Science, and more opportunities for peer feedback in the blended approach.