

**Submission to the 2007 Enhancing Learning Through the Use of Technology  
competition sponsored by the Information Technology Council's Subcommittee on  
Academic Technology**

**Project Title: Webinars with Blended Online Technologies:  
Radicalizing Instruction for Qualitative Research Methodology**

**Project Category:** Professional Development Grant

**Principal Investigator and Title:**

Judith Davidson, Ph.D.  
Facilitator for the Qualitative Research Network  
Associate Professor  
Graduate School of Education  
University of Massachusetts-Lowell

**Other Participants and Titles:**

Cynthia Jacobs  
Research Assistant  
Qualitative Research Network, NVivo  
Training Cadre Member  
University of Massachusetts-Lowell

Mitchell Shuldman, Ed.D.  
Director, Media Services  
University of Massachusetts-Lowell

**Mailing Address, Electronic Mail Address and Telephone Number of all  
Participants**

Judith Davidson, Ph.D.  
Facilitator: UML Qualitative Research  
Network  
Associate Professor  
Graduate School of Education  
University of Massachusetts-Lowell  
Rm 521, O'Leary Library  
61 Wilder St.  
Lowell, MA 01854  
[Judith\\_Davidson@uml.edu](mailto:Judith_Davidson@uml.edu)  
(978) 934-4611

Cynthia Jacobs  
Research Assistant: Qualitative Research  
Network  
Graduate School of Education  
University of Massachusetts-Lowell  
O'Leary Library  
61 Wilder St.  
Lowell, MA 01854  
[Cynthia\\_Jacobs@uml.edu](mailto:Cynthia_Jacobs@uml.edu)  
(978) 934-4611

Mitchell Shuldman, Ed.D.  
Director, Media Services  
University of Massachusetts-Lowell  
O'Leary Library  
61 Wilder St.  
Lowell, MA 01854  
[Mitchell\\_Shuldman@uml.edu](mailto:Mitchell_Shuldman@uml.edu)  
(978) 934-4561

Curriculum Developers: There will be six curriculum developers selected from the ranks of the QRN NVivo Training Cadre--doctoral and post-doctoral students with deep knowledge of qualitative research and qualitative research software.

**Campuses and Disciplines Involved:**

This project has been developed and will be conducted by the Qualitative Research Network (QRN) of the University of Massachusetts-Lowell (UML-QRN). This is a cross-campus organization of faculty, students, and staff with the aim of improving the use of qualitative research methodology. Founded in 1999, it has been active in promoting the use of qualitative research software (specifically the software package NVivo) through development of training and other supports. This is complex software to support organization and analysis of non-numerical data. It is used in diverse disciplines from criminal justice and health to education and regional development. Our members represent all areas of social research on campus. In addition to the campus site license and NVivo user support group, QRN-UML has developed a cadre of highly experienced NVivo users who provide faculty coaching sessions with the tool, as well as in-depth face-to-face training sessions using training materials developed on our campus.

**Total Amount of Funds Requested: \$7,800**

**Concise Summary:**

In order to address the world-wide need for advanced training opportunities in qualitative research methodology, we will develop a prototype Webinar that will blend the use of new online technologies into a dynamic teaching package. Our prototype Webinar will provide training in NVivo 7, the most widely used qualitative research software package on the market. Using a Web CT container, we will develop curriculum materials in Camtasia (a software that allows for new forms of multimedia

programming). The prototype course will be delivered using Horizon Wimba (a Web CT add-on) to allow real-time interactions and the ability to demonstrate software applications. To the best of our knowledge, no such online training for this package yet exists.

This project is sponsored by University of Massachusetts-Lowell's Qualitative Research Network (UML-QRN), a cross-campus coalition of faculty, staff, and students dedicated to improving the use of qualitative research methodology. Our interest in the Webinar as a teaching vehicle emerged from our years of experience developing on-campus support for qualitative research methodologies and the use of qualitative research software. With this prototype, we will be able to improve our services to campus and UMass system members, to reach out to researchers around the world who have methodological skills that could be shared through this new format, and to respond to the increasing number of national and international requests we are receiving for access to our qualitative research software expertise.

**Signature of Investigator's Department Chair or Program Director:**

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Anita Greenwood, Ed.D., Faculty Chair, Graduate School of Education, UML

**Signature of Investigator's Dean:**

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Donald Pierson, Ph.D., Dean, Graduate School of Education, UML

**Signature of Campus Provost:**

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John Wooding, Ph.D. Provost, University of Massachusetts-Lowell

## **Project Narrative**

The goal of the *Webinars with Blended Online Technologies: Radicalizing Instruction for Qualitative Research Methodology* project is to make use of a suite of new technologies in service of developing new teaching strategies for the delivery of advanced qualitative research methodological training. Qualitative research methodological information is required in diverse social science research arenas and in both commercial and non-profit sectors. Qualitative researchers have been slow to take up the use of new technological approaches, and our webinar model offers new opportunities for those in this field. This project is sponsored by the UMass-Lowell Qualitative Research Network (QRN), an interdisciplinary cross-campus group of faculty, staff, and students concerned with improving qualitative research methodology.

Our aim is to develop a prototype webinar that will provide training in NVivo 7, a qualitative research software package. Using a Web-CT container, we will develop multi-media curriculum modules in Camtasia, new software that allows for multimedia demonstrations of software applications. Our webinar will include the asynchronous multimedia learning modules created in Camtasia and synchronous sessions in Horizon Wimba, to allow real time audio and visual components, including demonstration of live software use. The curriculum materials and webinar format will be developed by a team of curriculum developers with advanced skills in qualitative research, qualitative research software, and technology applications. We will work in concert with the UMass-Lowell Media Center, Continuing and Corporate Education Program, and the Faculty Center to insure that our plans are integrated with these resources and program and to provide for broad dissemination to our campus, the campuses of the UMass system, and beyond. The UMass-Lowell QRN has a web presence and information about the project and opportunities for participation will be advertised there, as well as linked to other campus and system links.

The topic we have chosen to focus on for our webinar prototype—the Nvivo 7 software application—is particularly appropriate for several reasons. First, by demonstrating our model using a complex software application we will test the limits of all components, allowing us to learn about the challenges and limitations of the webinar technology. Second, NVivo 7 is the most widely used software package of its kind, and demand for training is very high. The UMass-Lowell QRN has developed extensive expertise in advanced use of this package, and users throughout the world find it difficult to access trainers with the level of use found at UML. Thus, we possess a skill that is restricted in availability and greatly desired by others. Third, the selection of a strong prototype topic, such as NVivo 7, will provide us with ample participants for testing the webinar model, paving the way for using it as the vehicle for delivery of instruction on diverse topics in advanced issues in qualitative research methodology. Finally, understanding how to use a complex qualitative research software like NVivo 7 in the Web CT/Horizon Wimba/ and Camtasia environments will provide UMass-Lowell qualitative researchers with the tools and experience for conducting long-distance consultation to other researchers and projects seeking assistance in research design in qualitative research software. We will be able to offer an important service without the need to travel to another site, which will greatly reduce the cost for those who need this service, as well as increase the number of people with whom we can consult, again further broadening our potential training audience.

Our initial webinar prototype will be offered as a non-credit seminar through the Division of Continuing Education and Online Programs at UMass-Lowell. It is our aim that it will become a self-supporting offering that can be used by graduate students, faculty, and others seeking training in NVivo 7. From this beginning, we hope to build a collection of one-credit graduate level webinars on critical topics in qualitative research methodology that could be combined in different ways to build the equivalent of three-credit courses. This would serve the needs of UML and non-UML audiences. We intend to build future webinars on topics in qualitative research methodology, drawing upon the special talents of UMass-Lowell and UMass faculty. In addition to bringing the skills and expertise of individuals from the UMass system to the larger world, we are also very excited by the possibilities these new technological tools offer for bringing outside skills and expertise into our system.

By the conclusion of our one year project, we will have developed a webinar prototype for graduate level training in qualitative research software (NVivo 7) and be well on our way to moving our webinar model into production with other qualitative research topics. We will have developed broad expertise in the use of cutting edge technologies that can support new ways of teaching and learning, as well as having developed methods for providing research design consultation through new online modalities. This type of consultation offers the potential for high-level training in demand among faculty at UML and far beyond.

### **Leveraging Funds**

By the conclusion of the grant period, our efforts will have begun to produce a revenue stream that can support future endeavors. Further, the development of the webinar offers us a powerful component that can be integrated into future proposals for funded research. In particular, we are in the process of developing a proposal for the National Science Foundation's initiative in the arena of qualitative research methodology that will combine aspects of the webinar approach we have described here. The activities of the UML-QRN have already garnered attention from broader qualitative research circles. This year alone, members of our group will be making presentations on our experiences with the use of qualitative research software at the Third International Congress on Qualitative Research, the New England Educational Research Organization, and the UMass Instructional Technology Conference. We intend to build upon this base of interest, disseminating information on our webinar approach to national and international audiences in this field at similar conferences and through publication in peer-reviewed journals.

### **Project Deliverable:**

The primary deliverable of this project will be our webinar prototype, an online course that blends the use of several cutting edge technologies for online course development (primarily Camtasia, Horizon Wimba, and Web CT) to deliver synchronous and asynchronous training in NVivo 7, a software package for qualitative researchers.

### **Dissemination of Project Results:**

Among qualitative researchers, our webinar approach is unique and, thus, a very timely development in this field. We plan to present the results of our project at

international conferences on qualitative research methodology. Participants at the following conferences would be particularly interested in demonstrations of this approach: International Congress on Qualitative Research, the Strategies in QSR-NVivo Conference, and the Computer-Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis (CAQDAS) conference. The UML-QRN is also in the process of making application to the National Science Foundation's special initiative in the area of qualitative research methodology and we will blend our webinar ideas into this proposal, which will have multiple dissemination components. Special efforts will be made to advertise and encourage webinar participation from members of the UMass system.

**Project Budget:**

Purchase of Camtasia licenses for webinar developers from the NVivo Training Cadre	\$1,800.00
Honoraria for 6 Curriculum Developers (Doctoral and Post-doctoral students with advanced expertise in qualitative research methodology and qualitative research software application)	\$6,000.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$7,800.00</b>

**Project Timeline:**

<b>June 2007</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assemble Curriculum Development Team,</li> <li>• Purchase Camtasia</li> <li>• Bring all members up-to-speed with functions of Camtasia, Horizon Wimba, and Web CT</li> <li>• Develop Curriculum Development Master Plan and assign specific tasks.</li> </ul>
<b>June-September 2007</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop curriculum components</li> <li>• Periodic review of progress</li> <li>• Work with UML's Continuing Education Program to advertise and enroll participants for the fieldtest of the prototype webinar</li> </ul>
<b>September 2007</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assemble webinar components and conduct internal tests of the product.</li> </ul>
<b>October 2007</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fieldtest the prototype webinar</li> </ul>
<b>November-December 2007</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review the results of the fieldtest</li> <li>• Revise curriculum modules</li> <li>• Provide an Interim Report to the UMass President's Office (12/15/07)</li> </ul>
<b>November 2007-January 2008</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue work with UML's Continuing Education Program to advertise and enroll participants for the pilot of the prototype webinar</li> </ul>
<b>February-March 2008</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pilot the prototype webinar</li> </ul>
<b>April-May</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Revise prototype and begin plans for development of future</li> </ul>

	<p>qualitative research methodology webinars</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with Continuing Education to establish the NVivo webinar as an ongoing seminar offering</li> </ul>
<b>June 1, 2008</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Final Report on Project to UMass President's office.</li> </ul>
<b>Throughout the project period</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop conference proposals for disseminating information on the use of the webinar for delivery of advanced training in qualitative research methodologies, including qualitative research software packages.</li> <li>• Provide regular updates to Qualitative Research Network membership and integrate webinar opportunities with the ongoing work of QRN.</li> </ul>

### **Principal Investigator, Participants and Qualifications:**

**Judith Davidson, Ph.D:** As facilitator of the UML Qualitative Research Network (QRN), Davidson will take the lead in overseeing this project and insuring that its opportunities and benefits are integrated into the QRN program. A qualitative research methodologist with many years experience in the arena of qualitative research software, Davidson is currently at work on a book—*Research Design in Qualitative Research Software*—to be released in 2007 by Open University Press. She is an experienced online instructor, familiar with Web CT and Intralearn formats. She was a recipient of the UMass--*Assessment of Student Learning with Technology Leadership Award*—for her work developing an electronic portfolio for use in online teaching.

**Cynthia Jacobs:** Jacobs is a doctoral student in the UML Graduate School of Education and an adjunct professor in UML's Community Psychology and Regional, Economic, and Social Development Departments. She has served as the research assistant to the Qualitative Research Network since Fall 05. She is the lead writer of the QRN NVivo training materials and has played a critical role in the development of qualitative research software support on the UML campus.

**Mitchell Shuldman, Ed.D:** As Director for the UML Media Services Shuldman has been an active collaborator with the Qualitative Research Network activities, assisting with the web page and videostreaming of campus speakers. He has already begun collaboration with the Qualitative Research Network on this project, introducing us to the Camtasia software and offering technical support for its use.

**Curriculum Developers:** Six curriculum developers with strong knowledge of qualitative research methodology, expertise in qualitative research software, and experience in technology-based instruction will participate in the development of the prototype webinar. All will be current UML doctoral students or recently graduated with their doctorate and all have been active participants in the UML NVivo training cadre.