

**Reflection – EDRS 812**  
**Qualitative Methods in Educational Research**  
**Dr. Joseph Maxwell**  
**Summer 2010**

First off, let me say that I truly enjoyed this course. I knew that when I took this course that not only would I learn qualitative research methods but I would have an opportunity to complete a pilot study. I had been thinking about doing a pilot study for nearly a year by the time I enrolled in EDRS 812, actually since I had been in Bath and had really started to dissect the English and Australian university perception studies that had been done in my dissertation interest area. Conversations that I had with Jeff Thompson over in Bath also sparked my interest in doing a pilot during the qualitative course as we had talked at length about various differences there might be when completing a study in the United States.

Despite the fact that I took this course over the summer term with a compressed schedule and knew the workload would be hard with completing working full-time, I devoured readings and went through HSRB review so I could complete my pilot study outside of Virginia. The timing with Code of Virginia § 23-9.2:3.8 - *Course credit; International Baccalaureate and Advanced Placement courses*, which was passed in April, made me not want to work in Virginia where credit for IB examinations was now mandated. I wanted to obtain data in a state where there was not legislation as Virginia's situation was new and implementation had not yet been decided by the State Council for Higher Education for Virginia. The HSRB review was important to me as well; up until my study there was no North American data on this subject. If I wanted to use this data in any way or share it at all, I needed HSRB approval. After both of these conditions had been met, I proceeded with my study.

As I worked, I found that some of the differences that Jeff and I had talked about in Bath did actually come to pass. America *definitely* is a different horse in IB for university admissions than the rest of the world. I did find schools that had no conception of the IB Diploma Programme and no policy but I also, in looking back, am not completely sure that my choice of state was to blame. Even though the state has fewer Diploma schools than Virginia, several of those schools are in close proximity to universities, which didn't quite explain the university officials' lack of knowledge and frankly, stunned me.

In terms of an artifact for this course, obviously, I have included the pilot study. In order to protect the anonymity of the institutions and the individuals I interviewed, I have changed all of the names throughout the text and the transcripts at the end. Only a few individuals know the state I went to and the schools I visited. I did have each individual sign consent forms as required by the HSRB

guidelines. In addition, I gave each individual an opportunity to check their statements. Four took me up on the offer. One never responded to the email I sent.