Qualitative Methods

ARL Service Quality Evaluation Academy
Austin, TX
May 29-June 2, 2005

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What do we mean by qualitative methodology?

★ The observer/researcher inseparable from the study
★ Consists of a set of interpretive practices that tries to make sense of a cultural context
★ Data sources, including: field notes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recordings, and memos to the self
★ Study things in their natural setting, attempting to make sense of, or to interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them
From where do qualitative methods come?

- Beginnings in Sociology: 1920s and 30s in the “Chicago School;” in Anthropology: in the studies by Boas, Mead, Benedict, Bateson, Evans-Pritchard, Radcliffe-Browne, and Malinowski
- Through seven moments (Denzin & Lincoln, 2001)
- Today: influences of poststructuralism and postmodernism from textual studies
What are the differences between qualitative and quantitative research?

- Multiple realities, not a single one “out there” to be discovered
- Value laden, subjective rather than objective
- Seeks closeness with the actor through interviewing and observation, rather than abstract relationships
- Inductive rather than deductive
- Samples purposeful chosen for diversity rather than random
- Thick descriptions rather than crisp and terse background information
- Comfort with contradictions, ambiguity
- Representations: ethnographic prose, historical narratives, first-person accounts, still photographs, life histories, biographical and autobiographical materials rather than mathematical models, statistical tables, graphs, third-person narratives
What data are collected by the qualitative researcher (researcher as bricoleur, montage maker)?

• Case studies, personal experience, introspection, life story, interview, artifacts, cultural texts and productions, observational, historical, interactional, and visual texts, statistics that describe routine and problematic moments and meanings in individuals’ lives.
• Inherently multimethod in focus: triangulation
What methods are used?

- Ethnomethodology, phenomenology, hermeneutics, feminism, deconstructionism, ethnography, interviews, psychoanalysis, cultural studies, survey research, participant observation
The Research Process

1: The Researcher as a Multicultural Subject
- history and research traditions
- conceptions of self and the other
- ethics and politics of research
The Research Process

2: Theoretical Paradigms and Perspectives

- positivism, postpositivism
- interpretivism, constructivism, hermeneutics
- feminism
- racialized discourses
- critical theory and Marxist models
- cultural studies models
- queer theory
The Research Process

3: Research Strategies

- study design
- case study
- ethnography, participant observation, performance ethnography
- phenomenology, ethnomethodology
- grounded theory
- life history, testimonio
- historical method
- action and applied research
- clinical research
The Research Process

4: Methods of Collection and Analysis

- interviewing
- observing
- artifacts, documents, and records
- visual methods
- autoethnography
- data management methods
- computer-assisted analysis
- textual analysis
- focus groups
- applied ethnography
5: The Art, Practices, and Politics of Interpretation and Presentation

- criteria for judging adequacy
- practices and politics of interpretation
- writing as interpretation
- policy analysis
- evaluation traditions
- applied research

(Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, p.20)
## Establishing Trustworthiness: A Comparison of Conventional and Naturalistic Inquiry

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criterion</th>
<th>Conventional Term</th>
<th>Naturalistic Term</th>
<th>Naturalistic Techniques</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Truth value</td>
<td>Internal validity</td>
<td>Credibility</td>
<td>Prolonged engagement</td>
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<td>Persistent observation</td>
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<td>Triangulation</td>
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<td>Referential adequacy</td>
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<td>Peer debriefing</td>
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<td>Member checks</td>
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<td>Reflexive journal</td>
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<tr>
<td>Applicability</td>
<td>External validity</td>
<td>Transferability</td>
<td>Thick description</td>
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<td>Purposive sampling</td>
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<td>Reflexive journal</td>
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<tr>
<td>Consistency</td>
<td>Reliability</td>
<td>Dependability</td>
<td>Dependability audit</td>
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<td>Reflexive journal</td>
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<tr>
<td>Neutrality</td>
<td>Objectivity</td>
<td>Confirmability</td>
<td>Confirmability audit</td>
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Adapted from Lincoln & Guba, 1985.
## Summary of Techniques for Establishing Trustworthiness

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Technique</th>
<th>Results</th>
<th>Examples</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prolonged engagement</td>
<td>Build trust</td>
<td>Length of time in the field</td>
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<td>Develop rapport</td>
<td>Avoiding premature closing</td>
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<td>Build relationships</td>
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<td>Obtain wide scope of data</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Obtain accurate data</td>
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<tr>
<td>Persistent observation</td>
<td>Obtain in-depth data</td>
<td>Purposeful, assertive investigation</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Obtain accurate data</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sort relevancies from irrelevancies</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Recognize deceits</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Triangulation</td>
<td>Verify data</td>
<td>Using different or multiple sources (interview notes, videotapes, photos, and documents), methods, or investigators</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Absence of data</td>
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<tr>
<td>Referential adequacy</td>
<td>Provide a “slice of life”</td>
<td>Unobtrusive measures such as brochures, catalogs, yearbooks, photos, memos, etc.</td>
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<td>Peer debriefing</td>
<td>Test working hypotheses</td>
<td>Formal or informal discussion with a peer</td>
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<td>Find alternative explanations</td>
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<td>Explore emerging design and hypotheses</td>
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<tr>
<td>Technique</td>
<td>Results</td>
<td>Examples</td>
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<tr>
<td>Member checking</td>
<td>Test categories, interpretations, or conclusion (constructions)</td>
<td>Continuous, formal or informal checking of data with stakeholders such as at the end of an interview, review of written passages, or the final report in draft form</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reflexive journal</td>
<td>Document researcher decisions</td>
<td>Daily or weekly written diary</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thick description</td>
<td>Provide data base for transferability judgments</td>
<td>Descriptive, relevant data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purposive sampling</td>
<td>Generate data for emergent design and emerging hypotheses</td>
<td>Maximum variation sampling that provides the broadest range of information based on relevance</td>
</tr>
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<td>Audit trail</td>
<td>Allow auditor to determine trustworthiness of study</td>
<td>Interview guides, notes, documents, notecards, peer debriefing notes, journal, etc.</td>
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Adapted from Lincoln & Guba, 1985.
The Audit Trail

I. A Rich History (p.44)
   A. Location of the base/the TAJ
   B. Base description/access
   C. Base housing description
   D. History of the base
   E. Mission of the base/Education of personnel
   F. History of the school district/funding

II. The High School (p.47)
   A. Perimeter Road
      1. Description
      2. Stadium
      3. Trees
   B. Campus description
   C. High school office description/secretaries
   D. Teachers/ lounge description
   E. Patio area description
   F. Main classroom building description/display cases

III. The Principal—“Do what's best for the kid!” (p. 51)
   A. Physical description
      1. “Conservative”
      2. “Clean-cut”
      3. “Honest”
      4. “Country Gentleman”
      5. “Western-cut clothes”
      6. “Never having a hair out of place”
      7. “Trim”

Excerpted from Skipper, 1989.
Grounded Theory:

1. The aim of grounded theory is to generate or discover a theory.

2. The researcher has to set aside theoretical ideas to allow a ‘substantive’ theory to emerge.

3. Theory focuses on how individuals interact in relation to the phenomenon under study.
Grounded Theory:

4. Theory asserts a plausible relation between concepts and sets of concepts.

5. Theory is derived from data acquired through fieldwork interviews, observations and documents.

6. Data analysis is systematic and begins as soon as data is available.
Grounded Theory:

7. Data analysis proceeds through identifying categories and connecting them.

8. Further data collection (or sampling) is based on emerging concepts.

9. These concepts are developed through constant comparison with additional data.
Grounded Theory:

10. Data collection can stop when new conceptualisations emerge.

11. Data analysis proceeds from ‘open’ coding (identifying categories, properties and dimension) through ‘axial’ coding (examining conditions, strategies and consequences) to ‘selective’ coding around an emerging storyline.

12. The resulting theory can be reported in a narrative framework or as a set of propositions (Dey, 1999, pp.1-2).
The End