

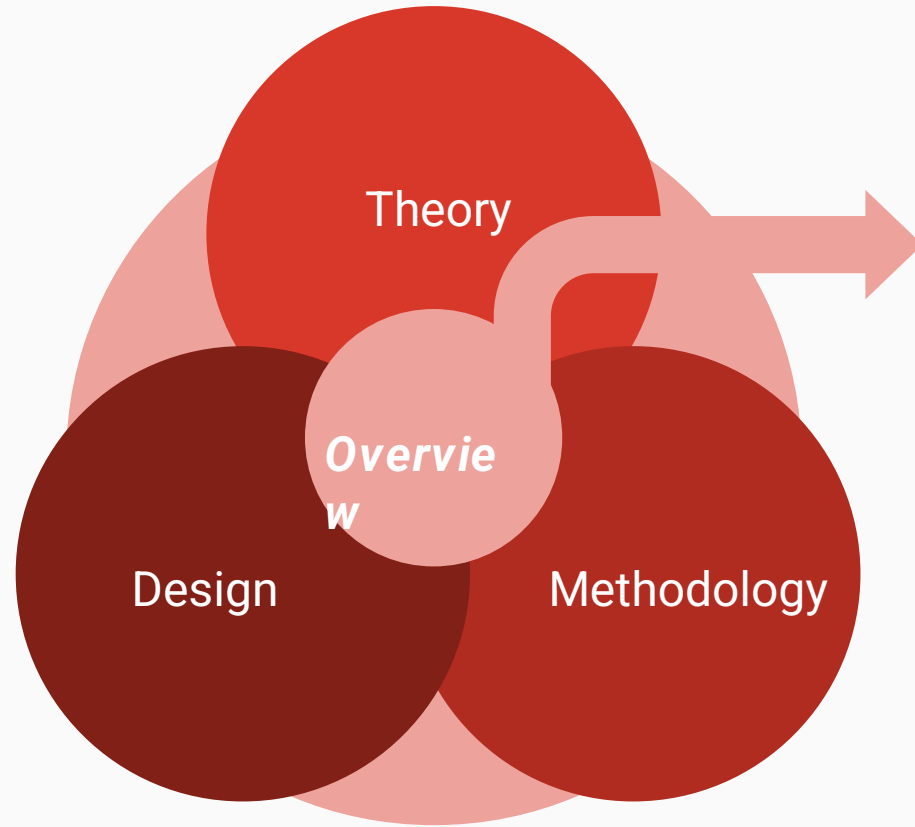
An Overview of Qualitative Research: Theory, Design, Methodology

Dr. Annamary Consalvo, Associate Professor

The University of Texas at Tyler

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An Overview of Qualitative Research

Differences between qualitative and quantitative research..... *a quick review*

Qualitative - refers to lived experiences of people who experience a phenomenon

Qualities of....

Characteristics of....

Leads to more understanding of what it is like for people in a given circumstance

Quantitative– refers to investigation of size/impact on large groups of people

Amounts of....

Is the “amount” large enough to “be significant” to many people....

Leads to better understanding of large scale trends.

Qualitative Research Focus....

- Focused on meaning

Qualitative researchers seek to gather meaningful data

Examine perceptions, motivations, and experiences that are significant (meaningful) to people

- Rather than focusing on numbers and statistics, qualitative research analyzes texts (written word, images), talk (spoken word, conversations), and interactions (encounters, events)

Examines social processes, not probabilities or predictions

- Qualitative research is an iterative and you could say, creative craft; no single “recipe” for qualitative research

Words Matter.....

Qualitative

The word “quality” as in quality of life, quality of a given lived experience.

How, why, what, and in what way kinds of questions.

Does not seek to assign “truth” to all situations.

Quantitative

The word “quantity” as in how much of X that is under study.

Asks about *intensity of degree*; what is the generalizable “truth” in this matter across the board.

PURPOSE

Qualitative

The purpose is to explain and gain insight and understanding of phenomena through intensive collection of narrative data. Generate hypothesis to be test, inductive.

Quantitative

The purpose is to explain, predict, and/or control phenomena through focused collection of numerical data. Test hypotheses, deductive.

Qualitative research.....

Attributes	Qualitative	Quantitative
<i>Approach to Inquiry</i>	Subjective, holistic, process- oriented	Objective, focused, outcome- oriented
<i>Hypothesis</i>	Tentative, evolving, based on particular study	Specific, testable, stated prior to particular study
<i>Research settings</i>	Controlled setting not as important	Controlled to the degree possible
<i>Sampling</i>	Purposive: Intent to select “small ” not necessarily representative, sample in order to get in-depth understanding	Random: Intent to select “large” representative sample in order to generalize results to a population

Take just a couple of moments for this exercise...

Empty your pocket, purse, or wallet, drawer, coin jar, nuts and bolts jar, or junk box or grab a deck of cards.....

Sort contents

Now, sort contents ANOTHER way

(lather, rinse repeat)

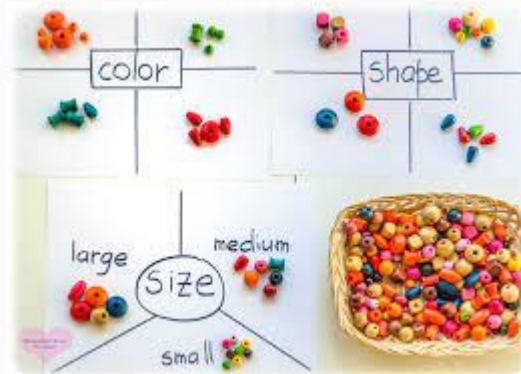
AND sort contents ONCE AGAIN ...

THEN... ..

Enter into the chat – how many ways did you sort and why? What surprised you about “your findings”?

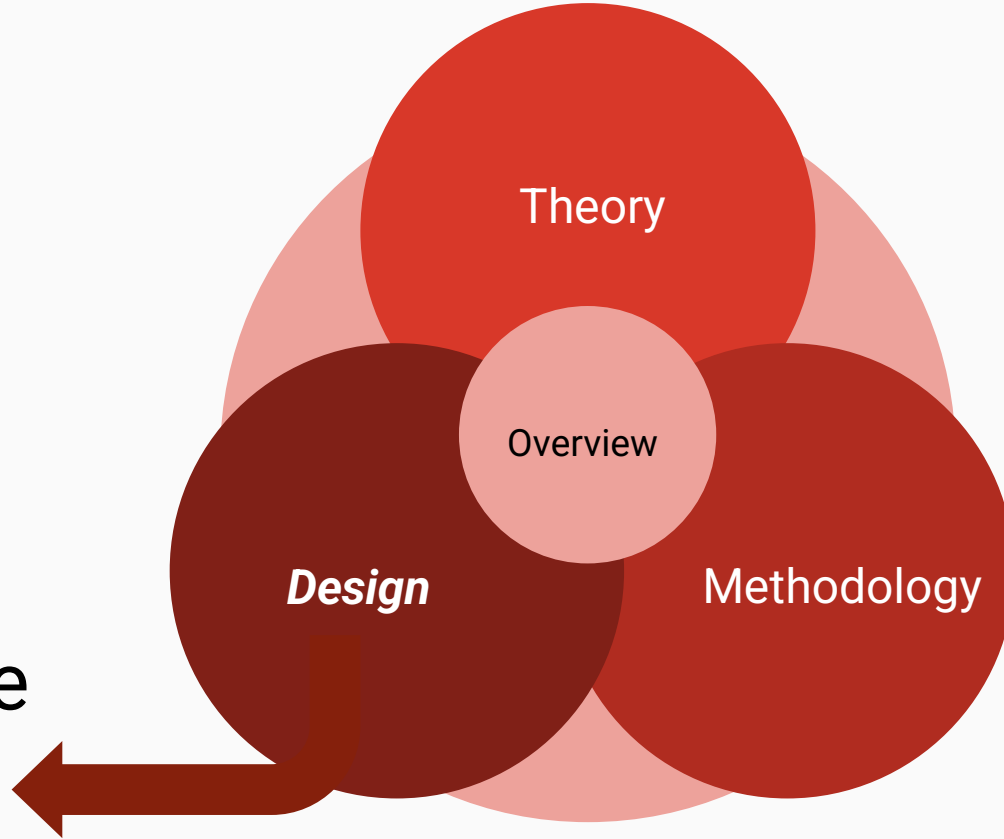


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Design

Common
Qualitative
Designs



Six Common Qualitative Designs (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016)

Basic Qualitative Research

- 1) How people interpret their experiences
- 2) How they construct their worlds
- 3) What meaning they attribute to their experiences

To *understand* how people make sense of their lives and their experiences (p. 24).

Phenomenology

Both a 20thC philosophy (Husserl, 1970) and a type of qualitative research.

All about the “lived experience”

The task is to depict the essence or basic structure of experiences such as love, anger, betrayal and the like – without judgement – in order to understand the other’s “lived experiences” (p. 26).

Ethnography

Focus on human society and culture.

*One must spend time with the group being studied (aim for cultural description) (p. 29).

*Immersion in the site for extended periods

*Emic vs etic perspective

*“thick description” (Geertz, 1973) is key

Must use the lens of culture.

Six Common Qualitative Designs (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016)

Grounded Theory

Focus is on building theory FROM the data (Glaser and Strauss, 1967).

Characterized by:

*Theoretical sampling (p. 30)

*Constant comparative method

Aim is to identify patterns in the data, then arrange in relation to each other to come up with a theory based on a “core category” through which all others are connected. (pp. 32-33)

Narrative Inquiry

Making sense of stories.:“To make sense of and interpret a text, it is important to know what the author wanted to communicate, understand intended meanings and to place documents in a historical and cultural context (Palmer, 1969, pp. 136-137 in M & T, pp. 34-35).

Hermeneutics (e.g. interpretation).

Different types: Biographical, Psychological, Linguistic

Qualitative Case Studies

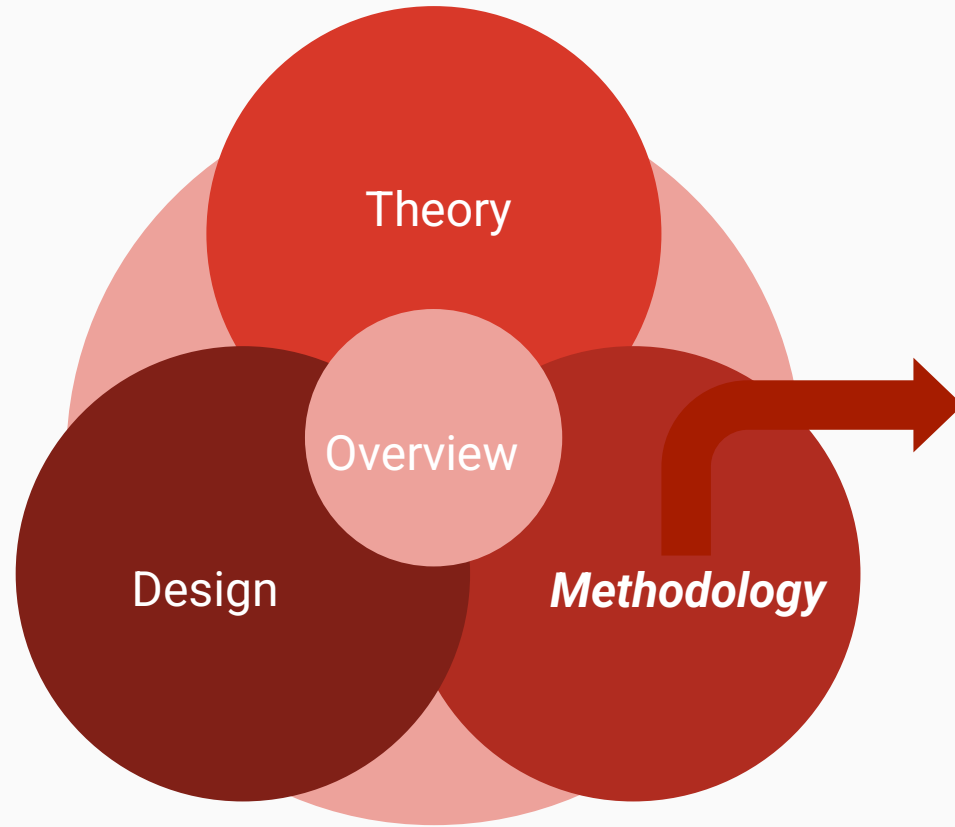
“A *case study* is an in-depth description and analysis of a bounded system” (p. 37)

It is “a design particularly suited to situations in which it is impossible to separate the phenomenon’s variables from the context (Yin, 2014, in M & T., p. 38)

Unit of analysis determines if it is a “case”. Qualitative is determined by methods used.

Historical; Biographical; Comparative

Methodology



Methods
Commonly
used in
Qualitative
Research

Common Qualitative Methods

Interpretive

Ethnographic

Data Sources

Observations

Insider \leftrightarrow Outsider

Participant observations

Interviews > Transcripts

Loosely structured

Unstructured

Field notes

Narrative

Document/content analysis

Film, audio recordings,
transcripts

Discourse Analysis

Conversation Analysis (the
study of turn-taking)

Non-verbals

Qualitative

Researcher log to support an
Audit Trail and “thick description”

Memo writing: Methodological,
theoretical, early hunches

Noting frequency

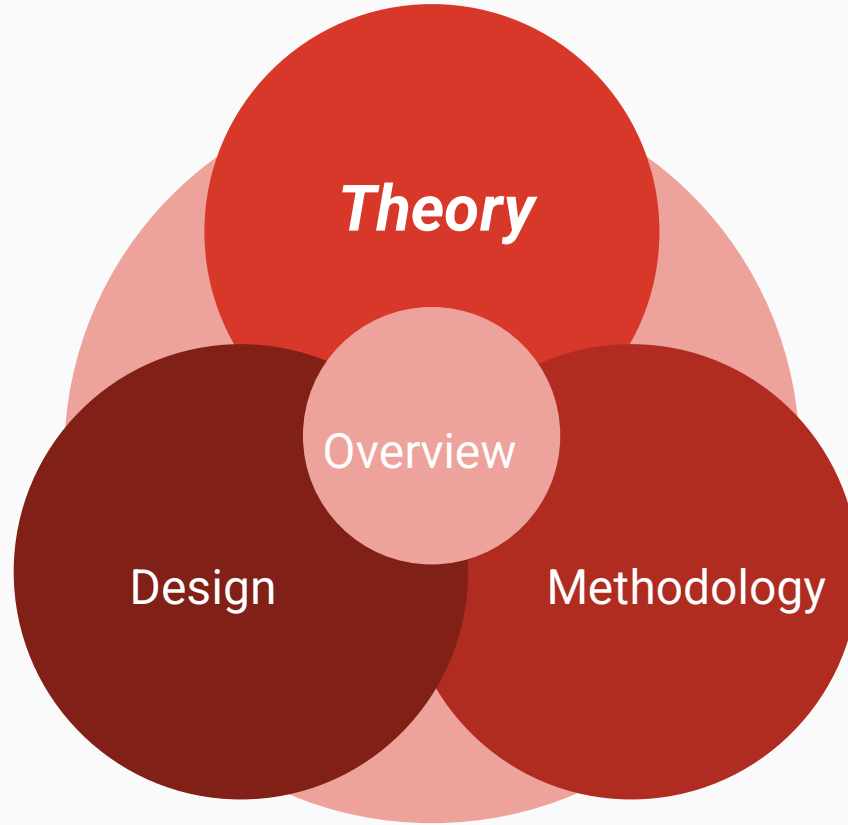
**Open coding > refined codes >
Themes**

Open-ended survey

Focus group interviews

Theory

Theory as lens in qualitative research



Approaches

Basic theoretical approaches in qualitative research

Post-positivist: Social world is patterned; researchers seeks to discover causes and effects

Interpretive: Social world is constructed through meaningful action; researchers seeks to understand actors' motivations, perceptions, and experiences

Critical: Social world is constructed through power relations; researcher seeks to unveil, critique power/privilege

Postmodern Disrupt, problematize, Questions monolithic views of reality

Examples of how approach can vary given one topic

Interpretive/qualitative

Experiences of non-completers

Factors involved

Interviews, observations, reports/diaries

Critical study

In what ways are institutions complicit in reproducing negative outcomes such as high schoolers dropping out?

Postmodern/Poststructural

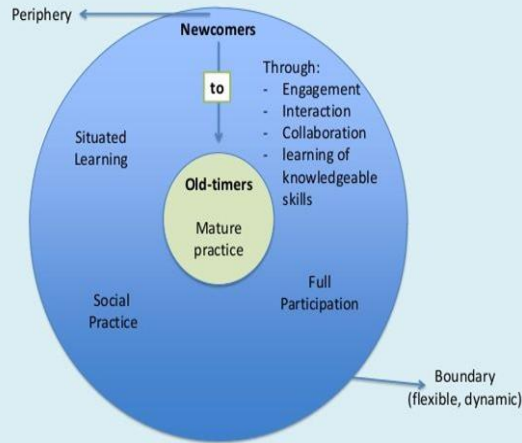
Seeks to question views like completer/noncompleter; successful/unsuccessful

Multiple perspectives

Many theoretical frameworks – these are just three Interpretive lens.....

Lave & Wenger

LEGITIMATE PERIPHERAL PARTICIPATION



d/Discourse (Gee, 2015)



Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (1943)



Paper sections and how they
contribute to coherence

Shape of a qualitative research report

How it
all fits
together
!

Introduction

Problem Statement >
Research Question

Perspectives

Theoretical Lens

Literature Review

Method

Design & Methodology

Site

Participants

Data Sources

Data Collection

Data Analysis

Limitations

Findings

Themes: Thick Description

Discussion

Implications

Conclusion

Selected References

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- *Yin, R. K. (2014). *Case study research design and methods* (5th ed.). Sage.

From a qualitative study.....

Video and Audio Data

(later, the student was shown this conference and interviewed about it, ("stimulated recall interviews" DiPardo, 1994)

Transcript

Student artifact

Discussion, questions...

Thank you!

aconsalvo@uttyler.edu