




Towards Quality Qualitative Research

Grant Russell
Sally Roach



Learning objectives

- Demystify qualitative research
- Gain a theoretical understanding of the field
- Explore study designs
- Understand principles of qualitative analysis

We don't plan to...

- Explain how to run a focus group
- Teach qualitative analysis software packages
- Use the words heuristic or epistemology

Task

Introduce yourselves to the group, suggest what you would like to gain from the workshop

Demystification is in order

- *The paper was replete with jargon and many strangely unscientific terms, which made it difficult to read; such as "epistemological," "extreme relativists," "antirealist," "reflexivity," "inductive inquiries," and "subtle realism."*

Isbister W Good communication is essential part of educational process BMJ 2000;320:1729 (24 June)

What it's really about

- ***Qualitative research offers the opportunity to focus on finding answers to questions that centre on social experience, how it is created, and how it gives meaning to human life.***

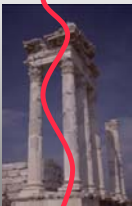


(Denzin and Lincoln, 94)

The history of qualitative research in health care

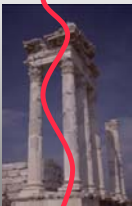


The history/philosophy of qualitative research in health care



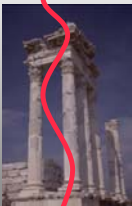


An ancient fault line

Cnidus		Cos
		

An ancient fault line


Cnidus		Cos
		
Logical positivism		Phenomenology

An ancient fault line

Reductionism		Holism
		
Linearity		Complexity

The types of research

- Experimental
- Observational
- Documentary - historical
- Field (qualitative) research -
 - the researcher is engaged with an interpretive focus on a natural field of activity
- Philosophic -
 - examines an idea or concept through the filter of logic



Defining qualitative research

- Qualitative research involves the collection, analysis and interpretation of data that are not easily reduced to numbers.
- The data refer to the social world and the concepts and behaviours of people within this world.

An organisational model for qualitative research

- “The search for an organisational model for qualitative research is akin to the quest for the Holy Grail.”

The philosophic traditions

Methods for the collection of data

Crabtree BF, Miller WL. Doing Qualitative Research. 2nd ed. Newbury Park, California: Sage Publications; 1999.

Organising by tradition

- Phenomenology
- Grounded Theory
- Ethnography



Data collection techniques

- Focus groups
- Interviews
- Participant Observation
- Field work
- Literature, Document analysis

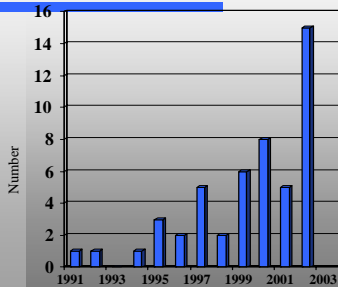


Where we are... and where we need to be

The current state of qualitative research

- Increasing interest
- Challenge to validity
- “Competition” with other methods

Increasing interest



Challenge to validity

'Their interest in qualitative methods and endpoints that go beyond simply counting deaths were commonly pushed to the margins of biomedicine. They claimed a complexity for their subject not shared by other areas of clinical practice. ... These arguments are quasi-mystical nonsense.'

• *Is primary-care research a lost cause? (Editorial) The Lancet 361,9362, 977*

The task of health care?

- *"A large 'acquaintance with particulars' often makes us wiser than the possession of abstract formulas, however deep."*

William James

Characteristics of qualitative questions

- **Broad, open-ended and interconnected questions that are not always specifiable as conventional hypotheses.**

• *Qualitative Methods in Health Research. Office of Behavioural and Social Science Research. National Institute of Health. Washington, 1998*

Task

- **In pairs, frame a qualitative research question on a topical issue in health care.**

Qualitative traditions

The big 3 traditions of qualitative research

- Phenomenology
- Grounded Theory
- Ethnography



Phenomenology

- Philosophical, sociological and psychological background
- Describes the particular phenomena as lived experience
 - Intuiting
 - Analysing
 - Describing



Grounded Theory

- Sociological background
- Systematic application of specific procedural steps to develop a theory that is grounded in the data – a theoretically complete explanation
- Conceptual framework is generated from the data



Ethnography

- Anthropological background
- Describes culture – learning from people
- Concern with the meanings of actions and events to people
 - Researcher as instrument
 - Fieldwork
 - Cyclic nature of data



New Generation Research Approaches

- Unorganised group of methodologies that share common beliefs about goals of scientific investigation
 - Naturalistic inquiry
 - Action research
 - Life history
 - Conversational analysis
 - Feminist theory
 - Symbolic interactionism



and the question is:

- After hours access and the Divisions...Why did it all fall apart in WA?

Emergency Disaster



- 6 April: Federal/State announcement of GP Emergency Clinics in Perth hospitals. Run by SBO. (GPDWA)
- 8 April: RACGP/RACEM press release.
- CEO of Clinics appointed.
- EGM planned to dismiss GPDWA Board.
- 8/14 Divisions refuse to attend mediation.

Task

- As a group, frame three different qualitative research questions based on the background you have received. One each for:
 - Grounded Theory
 - Ethnography
 - Phenomenology

Designing a study

Designing a study

- What is the question?
- What theoretical model should I use?
- What sources of data do I need?
- What is my sample?
- What is my data collection method?
- How do I incorporate an iterative process?

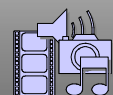
What data do I need?



- Why is it a problem?
 - The problem is that there are more sources for data than can possibly be examined and understood.

Sources of Data

- The sources are
 - People (either individuals or groups)
 - Documents
 - Other media



Sampling



- What sources are information-rich?
- Whom should I talk to first?
- What alternative data sources may confirm my understanding?

Data collection techniques



- Focus groups
- Interviews
- Participant Observation
- Field work
- Literature, Document analysis

What sorts of interviews

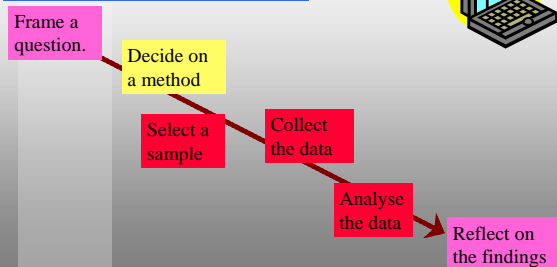
- Individual
 - Key informant
 - Semi structured
 - In-depth
- Group
 - Dyads
 - Focus group



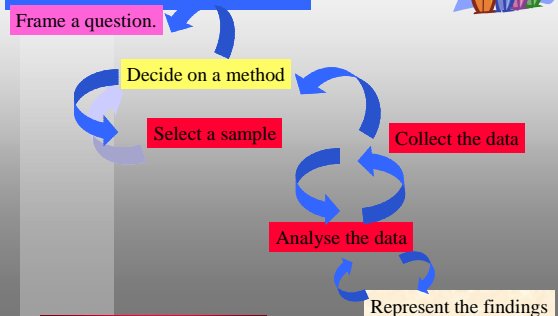
Matching methods to models

Phenomenology	Individual or dyad interviews
Ethnography	Participant observation
Grounded theory	Key informants, interviews, focus groups

Epidemiological studies



Qualitative studies



Task

- Each group to choose one of their research questions to work on
- Design a study for your chosen research question. Include:
 - Sources of data
 - Participant numbers, sample characteristics
 - Data collection method

Comprehensive data

Data Collection

- Is the setting described? (0-2)
- Is the method justified? (0-2)
- Is the role of the researcher described? (0-2)

Data Analysis

- Is there a clear description of the methods for data analysis? (0-2)

Comprehensiveness
Score (0-8)

Comprehensiveness

Data Collection

Score

Analysis

Criterion	%
	=2/2
Clear description of study setting	90
Method for data analysis described	59
Method for data collection justified	55
Researcher role in study described	39
All four criteria present	22

N=51

Qualitative analysis

Analysis

- “Qualitative analysis aims to make sense and order from the complex set of human practices and relationships that are represented in all qualitative data.”



Addison R. in Crabtree BF, Miller WL. Doing Qualitative Research. 2nd ed. Newbury Park, California: Sage Publications; 1999.

Analysis

Aims at representing the truth.

The question to ask is:
...Is this account trustworthy?



Key concepts



- The researcher inevitably interacts with the data.
- The iterative process is the core to the process.
- When has saturation occurred?

Analytic techniques



1. Describing
2. Organising
3. Connecting
4. Corroborating / legitimising
5. Representing the account

1. Crabtree BF, Miller WL. Doing Qualitative Research, 2nd ed. Newbury Park, California: Sage Publications; 1999.

Describing

- Reflect on the data as it is collected
 - What does it mean?
 - Are your thoughts changing?
 - Are your thoughts consistent with the theoretical framework?
- Have you achieved saturation?



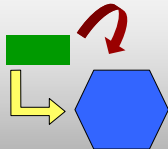
Select organising style

- Code manual
 - Design the coding before the data is accessed.
- Editing style
 - Review the data then determine the code book.
- Immersion/crystallisation
 - The researcher is the organising system.
 - Immerse yourself in the data
 - Draw conclusions over time.



Connecting

- What are the themes and patterns?
- How are they linked?
- Can I develop a model or a theory?



Corroborating



- How can I confirm that my findings are trustworthy?
- Are there alternative explanations?
- Triangulate
 - Alternative data sources
 - Checking with others (clinicians, researchers, peers)
- Member checking
 - Checking with the participants

Representing the account

- Sharing the understandings and interpretations.
- Remember
 - the world of the subject
 - the world of clinicians
 - the world of biomedicine.



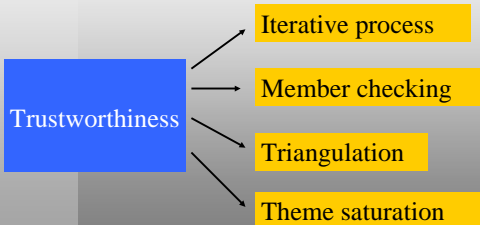
Crabtree BF, Miller WL. Doing Qualitative Research. 2nd ed. Newbury Park, California: Sage Publications; 1999.

Task

- Using the 'literature' and the 'interviews' you have been given, conduct an analysis in a manner appropriate to your research question.



Attaining trustworthiness



Trustworthiness

Method	%
Iterative process	49
Triangulation	47
Member checking	25
Theme saturation	22
Two or more methods	47

Tips for the unwary

- Data collection faults
 - Sampling
 - Search for disconfirming cases, outliers
 - Too many, not enough
 - Interviews
 - Take field notes.
 - 2 tape recorders, use a scribe
 - Checking the transcripts with the tapes



Tips for the unwary

- Analysis
 - Superficial analysis
 - Listing themes
 - Quantifying results
 - Participant's description
 - Member checking

Thankyou for your participation

Grant Russell
Sally Roach

russellg@cyllene.uwa.edu.au
sroach@cyllene.uwa.edu.au