

Qualitative Data Collection & Analysis

An Appreciation

why an appreciation?

the qualitative approach

- exploration, description, explanation
- induction, emergence
- words
- holistic
- no treatments
- local knowledge, perceived and constructed
- participants' POV, as teachers

best for

- complex phenomena
- in context
- new perspectives, a fresh start

types

- observation
- ethnography
- field study
- content analysis/archival
- case study
- interview

a sample research question

What are important aspects of the information behavior of non-library users when solving a new problem?

central phenomenon

observation/fieldwork

how best to observe
 gaining entry
 preserving naturalness
 what to sample
 field notes & memos
 analyzing while collecting
 using hunches, conclusions to guide collection
 triangulating for accuracy
 testing explanations
 resolving ethical Qs on the fly
 when/how to leave

ways of observing

covert participant
 concealed
 unconcealed participant (overt)
 nonparticipant
 unobtrusive

gaining entry

trust
 gatekeeper
 entrance, acceptance

data gathering

what is significant?
 what not to look for/at?
 who/what/where/why....

how to observe

from Spradley:
 watch yourself as well as watching others
 try to become explicitly aware of what others take for granted
 look beyond immediate focus of the activity
 experience the situation simultaneously as insider and outsider
 be introspective
 keep a record of what you see, how you experience the situation;
 separate observations from reactions

notes, logs, annotations

what's been observed
 thick description
 detail; language as it's used
 memos