Qualitative Research

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Research Is

- A Systematic Investigation to Increase Knowledge and/or Understanding
- Disciplined, Systematic Inquiry
# Epistemological Perspectives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Positivist/Postpositivist</th>
<th>Interpretive/Constructivist</th>
<th>Critical</th>
<th>Postmodern/Structural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Purpose</strong></td>
<td>Predict, Control, Generalize</td>
<td>Describe, Understand, Interpret</td>
<td>Change, Emancipate, Empower</td>
<td>Deconstruct, Problematize, Interpret, Question</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Reality</strong></td>
<td>Objective, External, Out There</td>
<td>Multiple Realities, Context-bound</td>
<td>Multiple Realities, Situated in Political, Social, Cultural Contexts (One reality is privileged)</td>
<td>Questions assumption that there is a place where reality resides. “Is there a there there?”</td>
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Qualitative Research Is

“An Umbrella Term Covering An Array Of Interpretive Techniques Which Seek To Describe, Decode, Translate, And Otherwise Come To Terms With The Meaning, Not The Frequency, Of Certain More Or Less Naturally Occurring Phenomena In The Social World.”

Qualitative Research Is Designed To

- Clarify Situations And Phenomena When Operative Variables Unclear
- Determine Why An Intervention Has Unanticipated Effects
- Define Fresh Ways To Look At Over-Familiar Problems
- Understand How Tasks, Policies, Roles, Or Other Systemic Elements Are Perceived By Participants
- Build Theory, Hypotheses, Generalizations
Characteristics Of Qualitative Research

- Search For Understanding, Meaning
- Interest In Process
- Researcher Primary Instrument
- Involves Fieldwork, Natural Settings
- Qualitative Description
- Inductive
Quant Vs. Qual 1

**Quantitative:** The Relationship Between Types of Learning Activities of Adults and Geographic Location (rural vs. urban) (correlational)

**Qualitative:** How a Rural Location Shapes the Learning Activities of Adults
Quant Vs. Qual 2

**Quantitative:** Strategies Teachers Prefer to Use in Handling Classroom Discipline Problems (Survey)

**Qualitative:** How Teachers Negotiate the Resolution of Classroom Discipline Problems
Quant Vs. Qual 3

**Quantitative:** The Relationship Between Being a Learning Organization and a Firm’s Financial Profits (Correlational)

**Qualitative:** Factors That Facilitate the Successful Implementation of the Learning Organization
Quant Vs. Qual 4

**Quantitative**: Who Continues To Work After Retirement And Why? (Survey)

**Qualitative**: How Retirees Adjust To Life After Work
Quant Vs. Qual 5

**Quantitative:** Which Method Of Instruction Leads To Greater Knowledge Gains? Face-To-Face? Online Only? Online Plus Face-To-Face (Blended)? (Experimental)

**Qualitative:** Learner Perceptions Of Conditions That Promote Online Learning
Major Types Of Qualitative Studies

- Descriptive/Basic/Generic
- Grounded Theory
- Ethnography
- Phenomenology
- Case Study
- Narrative Analysis
The Research Process

• Identify a Topic or Concern
• Focus on a *Specific* Problem Within the Larger Topic or Concern
• Gather Data (Information) Relevant to the Problem
• Analyze the Data
• Write Up the Results and Disseminate (Publish/Present)
The Problem Statement

• Identifies a Knowledge gap

• Provides a Context for the study

• Persuades the reader through logic and documentation that there is a pressing need for your research
Sample Selection

Purposeful or Purposive (Not Random)

- Establish *Criteria* for Selection of Sites and/or Participants
- Can Suggest an Approximate Number
- *Actual* Number of Participants is Determined by Saturation
Qualitative Data Collection

- Interviews
- Observations
- Documents
Researcher Competencies

- A Questioning Stance
- High Tolerance for Ambiguity
- Being a Careful Observer
- Asking Good Questions
- Thinking Inductively
- Comfort With Writing