QUALITATIVE RESEARCH METHODS IN PSYCHOLOGY AND HUMAN SCIENCE

Arne Collen, Ph.D.

A Course of Study and Guide to Learning

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by

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for

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Qualitative Research Methods in Psychology and Human Science: A Course of Study and Guide to Learning.

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This learning guide has been written for use with the following Saybrook course:

HS/P1040 • Qualitative Research Methods
Formerly titled Non-Experimental Methods, this course emphasizes aspects of processing and interpreting data and observations characteristic of those research methods that favor the generation and collection of written text, narrative accounts, graphics, and visual displays in the study of human phenomena. Several data collection and processing techniques and procedures are given special attention, such as research interviewing, use of archival and other written documents, making observations, artifact collection, coding and categorizing schemes, and analysis and synthesis of thematic content. The techniques and procedures utilizing qualitative type data in disciplined inquiry are situated within several established research methods and methodologies in psychology and human science.

Adapted from the *Saybrook Catalog* (1996-1998).

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Section

QUALITATIVE RESEARCH METHODS

in Psychology and Human Science

Part I

INTRODUCTION

Required

Kvale, S. (1996). *InterViews*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
Miles, M. and Huberman, A. (1994). *Qualitative Data Analysis*. Second edition. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
Morse, J. and Field, P. (1995). *Qualitative Research Methods for Health Professionals*. Second edition. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Course Reader

Collen, A. (Ed.) (1997). *Qualitative Research Reader*. San Francisco, CA: Saybrook Institute.

Recommended

None

Advanced Reading

None

Overview

The subject matter of this learning guide concerns foremost the techniques and procedures for collecting and processing data in the forms of words, graphics, and pictures, rather than numbers. After your Overview of Methods course, this course in qualitative research has as its purpose to provide more focused study on qualitative data collection and data processing aspects of research methodology for psychology and the human sciences, but without the extensive and specialized emphasis found in a more formalized method and methododology, such as case study, ethnography, ethnomethology, hermeneutics, phenomenology, psychobiography, and psychohistory. Therefore, if you prefer your second methods course be more delimited to one of these more specialized advances in methodology, then you should select and take that course and learning guide available, that is, the Saybrook course and learning guide in case study method, phenonomenology, hermeneutics, participatory action research, or systems research methods, rather than this course and learning guide.

The objectives of this course of study are twofold: (1) to help you become more familiar with and better understand various techniques and procedures that serve as springboards for the more specialized forms of qualitative research in psychology and human science, and (2) to advance your research skills working with qualitative forms of data collection and data processing. These objectives are to be fulfilled through your study of texts, publications, readers, and learning guides, as well as your completion of a set of assignments described at the end of each section of this guide and in Appendix A.

The foundation of all sciences depends on solid, informative description, much of which is qualitative in form. It is important to grasp the ways researchers have situated qualitative data collection and processing within the context of their preferred research method. As you go through the course, this learning guide will also give some attention to the complementarity of data types, both qualitative and quantitative, lest you be left with the erroneous impression that data types cannot under any circumstances be mixed. The richness and variety of approaches—from the nascent to the sophisticated—to work with qualitative data in psychology and human science should be evident by the end of the course.

This course builds upon the concepts and principles of the Overview of Methods course to focus more explicitly on qualitative methods, techniques, and procedures of disciplined human oriented inquiry. No doubt you discovered the tremendous confusion and differences of opinion already that exist today about doing research, but please realize such similar experiences you may have in this and related courses are epidemic at this time. With the surge of interest in a range of methods in recent decades and an

explosion of published research literature, there are a number of research methods that many authors, publishers, and theorists are touting to be *exclusively* "qualitative methods" which they typically place in opposition to—via accusations, assertions, and illogical inferences—established labels, such as quantitative, experimental, statistical, objective, received, classical, traditional, and so on. Their presentations often make entertaining reading; however, their polemics are more likely help to convince them of their own assertions and sway uncritical minds to their point of view. Therefore, be forewarned.

One suggestion that I have found useful to sweep through much of the dust being stirred up is to note that a construct like *method* has several meanings. It is important to know the intended meaning of the author/researcher in each case. Specifically, on the one hand, the use of the phrase "qualitative method" is likely an oxymoron, if by method one means an approach to inquiry that will involve many decisions, such as the form of the research question, type of research design, context of data collection, procedures of data collection and analysis. Any author who uses this phrase to label various methods, such as ethnography, case study, observation, and the like, makes me immediately suspicious that the coverage is very limited and perhaps superficial, even naive. When one studies what researchers do and the ways they use various known and agreed upon methods, one realizes the artificiality of classifying a method as exclusively either qualitative or quantitative. Hence, please do not jump to such a conclusion by the title of this course, learning guide, or any textbook so titled. Although there are some methods that appear to generate and make use of exclusively qualitative data, such as phenomenology and hermeneutics, and other methods, exclusively quantitative data, such as correlational method, in general most methods are able to make good use of both data types.

On the other hand, the term "qualitative method" can more properly mean reference to a research procedure which yields, generates, and/or processes data types in the form of words, graphics, and pictures by means devoid of established arithmetic operations. Here method means *a specific procedure*, not a holistic approach to inquiry. The learning guide and reader of this course are devoted to the study and articulation of specific procedures for processing qualitative data currently in use in psychology and the human sciences.

Therefore, note the intention of the author of the publication you are reading. What does the author mean by "qualitative method"? A formalized approach to disciplined inquiry, a data collection and/or processing technique, or step-by-step procedure? I prefer and use consistently the latter referent and will do so throughout this learning guide, because the term connects us directly with data types rather than a wholistic approach.

This course guide continues the general organization and format of presentation that is found in the learning guide for the Overview of Methods course. The aims (purposes) of this material can be stated as follows. First, it is to give direction and focus to your study of the qualitative emphasis in psychology and human science research. Second, it is to help you establish some boundaries around and organization to your learning, given the breadth of the subject matter. Third, it is to assist you with your ongoing professional development of your own theoretical foundation for and empirical experience with research to complete your graduate program. And fourth, it is to challenge your currently held assumptions and habits of thought about qualitative research, so that you may sharpen your scientific, critical thinking, and data collection and processing skills.

Let us ground these aims by reformulating them in terms of three specific learning objectives. You and your instructor may wish to add more, but the following set reflects current educational philosophy and pedagogy at the school: 1) to demonstrate proficiency in understanding through proper usage of the terms, principles, and concepts of qualitative research; 2) to demonstrate knowledge of the major characteristics and variations of select research methods that favor the use of qualitative data; and 3) to demonstrate proficiency in select techniques and procedures of qualitative data collection and processing. All of these objectives are to be fulfilled through completion of a chosen set of assignments described at the end of each section and in Appendix A.

This learning guide is selective in its coverage of qualitative applications in research methodology. Although some methods, techniques, and procedures receive more attention than others, this material provides guidance to those covered, but does not preclude other choices which you and your instructor may wish to pursue in order to tailor the subject matter closer to your professional and personal interests in qualitative research.

Readings

The reading material for the course is classified into four categories: Required, QRM Reader, Recommended, and Advanced. Those central to each chapter of the learning guide will be stated at the start of each chapter.

Required readings are directly relevant to completion of the assignments. The required texts cover doing research involving one or more of the following: research interviewing, observation, archives, databases, documents, artifacts, and specific data collection and processing procedures and techniques associated with these activities.

Consider those from the ***QRM Reader*** to be required also. The *Qualitative Research Methods Reader*, abbreviated throughout this learning guide by the acronym QRM or the

phrase "QRM Reader," provides you with a selection of articles about using qualitative data in research. The reader is organized in parallel to this learning guide and the course assignments.

Recommended readings do relate to the course assignments, but they are selective, meaning they are few among several sources which may prove helpful in completing the assignments. Other sources may be cited in the text with the full citation in References. Still you will discover other sources on your own as the field of qualitative research is large and growing rapidly.

Advanced readings are included for those who wish to pursue in more depth the major ideas covered in a specific part of the guide. Such readings are particularly helpful to study the more challenging ideas and applications. Finally, advanced readings may help you pursue links between the this course and any interest area at Saybrook, specifically, Clinical Inquiry, Consciousness Studies, Health Studies, Organizational Inquiry, Peace and Conflict Resolution Studies, Systems Inquiry, and Social Philosophy and Political Psychology.

The required texts, course reader, and sources listed in the References are there to facilitate your completion of the course assignments. Although I have made every attempt to make the required texts, course reader, and learning guide an adequate package to complete the assignments in a graduate level course, it is wise and recommended to go beyond this material and draw upon published literature and primary sources in the scholarly documentation and completion of the assignments. As a graduate level course, it is not mandatory that the learning guide, reader, and required texts provide a complete course resource package. Use of related sources and those connecting your professional interests to the course should be expected to complete course assignments, particularly those tailored to your own interests. Also, this often occurs in the application of methodology concepts and principles to specific human phenomena and their contexts, and when changes in assignments are negotiated between the student and the instructor. In other words, it is expected that this resource package will be supplemented by relevant publications chosen by the student.

Formats, Media, Modes, and Options for Course Completion

Having taken and completed courses at Saybrook, I assume you have gained a familiarity with some of the possible combinations available to you for working with your instructor to complete this course. If you wish to review the possibilities, I recommend the section with the same subtitle in the *Overview of Methods* learning guide.

Assignments and Time Plan

This learning guide presents a variety of assignments that focus your study in the following general areas that have become popularly identified with qualitative data collection and data processing: research interviewing, observation, archives and documents, and artifacts.

A set of assignments are required to complete this course of study. The set of assignments you choose may also be viewed as a route through the course, schematized in Appendix B. Some assignments involve making a choice among possibilities. Each possibility is labeled alphabetically under each assignment. See Appendices A and B. You are asked to decide which possibility you wish to complete for the assignment in each case and use that designation, for example, 2-B, when you sent it to your instructor. An assignment first appears only in summary at the end of its part of the learning guide. All assignments and their choices appear in full detail in Appendix A. For your quick reference, an overview of all assignments can be seen in Appendix B.

In completing Assignment 1, you are asked to select tentatively the set of assignments you prefer and the route taken to complete them, with the restriction that *your choices must entail at least TWO ways to work with qualitative data collection and data processing*. The flexibility in tailoring your course of study to your interests, program, and professional pursuits may be enhanced by knowing that there are essentially three routes through the assignments. For simplicity sake, I label these routes: the As Is Route, the Combined Route, and the Mixed Route. Read carefully Appendices A and B. Regardless of the route taken, there must be 7 written products accepted by the instructor to earn the 3 units of credit for the course. Further, regardless the the route, except the first and last assignments, each assignment consists of a 10 page paper. This means that when completing an assignment on the Combined Route, for example Assignment B, choices 2-B, 3-B, 4-B, and 5-B will be combined into this assignment which will be integrated as a result into a 10 page paper. In contrast, following the As Is Route, one selects one choice (A, B, C, etc.) described within each assignment number (2, 3, 4, etc.), and each choice requires a 10 page paper. The Mixed Route, may draw upon both extremes, such as Assignment 2-C for one 10 page paper and Assignment B for another 10 page paper, and so on, as long as a total of 7 papers accumulate by the end of the course to justify the credit.

The assignments are intended to focus your learning, challenge your thinking, and provide some experience in using the material. Building upon the same critical thinking and research skills involved with your earlier courses, the assignments are designed to continue this process a step farther toward qualifying for doctoral candidacy.

The choices within each assignment allow a flexibility to meet a range of research and professional interests. The specific set of assignments chosen can be completed in one semester, and it is recommended they be completed in the sequence described in the learning guide. If for any reason you cannot complete the course in one term, inform the Registrar at the end of the term to remain active in the course the subsequent term.

Prerequisites

Completion of the Overview of Methods course, or its equivalent, is expected before taking this course. It is advisable to have taken Theories of Inquiry and Critical Thinking and Argument Analysis courses too, or their equivalent.

Evaluation and Feedback

The main basis of evaluation is satisfactory completion of your required assignments. Drafts of assignments are evaluated in regard to coherence, accuracy, correct use of terms, principles and concepts, sound use of logic and argumentation, and cogent discussion of issues. In general, a clear, precise, organized, complete, and professional presentation is expected. Feedback involves commentary on the above criteria as well as less substantive matters of an editorial nature. Expect constructive criticism. Initial requests to revise are routine; they are one primary means of corrective improvement in building your research skills.

Each instructor has his/her own style of feedback. For example, I check many parts of the response to indicate my acceptance, and I circle and asterisk those parts needing revision. I read carefully the development of the response, looking for essential statements which communicate to me your understanding in terms of the criteria stated in the previous paragraph. Also, I comment in the margins and use brackets and arrows to tell you the portion of your text to which I am directing my comment. I may challenge the statements, question, note parallels, refer you to sources, try to provoke your thinking in relevant directions to the development of the text. I occasionally make use of typographer/editor symbols for editorial feedback and can provide a legend sheet if they are unfamiliar to you; check also your dictionary, because most editions includes a separate page at the start or end deciphering them for you. When the assignment as a whole is accepted, then I simply write "Accepted" next to the assignment number.

If feedback is insufficient or unclear, contact the instructor immediately and ask for more. Do not waste time second guessing. If your initial attempts at contact are frustrated or delayed, then write out your request for more feedback and direction and send it, meanwhile go on to other assignments. The instructor should contact you to fulfill

your requests. Frequently part of a response will need revision, and sometimes the entire response will need to be redone. This can happen when an incorrect tact is taken on writing out the response.

Course completion occurs through the accumulation of accepted assignments. Upon completion of all assignments, the instructor sends a written evaluation to the Registrar, who in turn sends you a copy for your records. Receipt of the instructor's course evaluation in the Student Records Office signifies official course completion and subsequent placement of the course on your Saybrook transcript. Note that the instructor's evaluation will reflect only your select record of completion of the assignments chosen, so do not expect sweeping statements applicable to all assignments. Choose assignments carefully. Think about the place of this course in your program and in relation to your professional goals.

It is important to maintain access to the instructor for feedback and evaluation purposes during your active months with the course material. Enrollment in the course ensures direct access to the instructor. Should you be working on assignments during a term when you are not officially enrolled, your name will not appear on the instructor's enrollment sheet, and the instructor is under no obligation to receive and evaluate your work. Therefore, should you not complete all assignments by the end of a term, you must re-register for the course to remain active and guarantee access to the instructor as a learning resource and evaluator. Do so even in the extreme case of the last revisions pending for course completion. Given the "rolling registration" at Saybrook, once any informal indication from the instructor is received indicating course completion anytime early, middle or late term, you may contact your advisor and the Registrar regarding enrollment in your next course.

Although evaluation here appears to emphasize ways the instructor will evaluate your work, Saybrook is a co-learner community. Our expectation is that the evaluation process is a two-way street. Your evaluation of the instructor's performance will be solicited by Saybrook via a separate evaluation form after the instructor submits the end of course evaluation of your performance.

However, it is vitally important that you have ample opportunity to evaluate also the effectiveness of the learning guide and resource package; therefore, please send me a copy of your written evaluation of the course material. The course surveys much ground, and some research methods are not included. The learning guide and reader are ongoing projects. Periodic revisions and additions are expected. You have an opportunity to participate, because it is through your suggestions and feedback that this presentation improves. I want it to be informative and useful. Please comment and contribute freely.

Your interest in this area of study is appreciated; therefore, do send me your feedback and suggestions for improvement.

Connecting the Course to Other Saybrook Courses

The Qualitative Research Methods course has several important links with other courses of the curriculum.

Overview of Methods. The organization of the first level methods course centered on the interests of researchers and their paradigmatic assumptions. Several methods as well as their changing forms were surveyed. Many of these methods make heavy use of qualitative data. Consequently, in the Qualitative Research Methods learning guide, a step further is taken to examine more carefully ways researchers generated, collected, and process their qualitative data when using these methods.

Critical Thinking and Argument Analysis. This course is central to good research practice involving all qualitative approaches to inquiry. All the methods, techniques, and procedures covered in Qualitative Research Methods involve key assumptions, sound use of logic and decision-making, a critical stance towards inquiry, and careful interpretation, discussion, and argumentation with respect to research findings.

Theories of Inquiry. This course, like the previous two courses, is foundational to understanding the use of qualitative data in research. Qualitative data collection, processing, and interpreting cannot be divorced from theory.

Other research methods courses. In general, the Qualitative Research Methods course and learning guide are intended to complement and supplement, but not substitute and replace, other second level courses taken after completion of the Overview of Methods course. Examples of other second level research method courses with direct relevance to this course are: Action Research, Case Study Methods in Psychology, Hermeneutics, Observational Research, Phenomenology. (i.e., Descriptive Phenomenological Psychological Method, and Phenomenological Critique of Psychological Systems), and Systems Research Methods.

Connecting the Course to the Saybrook Programs

This learning guide serves to fulfill the Research Methods II requirement of both the Psychology and Human Science programs. However, there are several offerings that meet these program requirements, therefore why take this course rather than the others?

Qualitative Research Methods provides both the broad band perspective of the Overview of Methods course, but brings the student into the process of working with this kind of data, which the Overview of Methods course did not. The other courses at

the second level are also expected to engage the student in more hands-on type research assignments, but must by the nature of their methodological focus be more restrictive in ways of treating qualitative data. In other words, if you believe it is in your best interest to be more selective for in-depth coverage of a particular methodological approach to inquiry, such as a course in case study or phenomenology, then Qualitative Research Methods may be too diverse to meet your needs. But if your readiness is to take a next step after Overview of Methods to examine with more specificity a range of methods and ways they treat qualitative data, this course may be the better choice. In this latter case, it may become a choice of this course or the like, such as Quantitative Research Methods or Systems Research Methods. The general argument here may seem like splitting hairs for some students. Perhaps, the best advice I can give is to examine the choices of learning guides for your second level methods course. If your chief interest is to understand better several ways researchers work with qualitative data and a range of established methods in which they work with such data, this may be the best course for you.

Regarding assignments tailored to the programs, the variety of assignments in this learning guide is intended to meet the difference in interests of the students of both programs, thus the number of choices provided for each assignment in the learning guide. It is expected that students in each program will complete those choices of the assignments which are more appropriate to their graduate program and professional goals. Whenever there is a question on this matter, it is important that you discuss with your instructor which choices best fit your program and professional goals and research interests.

Assignment 1

The initial assignment of the course is to introduce yourself in the role of researcher to your instructor. You are to communicate briefly and succinctly in writing your present level of familiarity with qualitative approaches to inquiry, your main areas of research interest, your choices for assignments, and your general plan (route) for cource completion. See full details in Appendix A.

Part II

QUALITATIVE DATA IN RESEARCH

Required

Kvale, S. (1996). *InterViews.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. [Chapters 1-4]
Miles, M. and Huberman, A. (1994). *Qualitative Data Analysis.* Second edition. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. [Chapter 1]
Morse, J. and Field, P. (1995). *Qualitative Research Methods for Health Professionals.* Second edition. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. [Chapters 1-4]

Course Reader

Read the articles listed under Part II.

Recommended

Denzin, N. and Lincoln, Y. (Editors) (1994). *Handbook of Qualitative Research.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. [Chapters 1-3]

Advanced Reading

None

Overview

Having received some orientation to the course in the first part of this learning guide, the purpose of the second part is to help you situate yourself within the subject area and some contexts in which researchers work with qualitative data. We want to look briefly at what qualitative data is, its place in scientific inquiry, and its relevance to researchers themselves and methodology in general. It is from this vantage point that we can subsequently examine the phases of the research cycle in the parts of the learning guide to follow that make use of qualitative data. The assignment at the end of this part asks you to demonstrate your understanding of the perspectives persented here and those aspects of the assigned readings which relate to them.

The Nature of Qualitative Data in Scientific Inquiry

This information is best included in the readings.

As alluded to earlier, the word "qualitative" is a descriptor researchers use to refer to an aspect, facet, feature, kind, type, property, or characteristic of the phenomenon studied. One can associate the descriptor with a category scheme that may be useful to sort out and label distinctions about what is studied and to make comparisons, such as among attributes, objects, and persons. In other words, the nature that is qualitative is to identify and categorize the qualities of what one comes to know. One of the most salient examples in science is the classification scheme contributed by Linneas, the founding father of botany and inventor of classification in basic science—that of naming every plant with a genus-species designation in the Latin language.

Qualitative data in research becomes that data which can be organized in various ways according to a classification scheme. Later in the learning guide, I shall discuss that such schemes may be a priori or a posteriori, suggesting that the researcher prefers to use a more deductive or inductive logic toward the collection and processing of the data, respectively. But suffice it for now to note that the idea of classification is fundamental to all forms of working with qualitative data in research.

Qualitative data is typically contrasted with quantitative data. Where the former is associated with classification, the latter with measurement. However, one may view the relation as not so much the antimonious separation of opposites as the inventive ways researchers add more precision to classification. Precision involves accuracy in the researcher's acts of obtaining a datum and making an observation. Precision and accuracy are fundamental to science and essential if research is to be trusted and successful. To make the observation that a person is anxious, the skin is a pale color, and he absence of a significant other is relevant can invite the researcher to exercise

both qualitative and quantitative means to yield such observations.

In the case of defining the datum as qualitative, the researcher must make use of a classification scheme, typically a set of other descriptors. In the case of a quantitative definition, the researcher must invent a scale of measurement (nominal, ordinal, interval, ratio) to place the datum on the scale, which technically is also a classification scheme with order and a degree of measureable precision from one location on the scale to the next. Interestingly, the crudest and most elementary form of measurement, nominal scales, are basically qualitative category schemes. Upon close inspection to understand the close non oppositional relation between-qualitative and quantitative. Incidently, it is common for researchers to develop quantitative scales of measurement to assist them to make more precise determinations of which category an attribute of the phenomena may best be placed; for example, in reference to the above, note the anxiety scale, color scale, and social distance scale, respectively.

However, in this course of study the emphasis is not on those research skills that foster this direction toward measurement—from categorization to quantitification—so popular in psychology and the human sciences, but instead we want to examine select ways to work with qualitative data without the assistance of measurement. It is important to emphasize that these ways of working with qualitative data are just as important in science as quantification of data. Qualitative data collection and processing have always been fundamental science, and it is unfortunate that a frequent overshadowing on the use of quantitative data processing in some quarters may lead us to under value the importance of qualitative data in research.

Data Types

When one looks carefully at the kinds of data researchers collect and process, it essentially boils down to three types: numbers, pictures, and words.

We associate the numbers with the more quantitative orientation, even though researchers commonly work with numbers in a qualitative fashion in many aspects of their research, such as labelling participants by number, using random number schemes to select and assign participants to the research design, and creating numerical combinations for coding schemes to sift and sort observations, archives, and field notes.

Words appear in narratives, that is spoken and written accounts taken from archives, research interviews, audiotapes, and the like. This data type can be thought of as situated in text. That is to say, the text is the context of the word, whether it comes from the verbal flow from the mind of its author, the real time dialog between interviewer and interviewee, or the audio record of events in everyday life, respectively. It is the word

data type that is most often sought and processed in the research methods stressed in this learning guide. In such cases, the researcher faces the challenge of working with various category schemes to classify, organize, aggregate, and synthesize words that capture and describe accurately and precisely the phenomenon studied.

Ironically, although perhaps our most impressionistic mode of communication, pictures are vastly under utilized in psychology and human science as a data type in comparison to numbers and words. What can be done with the collection and processing of words can be done just as well with pictures. Advances in video technologies have brought in recent decades largely untapped possibilities for the use of art, photos, and video as data in research. Some attention will be devoted to this advance, though the focus in this learning guide will remain largely on the data type of words.

In closing this brief presentation of the data type trichotomy, it must be stressed that researchers make use of all data types—numbers, pictures, and words—often within the same investigation, following the general rule of thumb: whatever data bears directly and appropriately on the phenomenon studied and research questions posed should be collected and examined. Manifestations of this last point will surface again later in the learning guide, specifically the use of different data types in the same inquiry to reveal a more comprehensive examination of the phenomenon or to cross validate a fundamental quality of the phenomenon.

Interests, Research Questions, and Focus

Whether qualitative data is relevant to the inquiry depends very much on what the researcher wants to know. According to the descriptive definition of qualitative provided earlier, it is clear that the researcher's central interest is in the nature of the human phenomena. What is it like? What does it mean? What kinds of thoughts, feelings, reflections, and actions are associated with the phenomenon? Are there particular properties, features, characteristics that can describe in words and pictures the phenomenon studied? When this orientation to the question asking of the phenomenon is the chief interest of the researcher, then the desired nature of the data will more often than not be qualititative.

More specifically, if one wants to know how long it will take for your best friend to recover from a broken leg and at what rate will mobility return during physical therapy once the plaster caste is removed, qualitative data may not be that informative. But if one wants to know what having a broken leg means to your best friend, because of the manditory adjustments and accommodations to the inconvenience during the period of recovery, then qualitative data may be very informative.

The challenge for the researcher will be to find creative and inventive ways to obtain qualitative data that connect appropriately to the research questions posed. Sometimes the researcher discovers a quantification procedure to measure precisely some aspect bearing on the qualitative nature of the phenomenon, and sometimes a categorization procedure becomes evident that leads to a more quantitative scaling of some feature of the phenomenon. That is to say, qualification can lead to quantification, and quantification to qualification. Nevertheless, the key point is connecting the appropriate kinds of data to the specific research questions asked.

The research questions about the qualitative nature of the phenomenon creates the focus of the inquiry. Importantly, the type of question and key terms used in the question statement begin to delimit the inqury. These are important steps for the researcher in trying to propose a feasible and doable project.

Research Methods and Methodology

Most methods in psychology and human science can be used to collect and process qualitative data. However, there are several strong associations antithetical to the use of some methods with qualitative data, which are worth mentioning in passing, because these unfortunate associations tend to be perpetuated and they retard the advance of methodology in psychology and human science likely doing some disservice in my opinion to each subsequent generation of ~~young~~ new researchers entering various fields of study. I state some outstanding examples in the delimiting case and comment on them afterwards.

Some very strong associations are: 1) correlational method involves the description, prediction, and application of the scaled and measured covariation between two or more constructs (variables, predictors, criteria, factors, discriminants, dimensions); 2) very traditional experimental method uses exclusively quantitative data to make comparisions between experimental and control conditions; 3) very traditional observational research in psychology involves only frequency counts of specifically defined overt behaviors; 4) very traditional survey research in psychology uses exclusively highly structured and scaled questionnaires. These associations are held by and large still to be true. However, it is only the first assertion about correlational method that still rings with some consistency and veridicality today. In theory and practice, the traditional methods of the first Arena of Inquiry, described in the Overview of Methods learning guide and related readings (Collen 1994, 1995), retain such restricted thinking. Researchers use whatever data types in their experimental, observational, and survey research that helps them answer their research questions posed.

Equally significant to the importance of proper linkages between research questions and data types is knowledge of the philosophical tradition and theoretical basis affiliated with each particular research method that informs the researcher about the origins, purposes, assumptions, proper uses and abuses, strengths, weaknesses, and ethical precautions of a specific research method under consideration for application to conduct inquiry. With the wealth of developments in methodology in this century, it is more common to discover that one must know not one but two or three philosophical traditions and theoretical bases in order to have the necessary background to apply a method as intended.

To take but one example to illustrate my point, from its origins as a philosophy later in the last century, phenomenology has been extended for use in psychology and related fields through efforts to articulate more clearly procedures of data collection and processing, and to refine skills and practices through empirical inquiry. This important work has been accomplished with qualitative data. Hence, phenomenology is no longer an exclusive method of philosophers. Philosophers and non philosophers alike have married phenomenology with other traditions, such as hermeneutics, heuristics, and dialectics, with the result that the variations of phenomenological method now available to those doing research in psychology and human science have markedly increased in the later part of this century. Consequently, variations of phenomenology are known today a s ways to work with qualititative data when the philosophical assumptions, philosophical system of thought, theory of the discipline, and research questions can be conceptualized into an internally consistent and coherent application that becomes a research proposal for a phenomonological inquiry of an human phenomenon. A similar kind of story may be told about many of the methods covered in the Overview of Methods learning guide.

Mixing Data Types

Part of the explosion of interest in advancing methods in psychology and human science stems from those researchers of more recent generations to more aggressively and boldly seek out innovative and creative ways of doing inquiry, even if it entails transgressions across paradigms and arenas of inquiry. This means that purists who insist that certain data types must be used with certain methods are bound to be insulted. Innovations of most methods have occurred to include both qualitative and quantitative data in the same study. Even from the most conservative standpoint, a sound scientific study will use both to decribe the demographic chracteristics of the sample studied and provide as clear and comprehensive description as possible of the situation, circumstances, boundaries, and generalizability of the human phenomenon

studied. Therefore, polemics aside, most scientists typically do not get trapped into superficialities, but they are intent on using whatever numbers, pictures, and words they believe appropriate to answer their questions and communicate them as unambiguously as possible to their fellow scientists.

It may be helpful, nevertheless, to point out the general status of developments in methodology with respect to the use of qualitative data. Table 1 is general and selective only; it is not intented here to be complete or to suggest any impossibility that a method in one column may never appear at some future point in human history in another column. Note that correlational method is perhaps an-instructive illustration of the quantitative extreme, where hermeneutics and phenomenology the qualitative extreme. Most methods however fall into the mixed category.

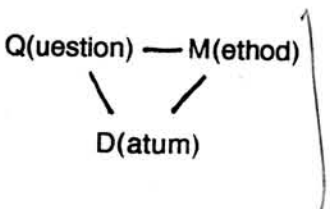
QUALITATIVE	MIXED	QUANTITATIVE
Autobiographical	Experimental	Correlational
Hermeneutic	Ethnographic	
Phenomenological	Observational	
	Case Study	
	Heuristic	
	Psychobiographical	
	Psychohistorical	
	Survey	
	Systemic	

Table 1. Data types used with some research methods in psychology and human science.

Complexity and the Construction of a Method or Methodology

The aspects of methodology mentioned in the previous sections of this part of the learning guide come together of course when the researcher considers how complex an inquiry is necessary in order to address the research question. Naturally, many decisions determine the complexity of inquiry. I shall focus on only a few here relevant to the use of qualitative data in research.

In proposing and conducting a research project, the researcher constructs an internally consistent proposal by articulating the relations among such key constructs as research question, research method, and data. I picture this triangle in Figure 1.



shall be covered in Ou. of Meth.

Figure 1. The QMD conceptual net of internal consistency in research.

There are really more components to this configuration, but these three are the most relevent at this point in the guide. This conceptual net must be internally consistent and clearly articulated to establish the internal validity of an inquiry. Obviously, if the question calls for qualitative data, that is what should be collected, and the method chosen should be a method invented/or amenable to generate the qualitative data that will directly answer the question. As a result of these key decisions, the fit is more parsimonious, economic, valid, and from a more pragmatic view—the use of human beings, time, money, and resources for research is the more ethical.

Summary

This part of the learning guide has described some of the main aspects facing the researcher in formulating a research project with special attention to interests in working with qualitative data. Some contrasts were provided between qualitative and quantitative data types and their associations with research methods. Salient areas of decision making, such as internal consistency, were highlighted in regard to the focus on qualitative data. Finally, the notion of qualitative data was situated in the process of formulating a method or methodology. The choices of assignment to follow are intended to apply the subject matter of this part, bring into the foreground the formulation of an inquiry that uses qualitative data, and pinpoint some research skills for doing so.

Assignment 2

Assignments should reflect what is being discussed.

Select ONE alternative below to complete this assignment. Important: (1) be sure to read the full details of your choice in Appendix A, and (2) when you send your assignment to the instructor, be sure to indicate which alternative you are completing.

2-A. This choice involves the design of a procotol for research interviewing.

2-B. This choice involves the conceptualization and articulation of an a priori category scheme for observational research.

2-C. This choice involves the conceptualization of search and retrieval strategies for archival and database research.

2-D. This choice involves the design and development of a questionnaire for survey research.

2-E. This choice involves a comparative study of three data types: numbers, pictures, and words.

2-F. This choice involves operationalizing an aspect of research that makes use of qualitative data in the form of pictures or words.

Part III

COLLECTING QUALITATIVE DATA

Required

Kvale, S. (1996). *InterViews.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. [Chapters 5-9]
Miles, M. and Huberman, A. (1994). *Qualitative Data Analysis.* Second edition. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. [Chapter 2, 3, and 4]
Morse, J. and Field, P. (1995). *Qualitative Research Methods for Health Professionals.* Second edition. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. [Chapter 5]

Course Reader

Read the articles listed under Part III.

Recommended

Denzin, N. and Lincoln, Y. (Editors) (1994). *Handbook of Qualitative Research.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. [Chapters 22-26]
Fetterman, D. (1989). *Ethnography: Step by Step.* Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
Jorgensen, D. (1989). *Participant Observation: A Methodology for Human Studies.* Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
Lofland, J. and Lofland, L. (1984). *Analyzing Social Settings: A Guide to Qualitative Observation and Analysis.* Second edition. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing.
Marshall, C. and Rossman, G. (1995). *Designing Qualitative Research.* Second edition. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
Mishler, E. (1986). *Research Interviewing: Context and Narrative.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
Rubin, H. and Rubin, I. (1995). *Qualitative Interviewing: The Art of Hearing Data.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. [Note: an alternative to Kvale (1996)]
Strauss, A. and Corbin, J. (1990). *Basics in Qualitative Research: Grounded Theory Procedures and Techniques.* Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
Yin, R. (1994). *Case Study Research: Designs and Methods.* Second edition. Thousand Oaks: CA: Sage. [Chapters 3-4]

Advanced Reading

None

Overview

Where the last part of the learning guide provided an orientation and context for your study of research involving qualitative data, this part of the guide discusses preparation for and collection of qualitative data, regardless of the many choices of research methods confronting the researcher.

After some general comments about formulating an inquiry to obtain qualitative data, specifically operationalizing, sampling, designing and planning for research, I stress four primary avenues researchers have used to get_ qualitative data, namely research interviewing, observing in the field, and examining documents and artifacts. The efforts of researchers to construct links—via data types, data collection techniques and procedures—from their questions to their answers have given rise to a wide assortment of implicit research strategies to be considered in this part of the learning guide.

At the end of this part, the choices for the assignment engages you in exercising select research skills of collecting qualitative data.

Formulating Research to Collect Qualitative Data

Conceptualizing an inquiry that expects to collect and process qualitative data is perhaps easiest to understand by stating that researchers cast their conceptualizations of research in the form of a research proposal for public scrutiny. Formulation is usually taken as the first of several stages of a general research cycle executed to complete an inquiry.

Formulation in terms of a research proposal is usually necessary for one or more of the following reasons, to: (1) obtain funding, (2) gain access to resources, (3) clear legal restrictions on the use human beings, (4) provide ethical and environmental justifiication, (5) estabish accountability for any adverse consequences of the research, (6) justify use of resources (persons, materials, money, and time), and (7) demonstrate one's qualifications and readiness to conduct the inquiry (grants, theses, dissertations).

Formulation expressed as a research proposal represents the researcher's best presentation of a coherent and internally consistent basis for the inquiry. It brings together several key constructs about inquiry: the research questions, the rationale, definitions of key terms and concepts, kinds of data expected, the research design and plan, techniques and procedures. Some sources particularly informative about proposals to collect qualitative data are Marshall and Rossman (1995) and the appendices of Morse and Field (1995).

Operationalizing Research for Qualitative Data

It is worth noting that a specialized focus on qualitative data does not dismiss the researcher from defining key constructs and finding clear rules and procedures that can be communicated to others about what was done to obtain the data. In science, this is what researchers generally mean by the term *operationalization.* As quantitative data results typically from defining constructs in terms of instrumentation that measures the construct along a scale, qualitative data requires definition of those procedures which generate it as well.

As one might expect from discussion in the previous parts of the learning guide, the most common means of operationalizing for qualitative data is to use a category scheme. Each category of the scheme must have clear definition to be meaningfully applied. Such definitions of a word or an image (one category) commonly entail description by means of other words and/or images, respectively. Its seems a bit circular, which it can be. However, the language game of defining words by other words, numbers by other numbers, and pictures by other pictures is a possible trap to be avoided when the set of definitions become a self-referential conceptual system that leads the researcher nowhere in one or more of the following directions: (1) getting to answers of the research questions, (2) advancing the knowledge of the field, (3) deepening one's personal understanding of what one is studying, and (4) helping to bring about ameliorative change. In other words, failing to operationalize frustrates and defeats one or more of the most fundamental interests (aims) of doing the research in the first place.

When categorization is applied before data collection, it is termed a priori category (coding) scheme, and when it is done after data collection it is termed a posteriori category (coding) scheme. Further, when the categories are those from the researcher's review of the literature and theory in the topic area, the term *deductive* category (coding) scheme is appropriate, because it is precategorically deduced from the abstract theoretical subject matter and inferred to be applicable to the more concrete empirical level of the data to be collected. In contrast, when the categories are taken from or suggested by the data collected, for example in the case of pilot research and programmatic research, they form an *inductive* category (coding) scheme to be applied to the same data collected and/or to subsequent data to be collected. In short, the terminology provides useful descriptors for communicating the logic behind the coding scheme. The kinds of coding schemes comprise a category scheme in itself (Figure 2), which may be summarized and applied to the study of qualitative data.

	DEDUCTIVE	INDUCTIVE
A PRIORI	1	2
A POSTERIORI	3	4

Figure 2. A four quadrant matrix and logic for the classification of category (coding) schemes used in research.

These four quadrants of the matrix reveal to us the consequences of decisions researchers make to operationalize their constructs to collect data. The first case represents a category scheme taken directly from a theory of a discipline or field of study, for example the defense mechanisms described by Sigmund Freud or the stages of intellectual development described by Jean Piaget. The second case represents a category scheme generated from the data processing of prior research, such as a checklist for observing and recording overt behaviors, which is based on the labels equivalent to the acts or those the participants themselves seem to apply to aggregate and classify their responses. The third case represents a category scheme that the researcher imposes on the data after it has been collected, based on theoretical inferences of the researcher about the data collected, for example an ethnography organized and written according to researcher conceived communal locations within the community, or a psychobiography similarly completed according to the researcher's perceptions of the presumed salient periods of the person's life. Lastly, the fourth case represents a category scheme that the researcher sees and teases out of the data collected based on the words and labels the participants appear to be using in providing their data to the researcher.

In the sections to follow, please take special note that whether one prefers research interviewing, observation, and/or examination of documents and artifacts, the four descriptor combinations of category (coding) schemes described above apply. Category schemes are required very often to collect but always to process qualitative data.

Sampling

Data typically represent but a sample of what could have been collected. Most research methods depend on sampling to apply to people, places, and periods. For example, sampling time periods and places in observational research helps to delimit the boundaries of the research project. Sampling decisions are critical. Who is to be observed? What is noteworthy of what happens? Where does the researcher look to have the greatest likelihood to observe the phenomenon? What times of the day and in what places should the researcher be to observe the phenomenon?

But sampling also invades decisions about the research design and plan of an inquiry. What eligibility criteria are to be selected for the actual selection of the research participants, and perhaps as well, the assignment of those persons to specific groupings in the research design? How often must one interact with a group of participants, a part of the research design, to establish the credibility of their data? Among the several procedures available to collect similar kinds of data, which one is the best one for this particular inquiry? These decisions and many more like them illustrate the importance of sampling.

Consequently, sampling is an essential area of know-how in formulating inquiry and collecting data. The study of various sampling plans, as they are usually termed, really pays off in making decisions early-on in inquiry to give the project a chance to establish its internal and external validity. Many texts divide sampling plans into two categories, probability and non probability sampling. Examples of the former are random and stratified random sampling, and examples of the latter are snowball, purposive, and accidental sampling. Whether one understands the distinction on the basis of probability theory, it behooves the researcher to understand the informed use of each choice of plan and its applicability to his/her project.

Some useful sources to learn about these plans are Babbie (1973), Miller (19 91), and Patton (1990).

Research Design and Research Plan Where the research *design* informs the researcher about the spatial and conceptual configuration of resources (persons, materials, conditions, interventions, money, and time) to be used to conduct the research study, the research *plan* informs the researcher of the temporal steps to follow that consumes the resources of the research study leading to the collection and processing of the data. For example, in psychohistorical research, one must decide the times and places of the study that comprise the history. The choice and configuration of times and places provides the psychohistorian with the design of the study. The research plan would entail the step-by-step procedures the researcher needs to collect the data for the psychohistory. The psychology theory helps to inform the researcher as to the nature of the data needed for interpretative purposes over the course (history) of the data collection period.

Research design and plan are complementary constructs, and every research proposal is expected to include them. However, many of the methods in psychology and human science research have not progressed to the point where one has a source to review design and plan choices best suited to the proposed inquiry. It seems researchers

still must design and plan seemingly unique configurations tailored to each investigation. Clearly the greatest advances in these areas has been with experimental and correlational methods (Campbell and Stanley, 1963; Coan, 1961). Several possibilities are emerging more recently for case study method (Miles and Huberman (1994); Yin, 1993, 1994). There are other methods making progress, such as the psychohistory example above, but suffice it note these within the limited explication this guide can provide.

Given the basic distinction between research design and research plan, there is as yet no clear and accepted schemes for these constructs in their application to collect qualitative data. But this should not surprise us, for research designs and plans are more dependent on the method than on data type. The fact that experimental methods, for example, have been used predominantely to collect and process quantitative data should not detract researchers from considering these designs and plans for the purposes of collecting and processing qualitative data as well. I would take this position for other methods and would expect that further advances in methodology will provide researchers new to a method with more established designs and plans to assist them with proposing and conducting their research.

Research Interviewing

We some of the SAGE publications

One of the most popular data collection techniques is research interviewing. Its importance in psychology and human science is so marked that I thought it necessary to have one of the required texts to accompany this learning guide cover this subject. There is much that can be said about this form of data collection, and Kvale (1995) provides a fine presentation of many aspects. Other helpful resources are McCracken (1988), Miller (1991), Mishler (1986), Morse and Field (1995), and Rubin and Rubin (1995).

Interviewing is shaped by many considerations, such as the degree of structure imposed on the question asking and sequencing of questions, the format and content of the questioning, the theoretical and philosophical propensities of the interviewer, the interpersonal skills of the researcher, and the setting of the interview.

Many assumptions are made about the participant interviewees, such as his/her honesty, accuracy, and articulation in responding to questions.

More commonly research interviewing involves tape recorded sessions with the idea of transcribing the tapes into written transcripts for data processing. In fact, the transcribing is often taken to be the first step of data processing. Oftentimes, the researcher may take auxillary notes, or may be assisted by others taking notes to pick up aspects of the interview and context that a tape recorder cannot, such as body

movement and facial expression. Videotaping may help capture a more global scene, but still frames the visual image and does not replace the many auditory and non auditory out-of-frame aspects of interviewing that occur, especially when the data collection sessions may be ambulatory—often the case in field work involving participant observation running with informal unstructured (though recorded) interviewing.

Where ethnographers have followed a tradition of adapting the data collection to the unaltered context as much as possible for the interview, researchers using other methods, such as phenomenology, hermeneutics, and psychobiography, have followed a tradition of isolating their interviewees in a room that is relatively quiet and undisturbed for the interview, be it the participant's home or workplace, a quiet corner of an almost empty cafe, or the researcher's office. However, interviewing is not always done in-person of course. The telephone interview, mail survey type interview, email and internet interview provide more recent media, though the context is more remote and less controllable, these media have broadened researcher accessibility to interview more distant and dispersed populations.

Therefore, there are many kinds of interviewing for research purposes and many variations as one takes into account the considerations highlighted above.

Making Observations

A second area of activity that comprises data collection techniques for obtaining qualitative data is observational research. Observational method tends to come in three well established forms: naturalistic observation, non participant observation, and participant observation. I like to use a metaphor to convey the essence of these variations by saying the first involves looking through a telescope or remote device unknown to those being observed, the second involves sitting on a park bench watching even though those being watched might realize it, and the third involves active interaction, even dialog and conversation with those who are being observed.

However, two rather neglected and still nacent forms in the textbooks and research literature may be termed self-observation and group observation. As potentialities for developing these forms of observation, heuristic research method (Moustakas, 1990) tends toward the former, and focus group research (Krueger, 1988) tends toward the later.

Like research interviewing, as one studies what is involved in making observations, it becomes more obvious that observation is not only a method in its own right, but also a data collection technique that through innovation is incorporated into other methods. The fuzziness of this boundary often gives rise to the construction of a methodology

consisting of observational method and one or more methods. Ethnography is an outstanding example of this research practice.

To understand what it means to make an observation is worth some considerable attention. That the choice of words "make" and "observation" communicate the act of the researcher is no accident. Our domination of the sense of vision here conveys the bias of the researcher to witness the phenonemon in person. This confrontation with the phenomenon leads to a selectivity by the researcher of what has been witnessed. The researcher chooses numbers, pictures, and/or words to represent what has been witnessed. One must never forget—and it is easy to—that the observation is not the phenomenon, but a representation of some researcher selected aspects of it. In a metaphorical vain, the map is not the territory. And further acts of the researcher, specifically those of data processing, typically distance the researcher further from the original observation and the reality of the phenomenon.

In this learning guide, the emphasis is on pictures and words. The researcher literally makes the form to represent that which was witnessed, and this form is termed an observation. It may be a word, a phrase, a paragraph of text, a symbol, configuration of symbols, drawing, photograph, videotape, and so on. Observations are often used synonymously with data, though the former more properly refers to the researcher's acts of making, and the latter to what the researcher does with these makings to process them into various aggregations, themes, displays, summaries, synopses, and the like.

In closing this section, I should mention that the construct "observation" has been generalized to all forms of research in psychology and human science. There is no restriction to my knowledge in the use of the terms observation and datum to one method and not to others. In other words, observation and datum are foundational constructs in research methodology.

Some helpful references on making observations and doing field work are Fetterman (1989), Jorgensen (1989), Lofland and Lofland (1984), Morse and Field (1995), Schatzman and Strauss (1973), and Whyte (1984).

AGAIN, what is the correspondence between text of course guide and assigned reading?

Archives, Artifacts, Documents, and Texts

This area is as rich with resources of qualitatve data as interviewing and observation. Here researchers look for and collect objects thought relevant to their research questions. Like participant observation and research interviewing, interactions with persons are usually necessary to obtain these sources, but they do not directly come from talking to and watching people in the here and now, so to speak. There is one exception—text—for which I have some comments at the end of this section.

Archival research is a recognized and central part of many fields of study, such as anthropology, archeology, criminology, ethnography, and philology. In a real sense, accessing and using a library of the published subject matter of a field of knowledge, an important part of every research investigation, demonstrates that archival research is a component of every research method. An archeological site can be conceptualized as an archive. So can the patient, citizen, pupil, and inmate records in the dozens of filing cabinets of a hospital, government agency, school, and penal institution, respectively. And so can the collected works and artifacts in the home of a deseased Pablo Picasso, Sigmund Freud, and Eugene O'Neil. ~~No doubt this is the point of establishing a memorial library for each recent President of the United States to house the written, audio, and video works of and pertinent to their administration.~~

Although archives are often defined in terms of written documents, photos, and affiliated memorabilia, there may be of course many kinds of artifacts in them. However, the notion of artifact is not confined to an archive. For example, one of the specialty areas of research skill, often humorous to the unspecialized, is garbology. Social scientists, especially anthropologists and archeologists, have become very adept at field work going through human discards, trash, and sediment layers discovering much about their former owners as a result. In other words, many cultural products, art, and constructions of all kinds pertinent to a person, neighborhood, community, and society provide an important source of qualitative data for research in psychology and human science.

Furthermore, documents also are not confined to those found only in an archive. Typically documentation about the person or persons studied, or as often the organizational or sociocultural context of the study becomes a critial source of information to situate the research project in its proper context and help the researcher better grasp the delimitations of the project in regard to its currency and generalizability. Both case study method and evaluation research, for example, makes religious use of documentation as one source of data. Specifically, a researcher doing a case study of a business undergoing a major employee reduction (downsizing) may consider it important to pour through the internal memoranda, company forms and progress reports leading up to and into the "crisis." As a second specific example, the program evaluator for a formative type research evaluation may examine carefully all written material presenting the program to its clients as well as program forms, descriptions, and related texts pertinent to approving, starting up, and implementing the program.

The salient concerns of archival and artifact researchers involve access, quality of records, and category schemes to find, retrieve, organize, and present information. Some sources for further study are Marshall and Rossman (1995) and Webb et al (1981).

The notion of "text" in research has a colorful history. One tends to associate text with the word. Writing in various forms creates text. It is the written narratives that researchers use as data in their research. Commonly, the research interview is transcribed into a written text. Events as witnessed by the observer are written up as field notes. But more formerly text may be identified especially with hermeneutics, that is, the interpretation of text, directed originally to biblical scrolls, then to medieval translations from one language to another, and finally to representations of content discernably woven into context. Recent philosophical influences, such as those of Foucault, are evident, and the broader notion of text is spreading its tentacles through psychology and the human sciences. For research purposes, the notion of text is being applied to not only the written flow of words, but also the flow of events in time and the sociocultural interconnections that comprise the fabric of a society covering a locality. Although this liberation of the construct from the confines of the two dimensional page seem to require the importation of other metaphors, these metaphors are very helpful to researchers in formulating, collecting, processing, and presenting qualitative data. Hence, the contents of the archives, artifacts, and documents of all kinds converge to form the texts of many researchers' projects, such as those of ethnography, psychobiography, and case study. Research text often comprise a mix of forms of qualitative data.

Qualitative Data Search and Retrieval

Perhaps the most recent advance in methodology applied to collecting qualitative data is the invention and growth of computer based search and retrieval technologies. The Internet is our premier example. These advances in technology mean a higher demand for know-how and skill at search and retrieval, which in turn brings a wider realm of potential data to the researcher. The impact of such realities as the Internet is having a profound effect on research in psychology and human science. Though all said and referenced earlier about sampling applies, the data pool has gone global in many respects. What these recent advances will portend for changing the practices of data collection and various research methods, we are presently witness to and will likely participate in over the coming decades.

To wet one's appetite, I can offer but one of the many emergent consequences here. What constitutes an archive is changing. Rather than finding an established and circumscribed database to which the researcher seeks an answer to his/her research question, more expectantly to the course of most scientific inquiries, the researcher can pose the question and subsequently define the database as a subsystem (subarchive) of the global informatique. This is more and more possible because the storage of events

and communications are more widespread, secure, and available as the "stored present" on its way to the cumulative record of humanity in terms of numbers, words, and pictures. While our recollecting of the events of today may fade day by day, the stored communications become additions to our growing worldwide archive. The importance of this phenomenon cannot be overstated. As the technology continues to improve, the researcher has increasing power to ensure the accuracy of the data, thicken and integrate the database, and efficiently upgrade and update the database, all to address more precisely, comprehesively, and validly the questions posed.

Research Strategy

A strategy consists of a series of maneuvers intended to get from one location to another, defeat an adversary, and coordinate a collective effort to acomplish some task. In the province of research, a research strategy may be equivalent to a method, a design, a plan, a style, or some combination of them that the researcher uses to collect the data. Proven strategies for research often tend to be formalized through articulation by textbook authors as well as researchers, who tend to label some of them as research strategies, others as research designs, still others as research plans, and sometimes as research methods, guaranteeing thereby to confuse and drive a little crazy their readers, students, and colleagues as a result. Nevertheless, it usually favors the researcher to develop some form of strategy in advance to collect qualitative data as efficiently and accurately as possible.

What are a few such strategies to foster data collection of a qualitative nature? In research interviewing, the design of an interview protocol is highly recommended. The protocol is a general guide or aid for the interviewer to be sure all areas of the interview and general sense of the sequencing of questioning will occur for each person interviewed. The exact conduct of the interview, sequence of the questions, and probing for specifics may vary from interview to interview, but the strategy is to use the protocol to cover the territory, so to speak, and transport the dialog from start to finish—to get beyond the introductions, into the meat of it, and eventually to closure. In making observations in the field, the strategy may inform the researcher where to be for predetermined periods to cover the territory, and advise the researcher of those circumstances to initiate contact and conversation with persons and those that one does not. In archival research and use of databases, a research strategy may suggest a heuristic to explore the data base for qualitative data pertinent to the research question, and it may inform the researcher regarding the most efficient actions to access and retrieve relevant information. Finally, there is the strategy, to ensure adequate coverage

and depth in the data, that consists of two phases: first survey the population with a questionnaire, and second interview by telephone and/or face-to-face interviews a subsample of those surveyed to obtain an in-depth and more personable examination to address the research questions of the study. This last strategy is popular with the doctoral dissertation in psychology and human science.

In other words, research strategies are key conceptual representations for action that researchers apply to streamline data collection procedures and techniques to up as much as possible the quantity and quality of their data.

Summary

This part of the learning guide has focused mostly on collecting qualitative data. There are a multitude of methods which make use of known data collection techniques and procedures to obtain qualitative data. Research interviewing, observation, and examination of documents and artifacts are outstanding means to do so in psychology and human science. The exact fashion in which the researcher uses one or more of these data collection techniques and procedures helps define the character of the particular research method or methodology constructed by the researcher, ie., constant comparative method, case study, psychohistory, psychobiography, phenomenology, ethnography, and so on. Everpresent in the researcher's mind is the formulation and execution of strategies to obtain productive qualitative data which directly addresses the research questions posed.

Assignment 3

Does not seem to be much relationship between the guide, reading and assignments.

The choices of the assignment are about collecting qualitative data. They also bring into the foreground some important skills one must exercise to collect qualitative data. The descriptions here are intentionally brief, therefore please be sure to read carefully the full descriptions located in Appendix A.

Select ONE alternative only from among the choices below.

3-A. This choice involves conducting the research interview.

3-B. This choice involves observing and making observations.

3-C. This choice invoves search and retrieval of information; it requires technology of access to databases.

3-D. This choice involves collecting artifacts.

3-E. Other forms of collecting qualitative data may be proposed to the instructor for his/her approval. Consult details in Appendix A and present your proposal to the instructor.

Part IV

PROCESSING QUALITATIVE DATA

Required

Kvale, S. (1996). *InterViews.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. [Chapters 10 and 11]
Miles, M. and Huberman, A. (1994). *Qualitative Data Analysis.* Second edition. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. [Chapter 4-9]
Morse, J. and Field, P. (1995). *Qualitative Research Methods for Health Professionals.* Second edition. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. Chapter 6]

Course Reader

Read the articles listed under Part IV.

Recommended

Denzin, N. and Lincoln, Y. (Editors) (1994). *Handbook of Qualitative Research.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. [Chapters 27-29]
Fetterman, D. (1989). *Ethnography: Step by Step.* Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
Jorgensen, D. (1989). *Participant Observation: A Methodology for Human Studies.* Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
Lofland, J. and Lofland, L. (1984). *Analyzina Social Settings: A Guide to Qualitative Observation and Analysis.* Second edition. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing.
Mishler, E. (1986). *Research Interviewing: Context and Narrative.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
Rubin, H. and Rubin, I. (1995). *Qualitative Interviewing: The Art of Hearing Data.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. [Note: an alternative to Kvale (1996)]
Strauss, A. and Corbin, J. (1990). *Basics in Qualitative Research: Grounded Theory Procedures and Techniques.* Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
Yin, R. (1994). *Case Study Research: Designs and Methods.* Second edition. Thousand Oaks: CA: Sage. [Chapter 5]

Advanced Reading

None

Overview

Where the last part of the learning guide discussed an orientation and context for your study of data collecting, this part of the guide discusses the processing of qualitative data.

After some general comments about data processing, several emphases are stressed, namely analysis, synthesis, dialectices, convergence and triangulation, which come up repeatedly across many research methods using qualitative data. Again the notion of research strategy is evoked and applied, for it is just as important to data processing as data collection discussed previously.

formulating an inquiry to obtain qualitative data, specifically operationalizing, sampling,

The choices of assignment at the end of this part of the learning guide involve you in exercising select research skills of processing qualitative data.

Data Processing

There are a number of operations open to the researcher to work wth the data once it is collected. The general phrase "data processing" is meant to convey any one or more the procedures and techniques that fall in the research cycle between data collection and interpretation. Some general terms that convey such procedures and techniques are: abstraction, aggregation, analysis, clustering, compilation, convergence, cross-tabulation, explication, extraction, ordering, reduction, sorting, synthesis, and triangulation. Although I shall not take the text space to describe each one of these terms, with the exception of the sections to follow, it is important to be on the look out for these and other such terms which communicate the procedural acts that researchers conduct with, to, and on their data. In all cases, the basic idea here is to work with the data in meaningful ways, such that they become more interpretable. However, processing must be done carefully without certain altercations of the data thereby falling prey to pseudoscientific tendencies, such as selectivity, prejudical preference, and falsification of evidence that of course jeopardizes subsequent interpretation, not to mention the validity of the inquiry. Miles and Huberman (1994) has been selected to accompany this learning guide especially because of its emphasis on data processing. Other publications on data processing for qualitative data in psychology and human science are Coffey and Atkinson (1996), Denzin (1989), Strauss (1987), and Strauss and Corbin (1990).

Be it qualitative or quantitative data types, data processing today makes heavy use of technology to reduce the researcher's vulnerabilities and speed data processing. Obviously, we implicate and depend more than ever on computer software to shape,

manipulate, organize, sort, and display the numbers, pictures, and words of research. Miles and Huberman (1996) cover more recent advances in the use of computer assisted data processing in research. Other references noteworthy of attention are Fielding and Lee (1991), Kelle (1995), Tesch (1990), and Weitzman and Miles (1995).

Analysis

To break a whole into parts is what we mean by analysis. Next to description, which is often an analytic activity, this is much of what scientists do. In fact, the term science stems from the Sandskrit root *sci,* meaning to cut, purposively related to the association between science and analysis. Over the decades researchers have become experts at analysis. Therefore, it should not be surprising to discover the pervasive presence of analysis in almost all forms of inquiry, all research methods in psychology and human science.

Take notice of the forms in which analysis shows itself in the research methods studied. To illustrate, the survey researcher designs the whole survey comprised of different items presumably relevant to his/her research questions. Many of the survey items are further broken down into qualitative alternatives, such as ethnicity, gender, geographical region, and other multiple choice type responses. The data is processed according to these choices, and often sorted accordingly. Specifically, the researcher may be interested in the cross-tabulation between gender and symptomatology in a study of gender differences and a particular psychodiagnostic disorder. The data processing, in other words, takes the researcher into finer and finer levels of analysis of the survey data.

To take another type of illustration, phenomenological data processing, often termed the data reduction, requires the research to make numerous cuts in the text to distinguish one meaning unit from another. Redundant aspects are dismissed. This kind of preparation of the text for subsequent processing may be considered a form of analytic activity, requiring some application of skill, termed imaginative variation, that is clearly different kind of analysis than that illustrated above with survey research.

To show the diversity and pervasiveness of analysis as a basic skill area in research, I make reference to a third form of analysis pertinent to such methods as participant observation, participatory action research and ethnography, where the researcher enters the field and becomes immersed in data collecting and processing at the same time. For many researchers of this inclination, the separation of collection and processing is largely artificial. In such cases, the researcher comes to know the field of his/her emersion. This knowing involves creating a conceptualization of the territory, a cognitive map if you will,

which consists of many landmarks, individual characters, and happenings. This act of topographical creation is analytic as much as it is holistic. Processing the parts of the territory means returning again and again to witness, experience, interact, and make progressively more detailed observations and field notes. From day to day in the research context, the researcher's ideal priority consists of collection and processing data. It is manditory and must become habitual if one is to fulfill the expectation that when one does eventually sever one's connection with the field, or more accurately terminate data collection, one is ready to organize, interpret, and report what one has found. Reading the works of anthropologists, sociologists, and ethnographers can be partcularly revealing on this account. See for examples Whyte (1981, 1984) and Golden (1976), and Goldstein and Goldstein (1976).

Associated with archival research to some extend is the examination of documents and related material that was collected by others, typically before the research underway was even formulated. Examination of such material is often termed Secondary Analysis.

Synthesis

The complementary process of analysis is synthesis. However, in the childhood rhyme about humpty dumpty falling off the wall into pieces (analysis), the reassembly of the parts back into the whole usually does not recreate the phenomenon studied. Synthesis involves an integration of findings that is largely dependent on the skill of the researcher. In psychology and human science, synthesis conveys the researcher's integration. Syntheses of the same data may vary somewhat from researcher to researcher. Nevertheless, the hope is that each version has some general commonality and each version makes an important contribution to the subject matter and theory in psychology and human science.

The rules and procedures to assist the researcher with synthesizing activity with qualitative data typically make liberal use of category (coding) schemes. Computer software can take advantage of various algorithms to process qualitative data, such as the detection of repetition of key descriptors in the text designated by the researcher, aggregation of text according to a thesaurus of associated meanings, or chronologically and spatially organizing text. Further, these routines are becoming more sophisticated at taking in scanned data and introjecting codings (tags) that are critical to subsequent processing. Furthermore, initial stages of processing can efficiently move to more integrated stages, whereby graphs, charts, pictures, and other kinds of displays can effectively synthesize findings. The rapid search and find subroutines now save the current generation of researchers countless hours to the chagrin of the older generation

who remembers hole punch machines and card sorters. However, the researcher still must spend countless hours preparing the text for computer processing, but I suspect even those days are numbered as the technology becomes ever more useful for real time data collection and processing.

When the researcher can articulate, even refer to a category scheme publically available, it is usually easier for others to grasp the data synthesis, that is, to follow the researcher's progressive integration of the data from digestable pieces to dense summaries of the results. Implicit use of category schemes to synthesis data is one of the continual problems plaguing researchers who must find ways to communicate to others how they came up with the categories of the synthesis, specifically the themes, clusters, trends, and the like from the data.

Dialectics

Isn't this process discussed in the readings?

The word of course has many associated meanings, but I wish to point out only one pertinent to certain forms of data processing. During the data processing phase of an inquiry, it is important for the researcher to engage consciously in a back and forth between the data as a whole and its various parts which are preoccupying the researcher's attention. Despite the identification of this back and forth from the whole to the parts and back to the whole, again and again with the hermeneutic circle of hermenutical methods, it is an important to see that a dialectic is relevant to most research methods during the data processing phase of the inquiry.

In constant comparative method leading to grounded theory, one experiences a form of this whole-to-part-to-whole dialectic as the grounded theory emerges in the accumulation of data from one participant processed interview to the next. The ethnographer frequently engages in struggling to grasp larger wholes of the culture in which s/he is emersed between intense sessions of interaction with participants. Psychohistorians move back and forth between the grander considerations of the collective masses of humanity and their focal preoccupations with select individuals or small groups that epitomize these movements. In general, researchers are encouraged to dive into the data taking it to the next step of processing and intermittently step back from the data to view it as a whole. The conscious application of a dialectic serves as a check and self-correcting procedure to ensure that no relevant evidence is missed, and that the internal validity of the inquiry is maintained, that is, that each step of processing remains meaningful and germane to movement toward an answer to the research question.

Though the case is favored here for dialectics in the processing of qualitative data, I should add in closing this section that the general research cycle involves dialectics too (Collen, 1996). The back and forth may appear between the research questions and the published literature of the subject area as the researcher gradually funnels down the questions into researchable forms. The back and forth typically appears in the writing of the research report between a sense of the whole and select portions of the emerging manuscript. But each time through a successful and fruitful inquiry of a particular phenomenon, from formulation through reporting, the researcher's pre-understanding has been deepened, broadened, even radically revised. Consequently through inquiry the researcher in this sense is no longer the same person. Such a distinguishing feature apparently associated with most forms of hermeneutics in fact pervades to some degree most forms of disciplined inquiry in psychology and human science, if one cares to scrutinize and experience first-hand the execution of a specific research method.

Convergence and Triangulation

The last emphasis to data processing to be described briefly in this part of the learning guide is intended to indicate yet another way researchers process their data. Unlike the activities of analysis, synthesis, and dialectics, triangulation entails tying at least three datum points, sources of evidence, observations, and the like together to form an anchor in what typically feels like an ocean of text. These anchors bring a kind of stability to the process. To follow this metaphor a bit farther, with a number of anchors in place, the researcher can eventually construct a kind of fishnet like web of ropes through the ocean, which will become invaluable to organize and display the findings as the web connects to the research questions, those ships floating on the surface.

Taken from the surveyor finding topographical fixes to chart out segments of land and the celestial navigator making a watery fix with the aid of the astrolabe, the act of triangulation is a form of convergence. Yin (1994) seems to favor the convergence of at least three different data collection techniques, such as observation, interviews, and documents, which contain corroborating information. Miles and Huberman (1994) seem to favor the use of matrices, tree structures, clustering, meta-analytic, and related data processing techniques to discover these points of convergence. Incidently, the cross-tabulation type matrices of meta-analysis (Glass et al., 1981; Rosenthal, 1991), as well as the multi-method multi-trait matrix developed by Campbell and Fiske (1959) for correlational method are also applicable for processing qualitative data to look for points of convergence. Finally, doing integrative reviews of the literature, for example Cooper (1989), we see similar underlying concepts applied for synthesis and convergence.

Research Strategy

Discuss in relation to both type of methodology.

Although research strategy was described in the last part of this learning guide as a set or configuration of intended actions to accomplish some task, in terms of this part of the guide, it boils down to a series of maneuvers intended to process the data efficiently and effectively toward answering the research question(s).

There are many examples of such strategies that researchers have discovered to process the data obtained from interviewing, observing, and collecting artifacts and documents. Given the data is qualitative in nature, it is common to employ a category scheme. Hence, the strategy is often to get a relevant scheme and sift the data through it. This is more deductive and a priori, as described in the previous part of this learning guide. Much of survey research and observational method may be of this type. In general, the more traditional forms of content analysis also tend to be of this kind found in social, media, and political science research.

Alternatively, it may be the intention of the researcher to use a formal set of rules to process the data thereby creating a category scheme as the major finding of the inquiry. This strategy is more inductive and a posteriori. This strategy is more often seen in forms of phenomenological method and hermeneutics as well as constant comparative method leading to grounded theory. More recent innovations in content analysis favor the use of emergent categories inherent in the data, which also speaks to this kind of data processing.

Further still are the contributions of authors like Miles and Huberman (1994) who recommend the advantages of within-case and cross-case analysis as a strategy, and Yin (1993, 1994) who has stressed the triangulation of multiple data sources as a strategy. In within-case analysis, an in-depth presentation of each case is presented separately to give the reader both the modal and unique findings of the case. This is followed by comparisions across cases to bring out commonalities of the sample, its diversity, and delimitations relative to any particular individual and what is known about the population from which the sample was drawn. In triangulation, intersections are attempted from the convergence of data obtained from interviews, documents, and observations for example that establish stable findings.

Even though not identified with any particular researcher, I wish to note two other examples of strategy in processing qualitative data. Many researchers consider the combination of analysis of the content followed by its synthesis as an effective strategic preparation for interpretation. The data is broken down into managable parts. Those parts relevant to the research questions asked draw the researcher's attention. Those parts are then aggregated into a larger unit, often refered to as a category, theme, trend,

and the like, which in turn is synthesized with other aggregates into even larger aggregations, and eventually a wholistic description of the phenomenon.. Each major stage of the analysis and synthesis is presented for the reader's inspection. There may be a final synthesis back to a whole, or the researcher may prefer to leave that wholistic description as part of his/her interpretation and discussion of the findings.

The second and last example I wish to mention may be more akin to the process of setting up and detailing a story board. The researcher has to find and sequence a series of frames, a special kind of categorization of the data, so to speak, which will be later interpreted and reported. The data are organized according to the "story" to be told and the narrative account of the data to be written. The processing of the data in this instance involves the selecting, organizing, and displaying the findings to be conveyed. There are no formal rules of analysis and synthesis necessarily applied, but it is more the task of inclusion and exclusion, and the selection of representative and exemplary aspects of the phenomenon that will require a weaving together to address adequately and thoroughly the research question(s) posed.

Summary

This part of the learning guide centers on processing qualitative data. There are as many ways to process qualitative data as to collect it. The data from research interviewing, observation, and gathering of documents and artifacts typically endear the researcher to various category (coding) schemes to analyze, synthesize, organize, and display. Researchers partial to each research method have favored certain ways to process their data, thus various categorizations strategies have become prominent. Regardless of the preference, the chosen strategy is to place the researcher in the position to be able to interpret and report, the topics of the next part of this learning guide.

Assignments 4

The choices of the assignment are about processing qualitative data. These choices also emphasize those research skills that one must exercise to process qualitative data. The descriptions here are intentionally brief, therefore please be sure to read carefully the full descriptions located in Appendix A.

Select ONE alternative only from among those to follow in order to complete this assignment. Important: be sure to indicate which alternative you are completing when you send your assignment to the instructor.

4-A. This choice involves processing qualitative data obtained from research interviewing.

4-B. This choice involves observational research. It concerns the processing of observations made in the field.

4-C. This assignment requires processing text as data obtained from archival and database research.

4-D. This choice consists of processing the qualitative data of artifacts.

4-E. Other forms of processing qualitative data may be proposed to the instructor. All such proposals should follow the same guidelines to obtain the data as conveyed in the previous choices of this assignment.

Suggestion: Use a real research example for each method and describe each one from beginning to end. This is the best way for students to get a hands on understanding of research

For assignments: data for 2-3 methods should be collected and analyzed with the instructor reviewing both step of the process

Part V

INTERPRETING AND REPORTING QUALITATIVE DATA

Required

Kvale, S. (1996). *InterViews.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. [Chapters 12-15]
Miles, M. and Huberman, A. (1994). *Qualitative Data Analysis.* Second edition. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. [Chapters 10 and 12]
Morse, J. and Field, P. (1995). *Qualitative Research Methods for Health Professionals.* Second edition. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. [Chapter 8]

Course Reader

Read the articles listed under Part V.

Recommended

Denzin, N. and Lincoln, Y. (Editors) (1994). *Handbook of Qualitative Research.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. [Chapters 30-34]
Fetterman, D. (1989). *Ethnography: Step by Step.* Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
Jorgensen, D. (1989). *Participant Observation: A Methodology for Human Studies.* Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
Lofland, J. and Lofland, L. (1984). *Analyzina Social Settings: A Guide to Qualitative Observation and Analysis.* Second edition. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing.
Rubin, H. and Rubin, I. (1995). *Qualitative Interviewing: The Art of Hearing Data.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. [Note: an alternative to Kvale (1996)]
Strauss, A. and Corbin, J. (1990). *Basics in Qualitative Research: Grounded Theory Procedures and Techniques.* Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
Yin, R. (1994). *Case Study Research: Designs and Methods.* Second edition. Thousand Oaks: CA: Sage. [Chapter 6]

Advanced Reading

Coffey, A. and Atkinson, P. (1996). *Making Sense of Qualitative Data.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
Silverman, D. (1993). *Interpreting Qualitative Data: Methods forAanalysing Talk, Text and Interaction.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
Wolcott, H. (1994). *Transforming Qualitative Data: Description, Analysis, and Interpretation.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Overview

This part of the learning guide deals with what the researcher does once the findings of the investigation are evident and clearly linked to the research questions. The challenge of interpreting and communicating to others what the findings mean constitutes the remaining phases of the research project. In the sections to follow, I take up briefly some aspects and issues of interpretation and suggest some of the options available to researchers for reporting their investigations. The assignments described at the end of this part of the learning guide are to involve you in exercising research skills of interpreting and reporting the findings from qualitative data.

Inference, Significance, and Interpretation of Qualitative Data

Where inference involves reasoning closure of a conceptual gap between what is and what presumably could be, between the presumed and the real, the matter of interpretation involves the attribution of meaning to what is. Inference also requires a cognitive leap, so to speak, in the application of logic to connect point A in thought with point B. Interpretation is about going under the surface of what is in order to understand more deeply what it means. Significance brings to these considerations more emphasis on the judged importance of what is inferred and interpreted. Although statistical significance has been undoubtedly overemphasized in psychology and related disciplines, there are other forms of significance pertinent to research that researchers do consider in interpreting and reporting their inquiries, specifically: clinical, practical, theoretical, and empirical significance. Given the centrality of these constructs in research, it may be useful for the sake of clarity to provide the following definitions from Urdang (1969):

> INFERENCE: a derivation by reasoning; a conclusion or judgment from premises or evidence.
> INTERPRETATION: a setting forth of the meaning of; an elucidation, explanation, explication, or translation of the meaning of something.
> SIGNIFICANCE: the importance, import, meaning, or consequence of something.

In psychology and allied disciplines, one learns early about inference, specifically statistical inference, as a way to determine whether a result of quantitative data processing yields a difference or a magnitude that is outside of the null set and randomness. The statistics of this kind, such as the Fisher t and F ratios, and the Pearson r correlation coefficient that stem from the quantitative data processing, are termed inferential statistics. Further, there are statistics, termed interpretive statistics, such as omega squared and r squared, that are intended to help researchers make interpretative statements about a significant inferential statistic. As we know, statistical procedures are popular in the social sciences. They aid researchers to make inferences

and interpretations about whether the evidence tends to support or refute the research question, typically examined in the form of a research hypothesis to be tested by comparing the statistical Null hypothesis against the statistical Alternative hypothesis.

But what about the situation where the researcher has qualitative data? Is there an analogue or parallel means by which the researcher can make inferences and interpretations of findings derived by qualitative data processing? It seems doubtful. It is a sticky issue among researchers. Most researchers working with qualitative data either find a way to convert it to quantitative forms for data processing and subsequent interpretation, or take up the challenge of redefining the key constructs of processing and interpreting qualitative data that does not necessarily retain ties with the traditional definitions of these constructs from the point of view of mainstream science.

In the first situation, for example, a quality of humanness or human experience may be cast in the form of a 5 point rating scale, requiring judgments from the participants as follows:

Entirely Absent	Unnoticeable	Just Detectable	Slightly Present	Strongly Present

Scaling qualities into quantitative dimensions follow a well established path regarding operationalization of constructs, construction and application of instruments for data collection, data processing, inference, and interpretation.

In the second situation, for example, a quality of the text (conceptualized liberally) is described in terms of other words or pictures that accentuate the quality in more specific or associated terms. The dictionary and thesaurus are outstanding sources to make this point; note the above three definitions. However, researchers tend to look for the specifics and associates from theory and published literature on the one hand and the raw data on the other hand. I must also refer you to examine once more previous sections in other parts of the learning guide about strategies and types of category (coding) schemes, for these sections are relevant to discussion and study of interpretation.

The study, organization, and display of the specifics and associates affiliated with a quality of human being, humanness, and human experience allow researchers to make inferential and interpretive statements regarding the nature of the quality, its properties, its similarities and differences from other qualities, its boundary characteristics, and that which distinguishes it from its context.

The matter and problem of the definition of terms represent ongoing issues hotly debated among researchers, which we take up in the next part of this learning guide. But suffice it to state here that constructs like interpretation, inference, significance, validity,

credibility, confidence, reliability, scientific method, and replicability are outstanding examples. Usually researchers must fall back on a consensus building process in science to find enough agreement regarding the definition of a key construct to advance the subject area. Interpretation as a basic and essential research skill may be more meaningfully defined in terms of explication for hermeneuticians, where the same construct may be more meaningfully defined for experimentalists perhaps as bringing meaning and subsequent elaboration to inference. This example represents a paradigmatic difference between researchers and previews the next part of the learning guide.

Qualitative Data as a Contribution to Knowledge and Theory

In the traditional vain, theory is thought to be an integration of facts, propositions, concepts, principles, tested hypotheses and questions answered, and supporting empirical evidence that accounts for a delimited set of phenomena and accompanying processes. Every field of study and discipline establishes its knowledge and theory base. Qualitative data contributes the bulk of the substance to this endeavor in psychology and the human sciences, for much of the base consists of the description of what we know and can explain of human phenomena.

Researchers using many methods introduced in the Overview of Methods learning guide and your continued study of methods in related guides to follow it, such as this one, follow the traditions of basic science. Occasionally, there are innovations which attempt to provide alternative ways to theory construction and revision. One such example is the contribution of Glaser and Strauss (1967) and subsequent publications (Corbin and Strauss, 1990; Glaser 1978, 1990; Strauss and Corbin, 1990; Strauss, 1987) that anchor theory to within even one inquiry and present more of a "grassroots" approach to theory building instead of the hypothetico-deductive approach popular in mainstream science. Grounded theory, as it is referred to, involves the empirical discovery of a category scheme which can account for the human phenomenon studied. The constant comparative method used helps the researcher to decide upon the best labels, code and connections among nodes of the scheme to construct a whole termed the grounded theory. The description of the theory becomes much of the task of reporting these findings.

Another alternative to theory building relative to mainstream science is phenomenology. As a philosophical orientation and perspective toward doing psychological and human science research, it drives the researcher towards discovery and articulation of the essential qualities of the phenomenon studied, which are taken to be rudimentary in human consciousness. Descriptions of the essences of consciousness,

situated structures, and synthesized holistic descriptions of the phenomena are basic contrbutions of the researcher to the knowledge base of the study of human consciousness, and they set the stage for theory construction integrating a number of such contributions. See for example Benner (1994), Edie (1965), Giorgi (1970), and the Duquesne University volumes edited by Giorgi et al. (1971, 1975, and 1979).

In mainstream science, what one can glean from all the research activity is that qualitative data and observations, as they are taken to represent that which is studied, is transformed to a higher status one might call information, and once information is processed and properly interpreted, it may- gain a higher status still in the minds of researchers called knowledge. It is some of this knowledge that is integrated still further to become the substance of theory in psychology and human science. The process begins with the collection of data and making observations, acts of the researcher, alluded to and partially described in previous parts of this learning guide.

I think some mention of the scientific enterprise is very important, because the views about what constitutes truth have changed dramatically since the enlightment and the rise of science. Later in this century alone, there is greater acceptance of the transitory nature of truth. Contemporary debates and concerns focus less on antequated notions of absolute truth than on the ferocity and turbulence in all forms of science which is a never ending process of discovering, producing, creating, and revising knowlege. There is a dynamic process under foot along the following sequential path: data, information, knowledge, theory. These latter constructs are the current preoccupations of theorists.

Therefore, keep in mind the theoretical backdrop and enterprise in progress while learning about the various research methods that make heavy use of qualitative data.

From Reporting to Discussion and Argumentation

Reporting a finding as a finding is one research skill exercised in writing the Results section of every research report. Interpreting the finding is another research skill typically exercised in writing the Discussion section of every research report. This common practice has many exceptions of course across the human sciences, but it seems sufficiently pervasive and instructive to make this general statement. Therefore, examine carefully the text in the two locations to tease out the subtleties between the two skills. It may help to point out that interpretive type statements invite the researcher to present his/her views on what the finding means in relation to previously published research, various competiting theories, rival explanations of the phenomenon, and issues in the subject area. The reporting text is a discussion, which means it covers the various aspects studied. It scrutinizes the credibility of the findings, the strengths and

weaknesses of the research project, the contributions of the project to the field, possible ramifications of the findings, limitations and delimitations of the research, and directions for future research. Finally, the researcher brings a critical stance toward his/her own work, making clear and appropriate use of critical thinking, sound reasoning, and cogent and convincing argumentation, all the while retaining a healthy degree of skepticism and open-mindedness toward findings that might supplant and interpretations that might supercede those in his/her report in the future.

Forms and Styles of Reporting

In my readings across psychology and the human sciences I have noted three basic styles of writing and presentation: scientific, literary, and journalistic writing. Although I shall briefly describe them in their purest form, in practice I see many researchers blurring the boundaries among them, which often leads to unfortunate ambiguities should care not be taken to communicate clearly the shift from one style to another.

Scientific writing is to apply the language with precision and without ambiguity. The researcher aims at exactness and conciseness in communication. Definition of terms are critical and the consistent use of terms paramount. Although an ideal, researchers generally ascribe to the belief that common agreement can be reached regarding the use of the language to foster the advance of the subject matter of the field. Perhaps the most outstanding example of this consensus building is the wide use of idiosyncratic jargon and acronyms among a group of researchers.

Literary writing is often contrasted with scientific writing; see Eisner (1981). As the aim of writing this way is to provide nuance, linguisitic innovation, some degree of ambiguity, and creativity of expression, researchers must be careful not to defeat themselves writing in an overly literary fashion in their research reporting. The heavy use of metaphorical language and analogies in science are prime examples of the ways researchers take to the more literary style of writing while exercising some caution not to become literary in their descriptions and interpretations. Another popular way researchers incorporate literary writing into their reporting is to make poignant use of literary excerpts from their participants, that is, selections of text that happen to possess literary style to them.

The third style of writing I term journalistic. It is a form of reporting falling somewhat between the previous two styles. There is an emphasis on brevity and conciseness as well as liberty taken to the attention-getting aspects of literary writing. Many editors give their journalists freedom to write quite stylistically, while expecting the clear communication of the who, what, where, when, and possible why of the event covered.

Researchers must show some restraint to not sell there readers on their view of events, hype certain aspects, and sensationalize their research, in other words, researchers must steer clear of the well known extremities of journalistic writing.

Whether writing scientifically, literally, or journalistically, it is essential to know your audience. The researcher must ask and answer his/her own question: For whom are you writing this report? Who is likely to read your research report? Knowing the audience determines the purity of scientific writing, and whether a mix with the other two is acceptable, or even expected.

As an alternative scheme to the one just described above, I recommend the last chapter in Yin (1994), who discusses six styles of reporting case studies. I think he picks up on some excellent points not addressed in my trichotomy. His schema is also more subtantive regarding strategies for organizing and constructing the written report.

Further, much can be learned about research reporting from reading ethnographies when special attention is given to their organizations, styles, and selectivity of contents.

Some additional sources of information with a helpful chapter or section on research reporting are Coffey and Atkinson (1996), Cooper (1989), Fetterman (1989), Morse and Field (1995), Rubin and Rubin (1995), and Strauss (1987).

Summary

This part of the learning guide covers the end phases of the general research cycle that involve the researcher mostly in interpretation of the findings and communication various aspects of the investigation as an oral and/or written report. The nature of interpretation is a subtle yet distinguishable activity from data processing, even though one might convincingly argue that interpretation is indigenous throughout inquiry. There are various forms of presentation, both oral and written available to the researcher to communicate the project to interested persons.

Assignment 5

The choices of the assignment are intended to give you some skill building and understanding of the role of interpretation and reporting qualitative data in research. The synoptic descriptions which follow are more fully detailed in Appendix A.

Select ONE alternative only from among those to follow in order to complete this assignment. Important: be sure to indicate which alternative you are completing when you send your assignment to the instructor.

5-A. This choice involves interpreting and reporting the findings of a research interview.

5-B. This choice involves interpreting and reporting the findings based on field notes and observations.

5-C. This choice involves interpreting and reporting the findings of an archive and/or database.

5-D. This choice involves interpreting and reporting the findings of a collection of artifacts.

5-E. Other possibilities for interpreting and reporting qualitative data that do not come from the sources designated in 5-A through 5-D may be proposed to the instructor for his/her approval.

5-F. This choice engages you in critique of the interpretation and reporting of others who have completed empirical work with qualitative data and contributed their research to the published literature in psychology and human science.

Part VI

ISSUES AND INTEGRATION

Required

Kvale, S. (1996). *InterViews.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. [Chapters 6, 8, 13, and 15]
Miles, M. and Huberman, A. (1994). *Qualitative Data Analysis.* Second edition. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. [Chapters 10 and 11]
Morse, J. and Field, P. (1995). *Qualitative Research Methods for Health Professionals.* Second edition. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. [Chapter 7]

Course Reader

Read the articles listed under Part VI.

Recommended

Denzin, N. and Lincoln, Y. (Editors) (1994). *Handbook of Qualitative Research.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. [Chapters 5-9]
Kvale, S. (Ed.) (1989). *Issues of validity in qualitative research.* Lund, Sweden: Studentlitteratur.
Mishler, E. (1986). *Research Interviewing: Context and Narrative.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
Morse, J. (Ed.) (1994). *Critical Issues in Qualitative Research Methods.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
Rubin, H. and Rubin, I. (1995). *Qualitative Interviewing: The Art of Hearing Data.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Advanced Reading

None

Overview

Researchers have many interests, and they attempt to satisfy them through disciplined inquiry. As each researcher may differ from others in these interests as well as the forms taken to research them, there are bound to be many issues about the conduct of inquiry among them. A select set of these issues having to do with qualitative data is the subject of this part of the learning guide. The assignments at the end of this part ask you to select one issue for discussion and integration of your study of the subject matter of this course.

The set of issues selected are by intention methodological. I have tried to bring into the learning guide those of contemporary fervor that seem to cut across many research methods. Although the qualitative-quantitative debate is rather superficial in many respects, one can learn much about issues in research from a study of this debate. But the other more substantive issues concern such matters as operationalization, validity, reliability, generalizability, strategy, data processing, attribution of meaning, interpretation, researcher bias, self-report, role and potential conflict of interests of the research, confidentiality, and ownership of data.

If one prefers to concentrate one's study on a particular research method that uses qualitative data, one can soon discover a host of methodological issues having to do with the strengths, weaknesses, and ethical issues in using qualitative data with the method. Any one of the issues pinpointed in this way may serve as a nucleus for study in this part of the learning guide. But please note that the emphasis here is not so much on the research method as understanding the issues of working with qualitative data.

Qualitative Versus Quantitative

In psychology and other human sciences, researchers sometimes become so preoccupied with quantification to study human phenomena that the important and basic reliance in all sciences on qualitative description of the properties, characteristics, features, circumstances, and contexts is almost forgotten. Concerns over the skewed view toward the proper data for psychology and human science has sparked fierce debate among researchers in education, nursing, psychology, sociology, to mention a few outstanding arenas. A radical stance, which has polarizing the debate in my opinion, is represented in the views of such publications as Denzin and Lincoln (1995), Guba (1990), Lincoln and Guba (1985) and Addison and Packer (1989), whiles others, represented by such publications as Brewer and Hunter (1989), Patton (1990), and Reichardt and Cook (1979) have taken a more middle of the road position, remaining open to different data

types and mixing data types where and when justified. I think you can tell from the text of this learning guide that my position is more middle of the road too.

Various parts of this learning guide allude to aspects of this issue. Is it acceptable to quantify the quality of a phenomenon? Can quantification be used to study qualities of human experience? Are there rules and procedures for categorization that are comparable in scientific rigor to those of quantification? Is it scientifically acceptable in psychology and human science to operationalize a construct for the purposes of research through the text based consensus building procedure with either the participants or the experts? Under what circumstances does a researcher use qualitative data and quantitative data? Must they always answer different kinds of questions, such as "what kind?" and "how much?" And can they be used together with the same research method in the same research project? These are the kinds of questions that relate to the debate.

Science Versus Pseudoscience

This issue becomes particularly meddlesome in regard to the selectivity of evidence. Through poor sampling, it is easy to miss occurrences and be in the best places to make observations. It is easy to overlook relevant text in the processing of much material. Preconceptions can subtlely influence synthesizing and integrating findings. The researcher can be led to interpret findings as one wants to belief them. Further, in the research reporting the researcher can fall prey to poor reasoning and unconvincing forms of argumentation to advance a particular view that may not be that apparent from inspection of the evidence and the stages of data processing.

Some sources which will likely be helpful to tie the relevance of this issue to qualitative data are Folgelin (1982), Gambril (1990), Radner and Radner (1982), and Stice (1987).

Validity and Reliability

require: Sage pub. on reliability and validity in qualitative research.

The issues of validity and reliability may be posed for all aspects of conducting inquiry. The qualitative data collected may be challenged with respect to its validity for the particular inquiry, that is specifically for the research question being asked. Is the datum, or observation, directly relevant to the research question being posed. Researchers collect a lot of data. Most of it is not directly relevant to a particular question. By what criteria can the researcher separate the directly relevant from indirectly relevant evidence? Is the act of the researcher, whereby an observation was made, truly represent the event? Do the procedures of data processing sufficiently alter the data from its original form in ways the cannot reflect back upon its original form? Do differences

among researchers of similar data invalidate their findings and interpretations? These and related questions bear on the validity issue in the use of qualitative data.

Reliability can be just as thorny as validity. Although related to validity, reliability tends to concern the consistency, stability, and repeatability of the data, both within the database and over the course of data collection. Does the interviewee give basically the same answer to a question asked in different ways? Does the same question included in the questionnaire yield the same response when asked in the follow up interview? Do the actions of this person observed in the field reveal a pattern which the person repeats on subsequent visits to this location? From one interview the next, does the set of interview probes in a particular area of the investigation also group together in regard to the responses they generate? These and related questions have to do with the issue of reliability.

Some sources to study these issues are Kvale (1989), and the recommended texts in this and previous parts of this learning guide.

Self Report

The honesty of the participant is a common issue in research. This is not to say that participants are intentionally trying to be dishonest. How contributive a participant can be to provide narrative responses in interviews and act naturally while you are watching as if you were not there may depend on how self-conscious the participant is. It may not be a matter of honesty but of personality and temperament. The defensiveness of the participant may also be relevant. Self-disclosure is a very personal matter in all social situations, the research interview and participant observer presence included. The participant, in other words, may be an unfortunate party to distorting the data collected. Establishing rapport, maintaining rapport, and building in checks to evaluate faking, psychopathology, and self-image management represent major challenges to researchers.

For sources on this important issue in qualitative research, examine particularly those texts written on research interviewing and texts like Miller (1991). However, some consideration this issue and others noted in this section as they apply to forms of qualitative data collection other than the research interview will be found in the material of the *QRM Reader*, such as Cochran et al (1980), Mathison (1988), and Sieber (1973).

Researcher Bias

On the other hand, problems with qualitative data may be traceable more to the researcher than the participant. The pseudoscientific tendencies alluded to above

certainly connect with the researcher bias issue.

Some sources on researcher bias in qualitative research are Rosenthal (1976) and those noted in the previous section of this part of the learning guide.

Parenthetically, it is important to stress that issues of bias, whether from the participant or researcher, often involves the interpersonal relationship and communications exchanged. We see numerous manifestations in qualitative research that must be scrutinized in regard to bias, such as between researcher and participant, interviewer and interviewee, observer and observee, researcher and artifact collector, researcher and archive recorder, and ethnographer and informer.

Research Ethics

The last but not least important area I shall mention concerns the ethical issue of using qualitative data in research. There are many ethical issues and now guidelines to discourage misconduct that have been provoked by violations in many aspects of research. In general, the area of research ethics pertains here just as much as it does to any research methods learning guide and form of research in psychology and human science. But my focus here is primarily on select ethical issues bearing directly on the collection, processing, and use of qualitative data in research. Manufacturing field notes of nonexistent events, falsifying or tampering with inteview text, eliminating documents from the archive because one does not like what they say, and making exaggerated claims from findings are examples of unethical practices.

Some sources on researcher ethics in qualitative research are Kvale (1996), Patton (1990), and Webb et al (1981).

Summary

This part of the learning guide has drawn attention to a few issues among many germane to the use of qualitative data in research. Qualitative data may be contrasted with quantitative data, propensities to use qualitative data in pseudoscientific ways, validity and reliability, self report and researcher bias represent prominent issues that if not addressed can undermine the value and contributions of the research, and raise ethical issues as well.

Assignment 6

Recognition of the methodological issues of handling qualitative data leads one to another important research skill area. The choices of the assignment which follow are intended to bring some integration to this course of study and improve one's research skills pertaining to issues around the use of qualitative data.

Choose ONE alternative to complete this assignment. Be sure to read the full details of each choice in Appendix A.

6-A. This choice involves the selection and study of one central methodological issue concerning the use of qualitative data in psychology and human science research.

6-B. This choice involves the selection and study of one major theme or trend you have discovered about working with qualitative data in research over the course of your study and completion of the previous assignments.

Part VII

CONCLUSION

Required

Miles, M. and Huberman, A. (1994). *Qualitative Data Analysis.* Second edition. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. [Chapter 13]

Course Reader

Read the articles listed under Part VII.

Recommended

Denzin, N. and Lincoln, Y. (Editors) (1994). *Handbook of Qualitative Research.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. [Chapters 35 and 36]

Advanced Reading

None.

Overview

The purpose of this learning guide has been to facilitate your study of the use and place of qualitative data in psychology and human science research. From an introduction to the nature of qualitative data, the course covered some outstanding avenues researchers use to collect and process qualitative data. This course of study brings as a result into the foreground several methodological issues that appear special to the use of qualitative data as well as a host of related issues common to the use of all data types in research. Having come this far, what can one say in hindsight? And what does the future portend for this rich area of research methodology in psychology and human science? This closing part of the learning guide requests you to take stock of what you have learned and your progress with understanding this subject emphasis.

Qualitative Research in Retrospect

In the 1980s and 1990s the label "qualitative" has become a flag to wave for many researchers and publishers to celebrate advances in research methodology that is anything but quantitative measurement, number crunching, and statistical data processing. Without a doubt, there has been an explosion of interest and publications in journals and books about the various forms of inquiry making use of qualitative data. It is an exciting time to be studying this material and using this kind of data in research projects, even if there is an overuse and likely abuse of the term "qualitative" and many ambiguities, inconsistencies, and marked differences of opinion evident in the use of "qualitative" concepts and methods among select text authors.

Despite all the dust in the air, so to speak, it is the intention of this learning guide to provide assistance to your study of a qualitative orientation toward doing research and a reference that you can return to again and again to stay on track and locate helpful sources. Incidently, in this regard, any suggestions you can forward to me to improve this material will be much appreciated by me and by your fellow student researchers who follow you.

On balance, I think it is fair to say that what we are witnessing is the righting of the pendulum to a healthier balance in the use of both qualitative and quantitative data in psychology and human science research. Many forebearers protested in the last century as the majority of researchers followed the likes of their fellow researchers in the physical and biological sciences to seek the study of human phenomena through the collection and processing of quantitative data. Many advances continue on this front. But now we can conclude that significant advances are also apparent on the qualitative front

as well, as demonstrated by a number of the texts and readings accompanying this learning guide.

Future of Qualitative Research in Psychology and Human Science

In the first decade of the new millenium I suspect many of the communication problems and distractions in discourse, alluded to above, will begin to fade. More researchers will drift to the middle on issues finding it more productive to cut the rhetoric and get down to work on the specific rules, procedures, and practices of inquiry that advance the methods and methodologies using qualitative data. Miles and Huberman (1994, 1995) are exemplars of what more is needed by way of specific contributions. Nevertheless, articulation of the specifics must be accompanied by the scrutiny, both philosophical and critical, whereby researchers reflect upon the issues but in connection to their practices rather than their polemics.

We should expect clearer rules and procedures for using qualitative data in research in the years ahead. More exemplars of effective strategies should become prominent too. The complementarity and mix of data types will be explored and more expected. Furthermore, it would not surprise me to see pictures come into their own as a data type alongside numbers and words. That the qualitative-quantitative relation becomes clearer. And the knowledge and theory base of psychology and human science rests more solidly on findings derived from qualitative data, thanks to the methodological contributions of the forthcoming generation of researchers.

Summary

This part of the learning guide concludes this course of study. Qualitative data is at the heart of research in psychology and human science. It is as close as we seem to come to describing human phenomena. There are numerous ways to make and work with this data to import meaning to, deepen our understanding of, and explain human phenomena. Great care in the formulation, collection, and processing of qualitative data makes for the many current and emerging forms of scientific method in psychology and human science that depend on it.

Assignment 7

For the last assignment of your course of study, write a 6 page paper in which you self-evaluate and critique your current proficiency in the use and understanding of qualitative data in research. See Appendix A for full details.

R

REFERENCES

The references in this part of the learning guide are those cited in previous parts. The reference list is therefore limited. However, these references also provide their own listings which will further carry one into the sources available. Furthermore, other references are to be found at the end of the articles in the *QRM Reader*, the Overview of Methods learning guide and *OM Reader*. Since the latter these resources are extensive of references relevant to qualitative research, you are expected to make ample use of all these resources to complement those provided here.

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A

Appendix A:

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

Full details of all assignments and their choices noted at the end of each part of the learning guide are given here. For each assignment, it is essential to provide the instructor with a written document and all appendices requested, in order to document your fulfillment of the course assignments and justify course credit.

Many of these assignments are most productively pursued in successive increments with feedback from the instructor. To promote improvements in your proficiency and competence with the research skills associated with this learning guide, instructor feedback and revisions should be expected for successive improvements to their completion.

You will notice some parallelism in the choices for Assignments 2 through 5. For those who prefer to follow one avenue, the choices permit one to be very specific, that is, to work with the formulation, collection, processing, and interpretation of one data set, for example data associated with research interviewing only. However, you are encouraged to seek as much breadth and depth in studying, experiencing, and skill building first hand to gain competence with AT LEAST TWO ways of doing qualititative research. It may be possible in some cases to cross over from one data collection technique in Assignment 3 to another in Assignment 4 without a repetition of data collection, that is, one might consider using the data collected in Assignment 3 and process it for Assignment 4. Such possibilities are left to the innovations of the learner and approval of the instructor. For routes suggestive through the assignments, see Appendix B.

The most recent edition of the *Publication Manual of the APA* is the recommended source for formatting all papers to the instructor. Indicate clearly on the face sheet of all papers your name, address, phone number, date, title, and choice of the assignment. Unless the instructor requests two copies, send ONE copy of your work.

Assignment 1

Having read Part I, write a paper to introduce yourself in the role of researcher to your instructor. In preparation for your writing, peruse the assignments presented in this appendix and make a tentative selection among them for your course of study. Make a self-assessment in tandem to this activity. Review your understanding of and experience using qualitative data, and evaluate your level of proficiency in regard to research skills in this subject area.

A complete paper includes informative and reflective answers to these questions:

- When did you enter the program?
- Which program are you in, and what is the nature of your professional work?
- Are there any research interest area(s) at Saybrook of interest to you now?
- In one paragraph, what are your current research interests, such as topic areas, problems, issues, and questions?
- Is your intention to complete the course as structured or do you expect to propose some modifications to some assignments? If you have any ideas for modifications at this time, please describe them.
- What is your plan for completing the course within one semester?
- What combination of format, media, and modes of learning do you intend to use?
- What is your general plan for completing the assignments, which includes your tentative and preliminary choice of assignments.
- What is your self-assessment of your research knowledge and skills in this subject area?
- What experience have you had working with qualitative data?
- What methods have you studied and used which involved the collection and processing of qualitative data? Describe these projects very briefly.

This assignment should range from 3 pages minimum to 6 pages maximum.

Assignment 2

Having studied the content of Part II and accompanying assigned readings, select and complete ONE of the choices below for the second assignment of your course of study. Clearly indicate the choice on written work sent to the instructor.

2-A. Note: This choice involves the design of a procotol for research interviewing. Select a topic area and focus to one research question. Generate a pool of derivative questions of a more specific nature that may help contribute to the answer to the research question. This family of interrelated questions, so to speak, may be thought to collectively

represent the research question for the purpose of research interviewing. Design a protocol to sequence the question family and give guidance to the interviewer. Draw on sources about designing research interviews.

The assignment is to be completed by communicating to the instructor in the form of a 10 page paper what you have learned about designing the research interview. The paper should consist of reflective and considered thought in the following sections:

1. State the topic area and focal research question.
2. List the family of questions, the question pool, that shall comprise the protocol. To generate the pool, it may be helpful to study the subject area of the published literature and discuss the question with others.
3. Present your configuration and sequencing of the questions that are intended to guide the researcher while conducting the interview. Describe your reasoning for the particular set of questions, their configuration and sequence. To discover what might like work best, it may be helpful to study other interview protocols and conduct informal role playing simulation type interviews with a friend, in which you take a turn being both the interviewer and the interviewee.
4. Discuss what you have learned from completing this task, making use of sources in research interviewing.
5. Discuss your proposed interview protocol with respect to what other researchers have to say about the use of them in research interviewing. Are there likely to be any advantages, disadvantages, and ethical concerns in the use of such guides for research interviewing? Make clear use of sources here.
6. Provide full References at end of the paper.

2-B. Note: This choice involves the conceptualization and articulation of an *a priori* category scheme for observational research. From your study of a topic area of study and the focal research question chosen, try to imagine categories to classify observations that are directly relevant to the research question. You may have to visit and spend some time in the social situation, just watching and thinking about possible categories which could be helpful later on. Work up your scheme and provide some definition to each category that will guide the observer in making decisions when it is likely one is witnessing an event that falls into the category. Find a form to summarize the scheme which lends itself to portability and usage in the field.

To complete this assignment, write a 10 page paper that consists of the following sections:

1. Describe the topic area and focal research question to be answered through

observational research.

2. Present the categories (codings) connected to the research question and what you did to find them, decide upon their relevance, and add them to the scheme. Define in as specific terms as possible what the category is and what the observer might expect to witness in order to classify the event in the category.
3. Describe the category (coding) scheme as a whole. Articulate your reasons (rationale) that it can serve as an a priori category scheme for the imagined observational research project to answer the research question. Detail whether the scheme was arrived at through deduction or induction, or a mixture of both. Is the scheme purely a priori in this case? Could one argue that it is a postiori in some respects, should you have spend much time in the field to discover the categories?
4. Discuss what you have learned from completing this task, making use of sources in observational research.
5. Discuss your scheme with respect to what other researchers have to say about the use of coding schemes in observational research. Are there likely to be any advantages, disadvantages, and ethical concerns in the use of this scheme? Make clear use of sources here.
6. List full References at end of the paper.

2-C. Note: This choice involves the conceptualization of search and retrieval strategies for archival and database research. Select a topic area and focus to one research question. Use search and retrieval sources, such as a psychology thesaurus, Psychological Abstracts, and subject indeces, to compose a list of descriptors relevant to the research question. This list should include the key terms in the question and their chief cross-references. Develop some strategies to search the archive (database) to find information bearing on the answer to the research question. If you have access to Internet and/or CD ROMs services, you may want to try out some possibilities to better understand what is and is not a search strategy, and what tends to work and what does not.

To complete this assignment, write a 10 page paper that consists of the following sections:

1. Describe the topic area and focal research question to be answered through archival and database research.
2. Present the list of descriptors and cross-referrants from which search strategies are applied. Define briefly what each term in the list means.

3. Describe the search strategies proposed to find information from the archive and database to answer the research question. Discuss your reasons (rationale) for each strategy, that it can serve for productive inquiry in archival research in this case.
4. Discuss what you have learned from completing this task, making use of sources in archival research.
5. Discuss your strategies with respect to what other researchers have to say about the them in archival research. Are there likely to be any advantages, disadvantages, and ethical concerns in the use of search and retrieval strategies? Make clear use of sources here.
6. List full References at end of the paper.

2-D. Note: This choice involves the design and development of a questionnaire for survey research. This choice is similar to Choice 2-A in most respects, in that one must select a topic area and focus to one research question, generate a pool of derivative questions of a more specific nature for the questionnaire, and find a suitable format to present the questions. Go through the parallel steps in questionnaire construction, described above for research interviewing.

To complete this assignment, write a 10 page paper that consists of the following sections:

1. Describe the topic area and focal research question to be answered through administration of a questionnaire for a survey research project.
2. List the family of questions, the question pool, that could appear on the questionnaie. To generate the pool, it may be helpful to study the subject area of the published literature and discuss the question with others.
3. Select the best set of questions from the pool, present your configuration and sequencing of the questions that are to be completed by the participant. Describe your reasoning for the particular set of questions, their configuration and sequence.
4. Discuss what you have learned from completing this task, making use of sources in questionnaire and survey research.
5. Discuss your scheme with respect to what other researchers have to say about the use of questionnaires in survey research. Are there likely to be any advantages, disadvantages, and ethical concerns in the use of the questionnaire to collect qualitative data? Make clear use of sources here.
6. Provide full References at end of the paper.

2-E. Note: This choice involves a comparative study of three data types: numbers, pictures, and words. It will require you to collect informally to obtain a small pool of data comprised of these three types and write a 10 page discussion comparing and contrasting their similarities and differences among them.

Select a topic area of your interest and focus it to one research question. Use informal means through written and published material available to you to obtain at least 6 numbers, 6 paragraphs of text, and 6 pictures that appear directly relevant to finding the answer to the research question.

To complete this assignment study the three subsamples to tease out some similarities and differences in the nature of data. What can and cannot be connected to the question in each case? What do you envision can be done with each data type to attempt to find the answer to the question? What are the strengths and weaknesses of each data type? Can the data types in this case be mixed in some way? Do the data types shed some light on the question collectively, than if only one or two of the subsamles constituted the entire data of the inquiry? These and similar probes of the data provide the kinds of substantive matters to discuss in the body of the paper.

The paper should consist of the following sections:

1. Statement of the topic area and focal research question posed.
2. Brief description of each subsample.
3. Connections of the subsamples to the research question.
4. Discussion of differences among data types
5. Discussion of similarities among data types
6. Discussion of mixing and matching data types
7. Concluding remarks on what you have learned about the data types, their characterisitics, advantages, and limitations.
8. After References at the end of the paper, place the subsamples, labeled Appendix A.

2-F. Note: This choice involves operationalizing an aspect of research that makes use of qualitative data in the form of pictures or words. It will require you to draw upon the learning guide and assigned readings to work with one data type and and write a 10 page paper about what you have learned.

Select a topic area of your interest and focus it to one research question. Underline the key terms and any phrases in the question that must be defined. Seek out definitions of these terms (constructs) from various sources. Make a decision regarding the most appropriate definition of each term for the research question that you think will facilitate the operationalization of them for inquiry. This is typically done by researchers by picking

one or synthesizing various contributors to arrive at the definition. Restate the research question more fully by replacing the key terms in the question with their more elaborated definitions. Do not become concerned if the question blossoms from a sentence into a paragraph. To begin to operationalize the process toward a research endeavor, imagine what qualitative data you would have to have that is consistent and permissible to answer this elaborated research question. Finally, imagine a few candidates of a data collecton procedure and the form they might take in a few research methods in psychology and human science.

To complete this assignment, the paper should consist of the following sections:

1. Statement of the topic area and focal research question posed.
2. The key terms and phrases to be defined.
3. The selected definitions of these key terms and phrases to be operationalized and a few reasons in each case for your decision to use the particular definition.
4. The elaborated restatement of the research question that incorporates the final definitions.
5. Statement of the qualitative data that appears relevant to answering the reserch question and the reasons which argue for such.
6. Statement of the data collection procedures that can provide this qualitative dta and the reasons which argue for such.
7. Statement of the research methods that utilize these procedures and the forms they are likely to take which generates the qualitative data expected.
8. Concluding remarks on what you have learned about operationalizing for using qualitative data in research.
9. After References at the end of the paper, list the definitions from various sources considered, labeled Appendix A.

Assignment 3

Select ONE of the choices which follows to complete the third assignment, which is to apply the content of Part III of this learning guide and its assigned readings.

3-A. Note: This choice involves research interviewing. It concerns data collection only. And it requires approval by the Saybrook Institutional Review Board (SIRB), because direct contact with human participants is necessary to collect the qualitative data. You must obtain SIRB application and receive permission to proceed with data collection prior to contact with participants. This option will require consent form, set of selection criteria, and interview protocol, in order to do the interviewing.

Design an interview protocol intended to solicit information to answer a research question of interest to you. The protocol may be the one from Assignment 2. The interview should be designed to last no long than one hour. The one hour session can be thought to comprise the following activities, in this order: introductions, explaining the nature and purpose of the session, obtaining informed and signed consent from the interviewee, going through the protocol, and bringing closure and giving thanks to the interviewee for participating.

Design a consent form and make a list of criteria to decide whether a person you contact is eligible to participate. Obtain and complete the SIRB approval application to interview 3 persons.

At this point, send the protocol, list of criteria, consent form, and SIRB application to the instructor for feedback and approval.

Submit your material to the SIRB for feedback and approval.

Obtain the participants and conduct the interviews, applying all the concepts and relevant content you have reaped from your course of study. Write up your experience of research interviewing and what you have learned about this major form of collecting qualitative data in psychology and human science in a 10 page paper.

The complete paper must consist of reflective and critical consideration of the following:

1. State your topic area of interest and what you did to focus it to one research question.
2. Describe your criteria for selection of your interview participants and the actions you took to obtain them.
3. Discuss in detail what happened during each interview, and what you learned from each interview that (a) contributed to your understanding of research interviewing and (b) helped you do a better job with the next interview. This portion of the paper may be best presented by covering each interview in two subsections: A brief synposis of the interview followed by a concise discussion of your learning gained from that interview.
4. Discuss in detail at least one strength, one weakness, and one ethical issue that you had to confront while collecting qualitative data by means of research interviewing.
5. Provide a concluding statement on what you have learned and think about collecting qualitative data in this fashion for the purpose of doing research in psychology or human science.
6. After the References at the end of your paper, provide a concise description of the criteria for selecting your interview participants, labeled Appendix A.
7. Place a copy of your consent form at the end of your paper, labelled Appendix B.

8. Provide a copy of your interview protocol at the end of your paper, labelled Appendix C.
9. Provide either copy or original tape recordings of your 3 interviews to accompany your paper, which you can make reference to at various points in your paper, if you prefer, to draw to your instructor's attention to corresponding points discussed in the text of your paper.

3-B. Note: This choice involves observational research. It concerns data collection only. And it may require approval by the Saybrook Institutional Review Board (SIRB) should any surveillance to direct contact with human participants be intended to collect the qualitative data. You must obtain SIRB application and receive permission to proceed with data collection prior to contact with participants. This option may require consent form and set of selection criteria in the case of participant observation, and consent form in other forms of observation, per judgement of the SIRB.

Given your decision of a topic area and focus to one research question, formulate a research design and plan to observe human beings in their every day environments to answer your question. Decide on the places and make up a time schedule to follow that is reasonable and doable, given the many other activities of your daily life. Consider sessions up to one hour in a place, and a data collection period spanning 2-3 weeks. You may want to visit at least 3 places and 3 times of day for comparative purposes; however, if you prefer a more in depth look in one location over several days, or several different times of day, this is allright too. These are examples of the kinds of decisions observational researchers must make to design and plan their research. Some decision will likely be necessary as to what form of observation best suits your research question: naturalistic, nonparticipant, or participant. You may want to try more than one to acquire some skill and understanding of their advantages and disadvantages.

If you expect to contact and converse with persons, selection criteria may become important to decide whether each person is appropriate for the inquiry. Further, with participant observation, a consent form may be appropriate. However, this is a touchy area in observational research and laborous to go through for each person one engages. You may prefer to obtain consent from a superior who allows you access to the social context, and who announces the purpose of your presence in advance. After awhile your presence will likely become less of a factor in the data collecting. In all cases, consult with your instructor and the faculty chair of the SIRB for advice on your particular situation. If necessary, obtain SIRB approval before you enter the field and contact persons for the purpose of observing.

Your time in the field should be enough to witness and/or obtain through human contact data directly relevant to the research question asked. Should this not be happening in following your plan, then some revisions of places and/or times may be in order.

Incidently, if you have an intriguing social context to habitat for a while, and are altogether lost in thought regarding what research question to ask, you might try what many ethnographers do, simply spend time in the context, remaining as open as possible to what is happening all around you, and to your surprise perhaps a number of potential questions will begin to pop up. Choose one, state it concisely as possible, and get on with those aspects of the assignment described above that will bring you back into the field to complete this assignment.

Part of this assignment will challenge you to determine what to observe that is relevant to the research question and what ways of recording properly constitutes the qualitative data of the investigation. Make your observations either during and/or as immediately after your observational sessions as possible. The category (coding) scheme completed for Assignment 2 may be applied and tested as part of this assignment.

In a 10 page paper, write up your experience of making observations and what you have learned about this major form of collecting qualitative data in psychology and human science.

The complete paper must consist of reflective and critical consideration of the following:

1. State your topic area of interest and what you did to focus it to one research question.
2. Describe your research design and research plan for observing and the sampling procedures used.
3. Discuss in detail what happened during your observation periods, and what you learned within each session and from session to session. This portion of the paper may best be presented by covering your sessions synoptically and chronologically to help the reader follow the progression of the data collection.
4. Discuss in detail at least one strength, one weakness, and one ethical issue that you had to confront while collecting qualitative data by means of observation.
5. Provide a concluding statement on what you have learned and think about collecting qualitative data in this fashion for the purpose of doing research in psychology or human science.
6. After the References at the end of your paper, place your observations in chronological order, labeled Appendix A.

7. In cases of participant observation, provide a concise description of the criteria for selecting your participants, a copy of your consent form, and SIRB application and approval, labeled Appendices B, C, and D, respectively.

3-C. Note: this assignment requires technology of access to databases. You may complete this assignment in a library with CD ROMs or online services. Alternatively, you can surf the Internet or work with the databases of your online provider to complete this assignment.

Select a topic area of interest and focus this=topic to one (re)search question. Search and scan the literature of the area (databases) for the answer to your question. The strategies articulated for completion of Assignment 2 may be tried out and tested as part of this assignment.

Write a 10 paper that discusses your experience and the relevant concepts from this course bear on the use of a database to collect qualitative data. A complete paper consists of reflective and critical consideration of the following:

1. State your topic area of interest and what you did to focus it to one search question.
2. Describe your actions to search and find sources that directly answer the question.
3. Discuss in detail at least one strength, one weakness, and one ethical issue that you had to confront in finding and collecting your information.
4. Provide a concluding statement on what you have learned and think about collecting qualitative data in this fashion for the purpose of doing research in psychology or human science.
5. After the References at the end of your paper, provide a record of the steps taken to perform and complete your searching, labelled Appendix A.
6. Provide a copy of the information that you found that directly answers the question posed and place the information at the end of your paper, lablled Appendix B.

3-D. Note: This choice of assignment consists of collecting artifacts. It concerns data collection only. And it may require approval by the Saybrook Institutional Review Board (SIRB) should direct contact with human participants be necessary to obtain the objects and/or access to areas where artifacts are to be found shall be required. You must obtain SIRB application and receive permission to proceed with data collection prior to contact with participants. This option may require a consent form, per judgment of the SIRB.

Given your decision of a topic area and focus to one research question, formulate a research design and plan to collect artifacts that will help you to answer your question. Decide on the places to visit where you have a reasonable chance of finding them. Draw

up a general plan to spend some time over a 2-3 week period for obtaining the collection. Make notes of the kinds of decisions you are making to design and plan the data collection.

If you expect to contact and converse with persons in order to gain access and permission to take, borrow, or study artifacts, then a consent form will likely be required. In all cases, consult with your instructor and the faculty chair of the SIRB for advice on your particular situation. If necessary, obtain SIRB approval before you enter the field and contact persons for the purpose of artifact access and collection.

Part of this assignment will challenge you to determine what artifacts are relevant to the research question and what ways of accessing, obtaining, and cataloguing them properly constitutes the qualitative data of the investigation.

In a 10 page paper, write up your experience of collecting artifacts and what you have learned about this major form of collecting qualitative data in psychology and human science.

The complete paper must consist of reflective and critical consideration of the following:

1. State your topic area of interest and what you did to focus it to one research question.
2. Describe your research design and research plan for obtaining artifacts and the sampling procedures used.
3. Discuss in detail what happened during your exursions for artifacts, and what you learned within each trip and from exursion to excursion. This portion of the paper may best be presented by covering your sojourns synoptically and chronologically to help the reader follow the progression of the data collection.
4. Discuss in detail at least one strength, one weakness, and one ethical issue that you had to confront while collecting this kind of qualitative data.
5. Provide a concluding statement on what you have learned and think about collecting qualitative data in this fashion for the purpose of doing research in psychology or human science.
6. After the References at the end of your paper, place your catalogue of artifacts, labeled Appendix A. Physical objects may be represented in the form of photos or short written descriptions, but both are preferable as they more closely simulate what researchers do with artifacts in research.
7. where appropriate, provide a copy of your consent form, and the SIRB application and approval, labeled Appendices B and C, respectively.

3-E. Other forms of collecting qualitative data may be proposed to the instructor for his/her approval. For example, the questionnaire designed and developed in Assignment 2 may be used to collect the qualitative data in for this assignment. The research interview may be done over the phone instead of in-person. Both interview protocols and questionnaires for surveys can be used to collect qualitative data via the Internet. All such proposals should follow the same guidelines to obtain the data as conveyed in the previous choices of this assignment. Further, such proposals should cover the general sections of a written 10 page paper about your skill building and learning that are presented in the above choices. Finally, a combination of the above choices may also be attempted. But in all cases, it is important to keep the assignment manageable and reasonable for completion of the third assignment.

Assignment 4

Select ONE choice presented below for completion of the fourth assignment, which applies the content of Part IV of this learning guide and accompanying readings.

4-A. Note: This choice involves processing qualitative data obtained from research interviewing. This assignment may be completed using the data collected in Assignment 3, or its equivalent. If an interview is to be completed to have this data to processing, the description of Assignment 3-A applies to the extend of obtaining the data; however one full interview will suffice.

If the written transcript of the interview is not at hand, transcribe the interview to a written text. Drawing upon the sources mentioned in the learning guide and others you find on processing interview data, proceed through the transcript according to the rules and procedures chosen for the processing. Move the processing through its course toward its expected end. The steps of the processing will vary, depending on whether you are following a conventional content analysis, a hermeneutical, phenomenological, or other recommended form of processing. Processing procedures and displays may be selected from the Miles and Huberman (1994), and equivalent, texts. Organize the findings for presentation.

To complete the assignment, write a 10 page paper that is reflective and critical consideration of the following:

1. State your topic area of interest and focus to one research question that the processing attempts to answer.
2. Describe briefly the form of processing chosen for the qualitative data and reasons for its appropriateness.

3. Describe the steps of the processing which the reader can follow with the aid of the appendices.
4. Present the end results of the processing the findings.
5. Discuss in detail what you learned about this form of processing qualitative data from this accomplishing this task. Include commentary on what rules and procedures you found most helpful and those that were wasteful in moving along from one phase to the next of the processing. If a category scheme of some kind was applied or emerged, then articulate what it is and its relevance to the processing activity.
6. Discuss in detail at least one strength, one weakness, and one ethical issue that you had to confront while processing qualitative data obtained by research interviewing.
7. Provide a concluding statement on think about collecting qualitative data in this fashion for the purpose of doing research in psychology or human science.
8. After the References at the end of your paper, place a copy of the transcript, labeled Appendix A.
9. Present the end results of each phase of the data processing of the transcript, and label each phase according as Appendix, B, C, D, and so on, the last appendix containing the final result(s) of processing.

4-B. Note: This choice involves observational research. It concerns the processing of observations made in the field. The data collected to complete Assignment 3 can be used to complete this assignment. If field notes and observations are needed, then the information described in Assignment 3-B will likely apply as far as getting the data.

Using the content of the learning guide and sources about observational research, develop a means to process the observations to answer the research question. The ways to do this are numerous though often to implicit, but the challenge of this task will be to find a meaningful path to organize the observations into relevant groupings relevant to what one is asking, look for corroboration, "anchor" the data, and discover ways to converge, synthesis and present the findings. Miles and Huberman (1994), Fetterman (1989), and Lofland and Loftland (1984) may be useful sources here.

In a 10 page paper, write up your experience of processing field notes and observations and what you have learned about this major form of collecting qualitative data in psychology and human science.

The complete paper must consist of reflective and critical consideration of the following:

1. State your topic area of interest and focus to one research question that the processing attempts to answer.

2. Describe briefly the form of processing chosen for the qualitative data and reasons for its appropriateness.
3. Describe the steps of the processing which the reader can follow with the aid of the appendices.
4. Present the end results of the processing, the research findings.
5. Discuss in detail what you learned about this form of processing qualitative data from accomplishing this task. Include commentary on what rules and procedures you found most helpful and those that were wasteful in moving along from one phase to the next of the processing. If a category scheme of some kind was applied or emerged, then articulate what it is and its relevance to the processing activity.
6. Discuss in detail at least one strength, one weakness, and one ethical issue that you had to confront while processing qualitative data consisting of field notes and observations.
7. Provide a concluding statement communicating what you think about collecting qualitative data in this fashion for the purpose of doing research in psychology or human science.
8. After the References at the end of your paper, place a copy of the field notes and observtions in chronological order, labeled Appendix A.
9. Present the end results of each phase of the data processing of the content of Appendix A, and label each phase according as Appendix, B, C, D, and so on, the last appendix containing the final result(s) of processing.

4-C. Note: this assignment requires processing the text data obtained from archival and database research. The data collected in Assignment 3 may serve this purpose, especially that of Assignment 3-C. However, library and database research can yield readily a set of documents on a chosen focus, should the data not be available from a previous assignment. It is important, however, to have a clearly circumscribed area and center point to it, as represented by a specific research question to answer via the data processing to maximize the meaningfulness of this choice of assignment.

Select and carry out a content analysis on the set of documents. There is a large literature on content analyses available, and many references to meta-analysis will also be relevant to complete this assignment. A number of techniques and displays in Miles and Huberman (1994) will also apply.

Write a 10 paper that discusses your experience and what you learning from carrying out the content analysis. A complete paper consists of reflective and critical consideration of the following:

1. State your topic area of interest and focus to one research question.
2. Describe briefly the form of content analysis chosen for the qualitative data and reasons for its appropriateness.
3. Describe the steps of the processing which the reader can follow with the aid of the appendices.
4. Present the end results of the processing, the research findings.
5. Discuss in detail what you learned about this form of processing qualitative data from accomplishing this task. Include commentary on what rules and procedures you found most helpful and those that were wasteful in moving along from one phase to the next of the processing. If a category scheme of some kind was applied or emerged, then articulate what it is and its relevance to the processing activity.
6. Discuss in detail at least one strength, one weakness, and one ethical issue that you had to confront while performing the content analysis of the documents.
7. Provide a concluding statement communicating what you think about collecting qualitative data in this fashion for the purpose of doing research in psychology or human science.
8. After the References at the end of your paper, provide a list of the documents analyzed, perhaps the full citation and their abstracts when available would suffice, labeled Appendix A.
9. Present the end results of each phase of the content analysis, and labeling each phase accordingly as Appendix, B, C, D, and so on, the last appendix containing the final result(s) of the analysis, which in some forms of content analysis really more of a content synthesis.

4-D. Note: This choice of assignment consists of processing the qualitative data of artifacts. If you do not have the data already, perhaps from a collection, or from Assignment 3, to obtain the data set may require approval by the Saybrook Institutional Review Board (SIRB) to get it, in which case the information presented in Assignment 3-D applies.

Read carefully the instructions for the choices above, particularly 4-B and 4-C, for they basically provide the guidance needed to process the qualitative data in this case and complete the 10 page paper for this choice of the fourth assignment.

4-E. Other forms of processing qualitative data may be proposed to the instructor for his/her approval. All such proposals should follow the same guidelines to obtain the data as conveyed in the previous choices of this assignment. Further, such proposals should

cover the general sections of a written 10 page paper about your skill building and learning that are presented in the above choices. Finally, a combination of the above choices may also be attempted. But in all cases, it is important to keep the assignment manageable and reasonable for completion of the third assignment.

Assignment 5

Select ONE choice presented below for completion of the fifth assignment. These choices are designed to exercise and improve research skills and understanding of the interpretation of evidence and the reporting of the results of research in psychology and human science. In completing this assignment, follow the same general guidelines used to complete the previous assignments of the course of study.

5-A. Note: This choice involves interpreting and reporting the findings of a research interview. For this assignment, you will need the results from processing the text of a research interview. The outcome of data processed from Assignment 4 may apply. If you are unsure about the material you wish to interpret, then confer with the instructor. In a 6-10 page paper, interpret the findings. After providing your interpretation of the findings reflect upon what you have done and how you did it. Consider the various aspects which may be brought to bear into your interpretation, such as balanced review of evidence both for and against the answer to research question; the interpreters presuppositions and presumptions, and preunderstandings brought to the task; generalization and extrapolation of the findings; soundness in the use of argument and logic; and the choice of words, their meanings, and the use of language. Draw upon sources to provide citation and application of the course sources about interpreting and reporting the findings of qualitative data.

The paper to complete this assignment should contain reflective and considered thought in the following sections:

1. Describe in the Introduction section the topic area and focal research question investigated.
2. Provide a brief Synopsis of the findings available to you from the processing of the data for the second Synopsis of Findings section of the paper. This section should consist of highlights, because Appendix A is to contain the full findings.
3. Present your interpretation of the findings. What do they mean in regard to answering the research question? Do the findings appear to support or refute particular answers to the research question? If others claim to have the answer to the research question,

compare and discuss their interpretations with your own. Such discussion is expected to involve critique of your interpretation and those of others, including an examination of the strengths and weaknesses bearing on comparing and contrasting interpretations. Referral to the appendix of your paper and other publications will facilitate completion of this section. This third Interpretation section of the paper constitutes the body and most substantive section.

4. Reflect upon what you have learned about the research skills of interpreting and reporting. What has interpretation itself meant for you in this case? What insights about the research question and the task of interpretation have occurred as the relate to working with qualitative data in psychology and human science research? This last section may be aptly titled Reflections and Insights.
5. Provide the list of full References used to complete the paper.
6. Provide the full findings from the data processing, or last stage of data processing, labeled Appendix A.

5-B. Note: This choice involves interpreting and reporting the findings based on field notes and observations. For this assignment, you will need the results from processing field notes and observations. The outcome of data processed from Assignment 4 may apply. If you are unsure about the material you wish to interpret, then confer with the instructor. The sections of the 10 page paper to complete this assigment described above in 5-A apply.

5-C. Note: This choice involves interpreting and reporting the findings of an archive and/or database. For this assignment, you will need the results from processing information retrieved from an archive and/or database. The outcome of data processed from Assignment 4 may apply. If you are unsure about the material you wish to interpret, then confer with the instructor. The sections of the 10 page paper to complete this assigment described above in 5-A apply.

5-D. Note: This choice involves interpreting and reporting the findings of a collection of artifacts. a collection of artifacts. The outcome of data processed from Assignment 4 may apply. If you are unsure about the material you wish to interpret, then confer with the instructor. The sections of the 10 page paper to complete this assigment described above in 5-A apply.

5-E. Other possibilities for interpreting and reporting qualitative data may be proposed to the instructor for his/her approval. For example, the qualitative data to be interpreted and reported may be that from a questionnaire used in survey research, previously developed, used, and processed in one or more of your previous assignments. All such proposals should follow the same guidelines to obtain the data as conveyed in the previous choices of this assignment. Further, such proposals should cover the general sections of a written 10 page paper about your skill building and learning that are presented in the above choices. Finally, a combination of the above choices may also be attempted. But in all cases, it is important to keep the assignment manageable and reasonable for completion of the third assignment.

5-F. Note: This choice engages you in critique of the interpretation and reporting of others who have completed empirical work with qualitative data and contributed their research to the published literature in psychology and human science.

Select two published research reports in a topic area of your interest that appear to address the same research question. Examine carefully the authors interpretation and reporting of their findings based on qualitative data. Study their reasoning, internal consistency, plausibility, argumentation, use of sound logic, generalization, validity, significance, extrapolation, inference, and the like. Write a 10 page essay that critiques these two contributions. Compare and contrast their two views, and do so with your own, based on your understanding and learning from the learning guide, texts, and relevant sources.

To complete this assignment, the essay should provide reflective and considered coverage in the following sections:

I. Introduction is the initial section of the paper to comunicate two tasks. Firstly, it states the topic area and research question asked by both contributors. Secondly, it presents your own (not the journal's) abstract or synopsis of the two research publications, which "sets the stage" for your critique.

II. Critique is the main section and the body of the essay, where you make your points of comparison between the two views (interpretations), as well as, contrast them with your own. Draw on various sources to back up your points, and include reasons for your points. Noting strengths and weaknesses, and evidence in favor and disfavor of varying interpretations helps to weave together your case, the principal critique of the two contributions to answer the research question and advance our knowlege. It will improve the readability and ease of following the critique to organize, sequence, and subtitle the body of the essay into several subsections.

III. Conclusion section is your "wrap up" of the essay, in which the highlights are reiterated and one's final statement on the matter is formulated and presented.

IV. References

V. Appendix which contains a clear copy of the focal two publications of the critique.

Assignment 6

The assignments associated with this part of the learning guide are to foster critical reflection and integration of the more global aspects of using qualitative data in research. They ask of you more attention to integrate the subject matter of qualitative research in anticipation of bringing to closure this particular course of study in the last assignment, which ask you to self-appraisal your learning and skill building over this course.

Select ONE choice presented below for completion of the sixth assignment. One choice will take you mre deeply into a methodological issue, where the other choice will have you discuss a theme or trend, both directly pertinent to the use of qualitative data in research. In completing this assignment, follow the same general guidelines used to complete the previous assignments of the course of study.

6-A. Select one central methodological issue concerning the use of qualitative data in psychology and human science research. Write a 10 page paper discussing several sides and current status of the issue in psychology or human science.

A complete paper should provide reflective and considered coverage, make use of relevant sources, and consist of the following sections:

1. Introduction. State the issue to be discussed.
2. Several major sections subtitled in a meaningful and plausible sequence that cover the various aspects, controversies, contributors, concerns, ramifications, and the like that has made it an issue in doing research with qualitative data.
3. Conclusion. State the current status of the issue and your final position as well.
4. References.

6-B. Select one major theme or trend you have discovered about working with qualitative data in research over the course of your study and completion of the previous assignments. In a 10 page essay, discuss the emergence, development, contribution, current status, and likely continuance of this theme or trend in the future. To complete this assignment, use the same organization described above in Choice 6-A.

Assignment 7

For the last assignment of your course of study, write a 6 page paper in which you self-evaluate and critique your current proficiency and understanding of using qualitative data in psychology and human science research. Describe what you have acquired of greatest value and strength, and describe those areas that represent revealed and clear weaknesses for your continued and future study. Draw upon your initial assignment of the course to reassess the extend of your progress over the course as well as reaffirmations and revisions of your point of view toward qualitative data in research. Draw also upon the critical thinking and research skills you have worked with to complete your previous assignments.

You may include your assessment of learning materials in terms of those which you discovered have especially facilitated your learning process, and those that have not. Self-recommendations or "advice to myself," are encouraged.

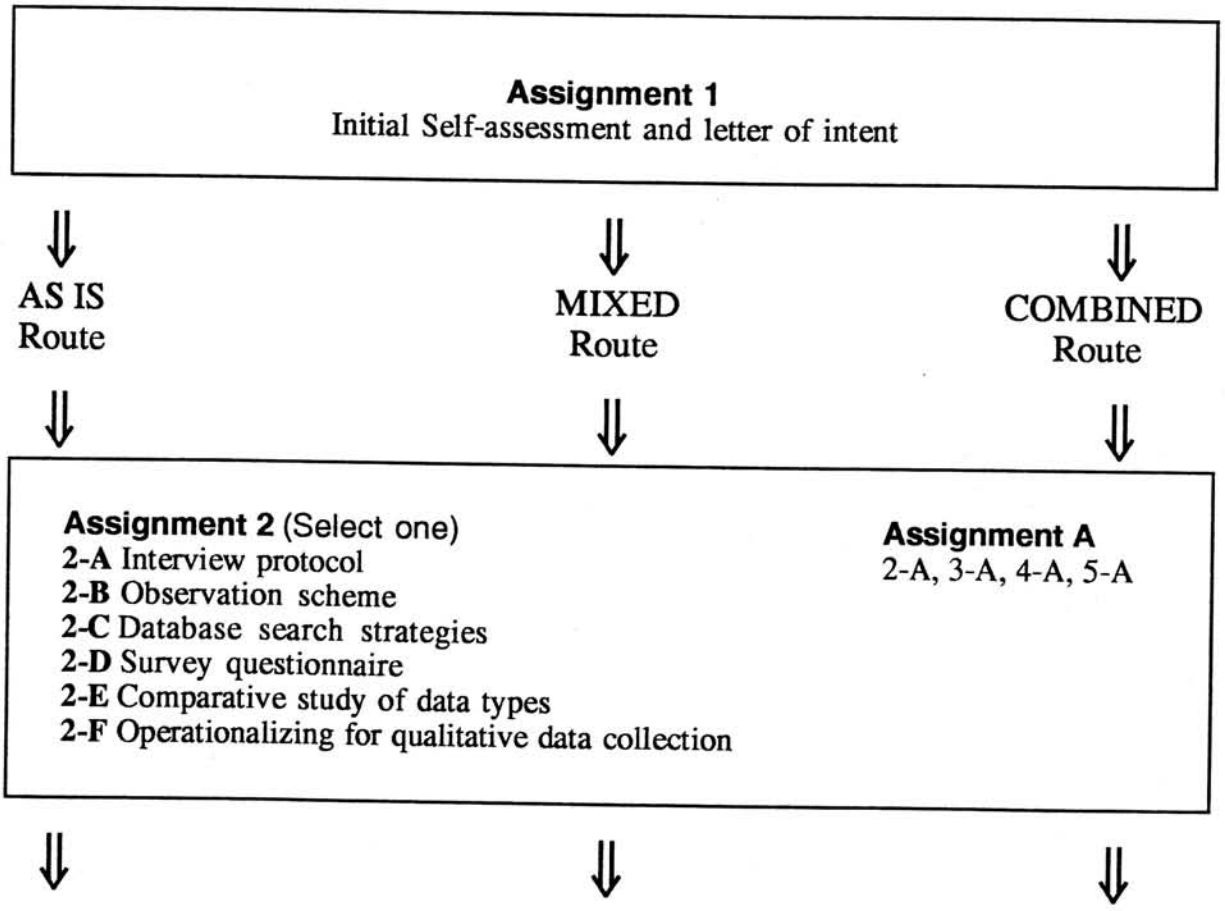
Equally important, if I am not your instructor, I would appreciate a copy of any assignments and evaluations, and your recommendations, by way of feedback, that you believe can improve this learning guide and accompanying materials to better serve others who come after you. This may be done anonymously, if you prefer. Your participation in the feedback loop is essential at Saybrook for continued improvement in the effectiveness and currency of these learning materials.

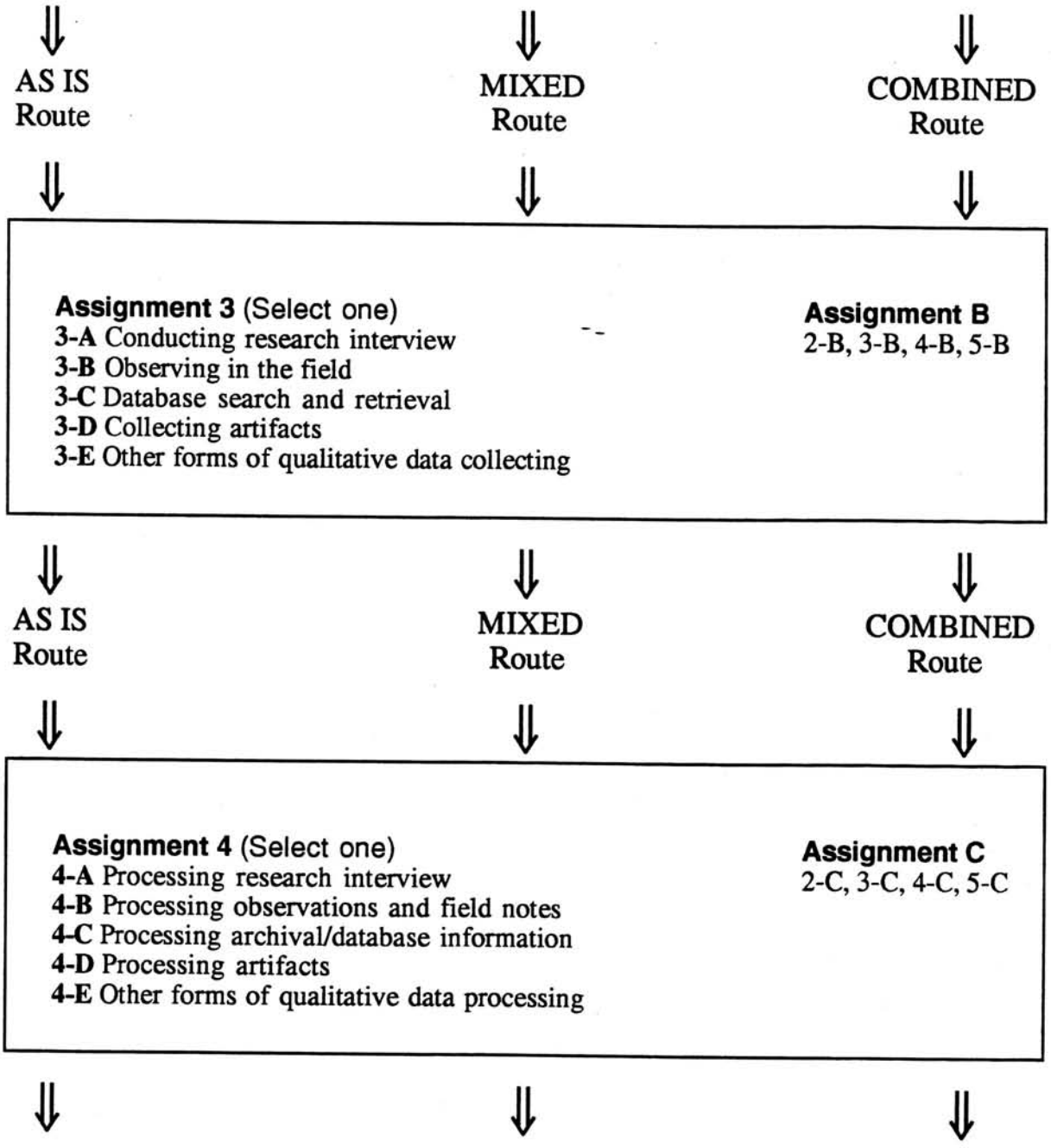
B

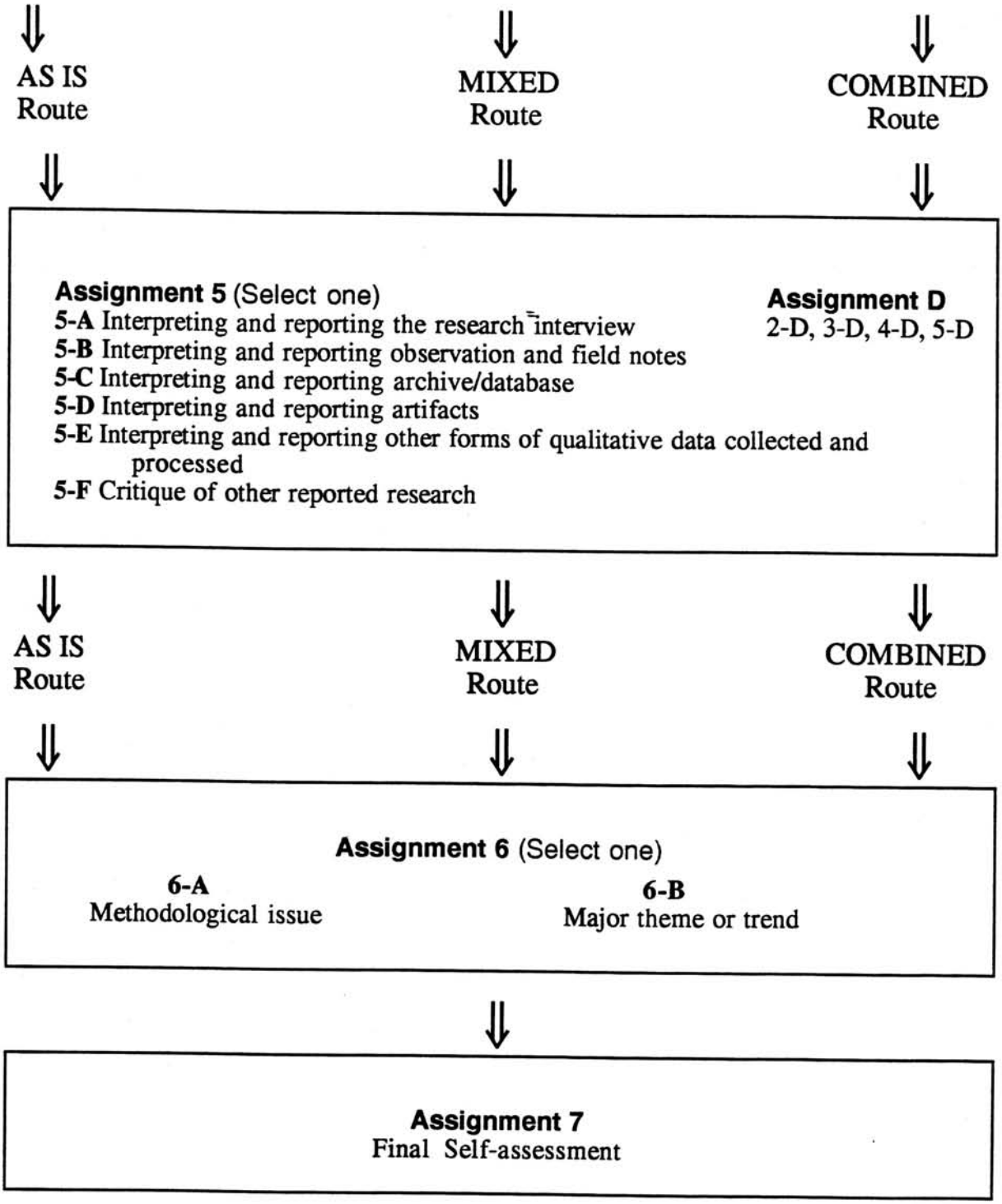
Appendix B:

DECISION FLOW CHART FOR ASSIGNMENTS

Note: This flow chart indicates the choices of each assignment over three routes through the course.




AS IS Route
MIXED Route
COMBINED Route
Assignment 3 (Select one)
3-A Conducting research interview
3-B Observing in the field
3-C Database search and retrieval
3-D Collecting artifacts
3-E Other forms of qualitative data collecting
Assignment B
2-B, 3-B, 4-B, 5-B
AS IS Route
MIXED Route
COMBINED Route
Assignment 4 (Select one)
4-A Processing research interview
4-B Processing observations and field notes
4-C Processing archival/database information
4-D Processing artifacts
4-E Other forms of qualitative data processing
Assignment C
2-C, 3-C, 4-C, 5-C


AS IS Route
MIXED Route
COMBINED Route
Assignment 5 (Select one)
5-A Interpreting and reporting the research interview
5-B Interpreting and reporting observation and field notes
5-C Interpreting and reporting archive/database
5-D Interpreting and reporting artifacts
5-E Interpreting and reporting other forms of qualitative data collected and processed
5-F Critique of other reported research
Assignment D
2-D, 3-D, 4-D, 5-D
AS IS Route
MIXED Route
COMBINED Route
Assignment 6 (Select one)
6-A
Methodological issue
6-B
Major theme or trend
Assignment 7
Final Self-assessment

C

Appendix C:

TABLE OF CONTENTS OF THE QRM READER

IV-B. Rennie, D. (1992). Qualitative analysis of the client's experience of psychotherapy: the unfolding of reflexivity. In S. Toukmanian and D. Rennie (Eds.), *Psychotherapy Process Research: Paradigmmatic and Narrative Approaches.* Newbury Park, CA: Sage, 211-233.

IV-C. Collier, J. (1967). Processing nonverbal evidence [Chapter 7], and Computing and interpreting the cultural inventory [Chapter 8]. *Visual Anthropology: Photography as a Research Method.* New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 67-104.

IV-D. Luborsky, M. (1994). The identification and analysis of themes and patterns. In J. Gubrium and A. Sankar (Eds.), *Qualitative Methods in Aging Research.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 189-210.

IV-E. Berman, H. (1994). Analyzing personal journals of later life. In J. Gubrium and A. Sankar (Eds.), *Qualitative Methods in Aging Research.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 211-226.

IV-F. Abel, E. (1994). Historical perspectives on caregiving: documenting women's experiences. In J. Gubrium and A. Sankar (Eds.), *Qualitative Methods in Aging Research.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 227-240.

PART V: SYNTHESIZING QUALITATIVE DATA

V-A. Collier, J. (1967). Computing and interpreting the cultural inventory. [Chapter 8] *Visual Anthropology: Photography as a Research Method.* New York: Hold, Rinehart and Winston, 77-104.

V-B. Mathison, S. (1988). Why triangulate? *Educational Researcher*, **17**(2), 13-17.

V-C. Morse, J. (1994). "Emerging from the data": the cognitive processes of analysis in qualitative inquiry. In J. Morse (Ed.), Critical Issues in Qualitative Research Methods. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 23-43. [See II-D]

PART VI: INTERPRETING AND REPORTING QUALITATIVE DATA

VI-A. Dabbs, J. (1982). Making things visible. In J. Van Maanen, J. Dabbs, and R. Faulkner, *Varieties of Qualitative Research.* Beverly Hills, CA: Sage, 31-63.

VI-B. Morse, J. (1994). "Emerging from the data": the cognitive processes of analysis in qualitative inquiry. In J. Morse (Ed.), *Critical Issues in Qualitative Research Methods.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 23-43. [See II-D]

VI-C. Collier, J. (1979). Evaluating visual data. In J. Wagner (Ed.), *Images of Information.* Beverly Hills, CA: Sage, 161-169.

VI-D. Collier, J. (1967). Computing and interpreting the cultural inventory. [Chapter 8] *Visual Anthropology: Photography as a Research Method.* New York: Hold, Rinehart and Winston, 77-104. [See V-A]

PART VII: ISSUES AND INTEGRATION

VII-A. Cochran, N. , Gordon, A., and Krause, M. (1980). Proactive records. *Knowledge: Creation, Diffusion, Utilization*, **2**, 5-18. [See III-A]

VII-B. Mathison, S. (1988). Why triangulate? *Educational Researcher*, **17**(2), 13-17.

VII-C. Luborsky, M. (1994). The identification and analysis of themes and patterns. In J. Gubrium and A. Sankar (Eds.), *Qualitative Methods in Aging Research.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 189-210. [See IV-D]

VII-D. Bottorff, J. (1994). Using videotaped recordings in qualitative research. In J. Morse (Ed.), *Critical Issues in Qualitative Research Methods.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 244-261.

VII-E. Thorne, S. (1994). Secondary analysis in qualitative research: issues and implications. In J. Morse (Ed.), *Critical Issues in Qualitative Research Methods.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 263-279.

PART VIII: CONCLUSION

None