

# Qualitative Methods

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CS 7123, Spring 2025

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# Qualitative Methods: Generic Guide

**Table 9.1** A Checklist of Questions for Designing a Qualitative Procedure

	Are the basic characteristics of qualitative studies mentioned?
	Is the specific type of qualitative design to be used in the study mentioned? Is the history of, a definition of, and applications for the design mentioned?
	Does the reader gain an understanding of the researcher's role in the study (past historical, social, cultural experiences, personal connections to sites and people, steps in gaining entry, and sensitive ethical issues) and how they may shape interpretations made in the study?
	Is the purposeful sampling strategy for sites and individuals identified?
	Are the specific forms of data collection mentioned and a rationale given for their use?
	Are the procedures for recording information during the data collection detailed (such as protocols)?
	Are the data analysis steps identified?
	Is there evidence that the researcher has organized the data for analysis?
	Has the researcher reviewed the data generally to obtain a sense of the information?
	Has the researcher coded the data?
	Have the codes been developed to form a description and/or to identify themes?
	Are the themes interrelated to show a higher level of analysis and abstraction?
	Are the ways that the data will be represented mentioned—such as in tables, graphs, and figures?
	Have the bases for interpreting the analysis been specified (personal experiences, the literature, questions, action agenda)?
	Has the researcher mentioned the outcome of the study (developed a theory, provided a complex picture of themes)?
	Have multiple strategies been cited for validating the findings?

# Qualitative Methods: Characteristics

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- Natural setting
- Researcher as key instrument
- Typically rely on multiple sources of data, rather than a single source
- Inductive and deductive data analysis
- Emergent Design
- Reflexivity
- Holistic account

# Qualitative Methods: Researcher's Role

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- Describe past experiences with the research problem or with the participants or setting
- Describe how these experiences may potentially shape the interpretations
- Comment on connections between the researchers and the participants/research sites that may impact the interpretation
- Describe steps of obtaining IRB approval
- Comment about sensitive ethical issues that may arise

# Qualitative Methods: Data Collection

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Data Collection Types	Options Within Types	Advantages of the Type	Limitations of the Type
Observations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete participant—researcher conceals role</li> <li>• Observer as participant—role of researcher is known</li> <li>• Participant as observer—observation role secondary to participant role</li> <li>• Complete observer—researcher observes without participating</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Researcher has a firsthand experience with participant.</li> <li>• Researcher can record information as it occurs.</li> <li>• Unusual aspects can be noticed during observation.</li> <li>• Useful in exploring topics that may be uncomfortable for participants to discuss.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Researcher may be seen as intrusive.</li> <li>• Private information may be observed that researcher cannot report.</li> <li>• Researcher may not have good attending and observing skills.</li> <li>• Certain participants (e.g., children) may present special problems in gaining rapport.</li> </ul>
Interviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Face-to-face—one-on-one, in-person interview</li> <li>• Telephone—researcher interviews by phone</li> <li>• Focus group—researcher interviews participants in a group</li> <li>• E-mail Internet interview</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Useful when participants cannot be directly observed.</li> <li>• Participants can provide historical information.</li> <li>• Allows researcher control over the line of questioning.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides indirect information filtered through the views of interviewees.</li> <li>• Provides information in a designated place rather than the natural field setting.</li> <li>• Researcher's presence may bias responses.</li> <li>• Not all people are equally articulate and perceptive.</li> </ul>

# Qualitative Methods: Data Collection

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Interviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Face-to-face—one-on-one, in-person interview</li><li>• Telephone—researcher interviews by phone</li><li>• Focus group—researcher interviews participants in a group</li><li>• E-mail Internet interview</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Useful when participants cannot be directly observed.</li><li>• Participants can provide historical information.</li><li>• Allows researcher control over the line of questioning.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Provides indirect information filtered through the views of interviewees.</li><li>• Provides information in a designated place rather than the natural field setting.</li><li>• Researcher's presence may bias responses.</li><li>• Not all people are equally articulate and perceptive.</li></ul>
Audio-Visual Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Photographs</li><li>• Videotapes</li><li>• Art objects</li><li>• Computer messages</li><li>• Sounds</li><li>• Film</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• May be an unobtrusive method of collecting data.</li><li>• Provides an opportunity for participants to directly share their reality.</li><li>• It is creative in that it captures attention visually.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• May be difficult to interpret.</li><li>• May not be accessible publicly or privately.</li><li>• The presence of an observer (e.g., photographer) may be disruptive and affect responses.</li></ul>

Source: Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches, by John W. Creswell and J. David Creswell

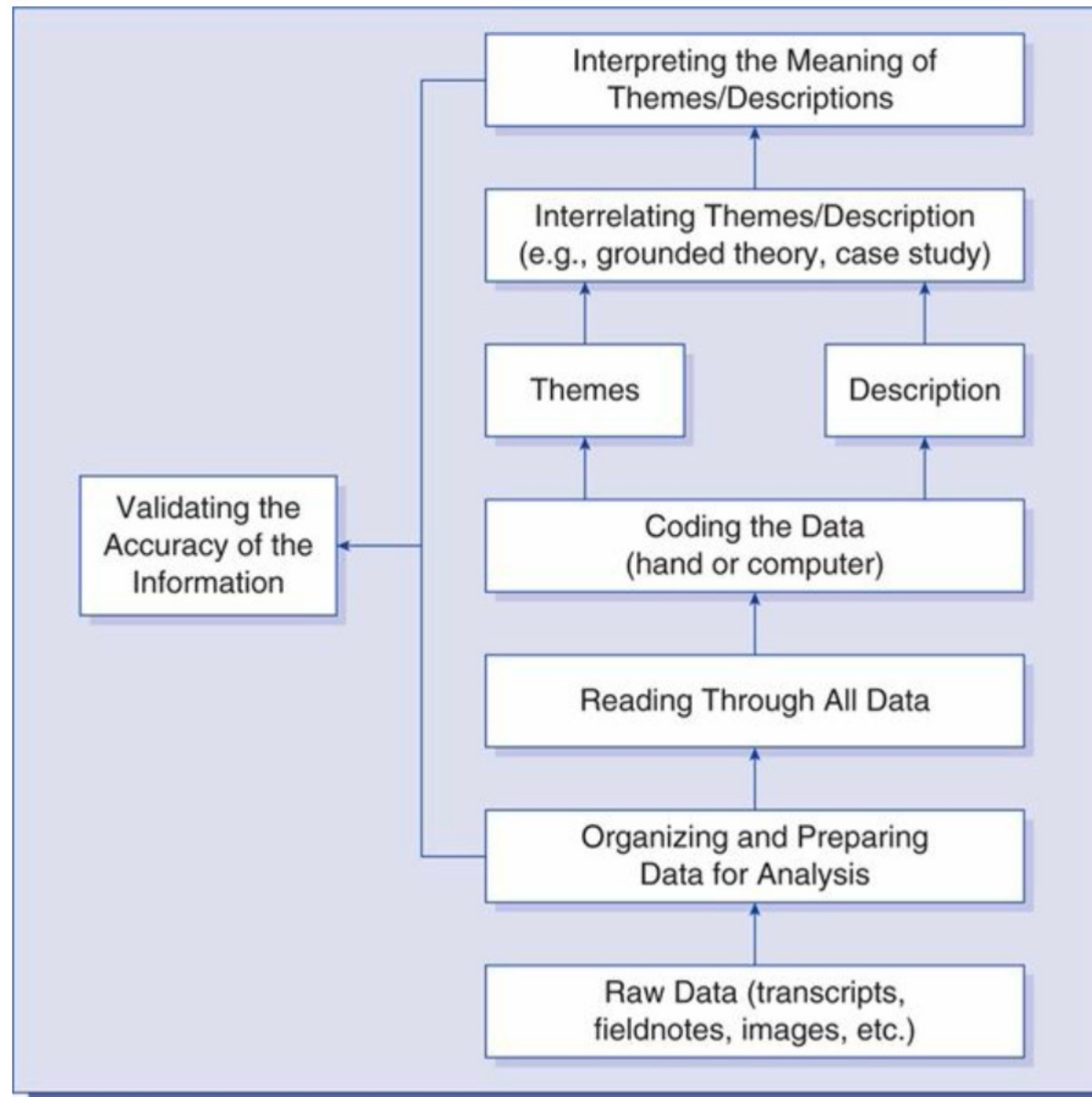
# Qualitative Methods: Data Recording

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- Observational protocol for recording information while observing
- Use an interview protocol for asking questions and recording answers
  - A heading (date, place, interviewer, interviewee)
  - Instructions for the interviewer to follow
  - The questions and space between questions to record responses
  - Follow up and ask individuals to explain their ideas in more detail, or to elaborate on what they have said
  - Finally, a thank-you statement to acknowledge the interviewee's time

# Qualitative Methods: Data Analysis

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**An example of a complete qualitative  
methods section [Live]**