

PRACTICING QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

Tasks for each scenario:

1. Describe briefly each of presented methods and its general benefits and drawbacks
2. Select ONE method and explain why it is the best idea for this research aim
3. What are limitations of your method in this specific case

Scenario 1

You are a psychologist that wants to carry out research on how people respond to a tragedy. You have decided that you would like to investigate how people who survived the earthquake and tsunami in Japan (March 11, 2011) have coped with this national tragedy. Which of the following strategies do you think would give you the best understanding of your research question?

- A semi-structured interview which you send out to volunteer participants by email.
- A focus group in which you bring together groups of up to eight participants at a time.
- A narrative interview in which you personally interview a number of participants.

Scenario 2

The government in your country is concerned about dietary habits among young people and the growing problem of obesity. They want you to carry out some observations on how eight-year-old children choose their food. Which of the following strategies do you think is the best for carrying out this research?

- A case study in which you study a group of 20 children over the course of one academic year.
- A series of covert, participant laboratory observations.
- Interviews with a number of children about their dietary habits.

Scenario 3

The counselors and IB coordinator of your school are concerned that there appears to be a high level of stress among students who are doing HL math, science and psychology. It is not clear to them why students with this particular combination are demonstrating more signs of stress than other students. They have asked you to do a case study to determine the nature of the problem. Which of the following plans is the best for carrying out your research?

- A longitudinal case study of three students, using observations and interviews.
- A cross-sectional case study of all students who have this combination of classes, using observations and interviews.
- A cross-sectional case study of students in your school and other IB schools in your region, using interviews and online questionnaires.