

Data Collection Techniques

1. School Profile Data:

- * Demographic and Historical Review of the General Organizational Patterns of the School System

2. Focus Group Interviews: students, support staff, parents, mentors (teachers)

Sevier (1989) “because participants are able to view and react to materials, it is possible to pursue and capitalize on insights that would not have surfaced in other forms of research”(p.4)

Focus group interview questions were pilot tested on students in two similar schools

Specific research questions, question paths, and probes were developed and refined

3. Individual interviews: served to clarify, allow for more intimate observations, and assess the field validity of the findings.

Students, teachers, counselors, assistant principals, secretary, school nurse, community aide, security guards, social worker, parents

4. Shadowing: a technique where the researcher attempts to experience the life of the other person as the person goes through her/his daily schedule.

Develops a feeling sense and the culture of the school

Assess the validity of the findings

Theme and Discrepancy Analysis

Triangulation: analyzing sets of responses or themes
that emerged throughout the focus groups interviews

document review.

Second Party Reading and Analysis: Colleagues
performing similar work in another setting

Qualitative Quotes

A man who had studied at many metaphysical schools came to Nasrudin.

..."I hope that you will accept me, or at least tell me your ideas," he said, "because I have spent so much of my time in studying at these schools."

"Alas!" said Nasrudin, "you have studied the teachers and the teachings. What should have happened is that the teachers and their teachings should have studied you."

--Sufi Wisdom

“ We recognize...that young people are often reluctant to talk with adults about their lives.”

Mann (1982, p. 34)

“Getting them to tell the truth”

Ianni (1993)

“qualitative research focuses on observation and dialogue to express reality and attempts to describe people in natural situations”

(Krueger, 1988, p.47)

“Social phenomena are never entirely idiosyncratic”

(Miles and Huberman, 1994)

It is easier to perceive error than to find truth,
for the former lies on the surface and is easily
seen, while the latter lies in the depth, where
few are will to search for it.

--Goethe

“One never notices what has been done; one
can only see what remains to be done.”

--Madame Curie

“As children we are, and we act, our real selves. We say what we think, what we want, we tell what we did. These spontaneous disclosures meet variable consequences; some disclosures are ignored, some rewarded, and some punished. Doubtless in accordance with the laws of reinforcement, we learn early to withhold certain disclosures because of the painful consequences to which they lead. We are punished in our society, not only for what we actually do, but

also for what we think, feel, or want. Very soon, then, the growing child learns to display a highly expurgated version of his self to others. I have coined the term “public self” to refer to the concept of oneself which one wants others to believe.”

Jouard (in Krueger, 1988,pp.23-24)

Data Sources

Portrait of Self

Individual Interviews

Who I Am Presentation

Attitude Mapping:

Thorndike and Hagan (1977): “in mapping one sinks many separate shafts into an attitude domain to see what the range and scope of attitudes is in some group or groups (p.435).

(ex. Stephen Sondheim, *Into the Woods*. *Careful what you do*

*Careful what you say
Although they might not obey,
Children will listen
Children will turn away.*

Write, draw, talk, etc.

Mentor Training

Direct Observation: observer must function as nearly as possible as an objective and mechanical recording instrument, observations must be organized, directed, systematic. Natural setting in every day life.

Anecdotal Notes

Focus Groups

Field Notes

Data Analysis Procedures

Data collection and analysis go on simultaneously. “The beginning principle of analysis is that the problem drives the analysis.” (Krueger, 1988, p.107)

“ A paper trail lead back to interpretation of incidents and data” (Smith, 1993, lecture notes)

Creation of categories and subcategories.

The identification of themes that run through all or most of the data, or one theme that carries a particular emotional or factual

impact. (Bogdan and Taylor, 1975)

“Theme analysis involves a search for the relationship among domains and how they are linked to the culture as a whole.”

(Spradley, 1979, p.94)

Member checks establish credibility of inquiry, as well as insure that nothing/ no one falls through the cracks. Levine (1980) stated that contradictions from different sources should be treated not as proof of unreliability but as additional information. Re: nonverbal communication:

“ Nonverbal communication was almost as critical as verbal communication, not only in helping the investigators assess the information they received from informants but also in providing clues to the state of the system they were studying. ...An informant's affect, especially taken in relation to other information, provided revealing cues, sometimes pointing to other data and sometimes confirming previous information. ...An informant's affect influenced the degree of conviction the reporters felt in the validity of a report. Sometimes the feeling tone aroused suspicion of lies or concealment.

...The data may be soft or subjective, but the perceived emotional state of an informant provides critical information for clinicians as well as for investigative reporters.”

(Levine,p.629)

Yin (in Krueger, 1984): “data analysis consists of examining, categorizing, tabulating, or otherwise recombining the evidence to address the initial proposition of the study” (p.106)

Qualitative Research Theorists

Bogdan & Biklen: *Qualitative Research in Education*(3rd. ed.)

Bogdan & Taylor

Ianni

Krueger:*Focus Groups. A Practical Guide for Applied Research*

Leedy: *Practical Research* (6th ed)

Miles and Huberman: *Qualitative Data Analysis* (2nd. ed)

Owen

Spradley

Yin

Research Questions

1. Who are the persons perceived as caring by at-risk students?
2. Do the persons perceived as caring provide supportive or destructive links to the school's culture and curriculum?
3. Who keeps at-risk adolescents in school?
4. What do the adolescents report keeps them in school?

5. What correspondence is there in the themes identified by students, parents, and school staff with regard to the importance of various factors in the success or failure of at-risk students?

“When we encounter our research subjects face to face, we are forced to deal with them as autonomous beings, and so our ethical problems are, by the very nature of our working relationship, different from those engendered by research in which we never encounter the living subject as individual. In qualitative research we often chat with our subjects, share food and coffee breaks, and generally build trusting relationships. Indeed, the fieldwork situation is so different from

experimental research that Margaret Mead
said, 'Anthropological research does not
have subjects. We work with informants in an
atmosphere of trust and mutual respect.'"

(Noddings, 1986, p.507)