**Additional Qualitative Methods**

The following methods are less often used by name in the study of programming languages, but see substantial usage in other fields.

**Ethnography**

In an ethnographic study, the researcher spends a significant period living among a population and writes about their experiences, often in a long-form format. In traditional ethnography, a researcher from outside a community speaks as an authority on the experiences of that community. This outsider authority leads a major limitation of ethnographic studies: because outsider experiences may struggle to capture the full depth of a community’s experience, treating that experience as authoritative carries the potential to propagate an inaccurate understanding of the community.

The following methods are often employed in an effort to overcome the limitations of ethnography and ensure cultural authenticity of results.

**Research-Practice Partnership**

In a research-practice partnership, the outsider researcher takes on the “subjects” as proper partners, meaning that they get to participate equally in steps ranging from the identification of research questions to writing and publication, typically resulting in shared credit on any academic research publications.

Example: A programming languages researcher partners with the non-profit community organization that oversees the direction of future development for a particular programming language. Together, they determine which questions about their programming community are of mutual interest, and investigate those questions together.

**Autoethnography**

Autoethnography is when a researcher applies ethnography to themself. Instead of overcoming the ethnographic power dynamic through teamwork, it is overcome by building a research team consisting of the subject group. Like all methods, it has limitations: if a sole author or internally homogenous group of authors attempt to speak on behalf of an entire identity group, they will fail to fully represent that identity group.

An argument in favor of autoethnography would be to recognize that no sole method can fully represent issues of identity, and that research fields make their progress through the combination of methods by different researchers.

**Example:** In 2020, a team of Black HCI researchers wrote autoethnographically about their lived experiences of racism within HCI.

* Example: **Prof. Zoe Reidinger at WPI has written authethnographically about queer issues.**

Example: When a programmer writes a social media post describing why they like or dislike a particular programing language, they are engaging in autoethnography

Because authoethnography means researchers writing about ourselves, it risks overemphasizing the importance of issues faced by researchers rather than the general public, yet it does excel at addressing those issues.