**Qualitative “Design of Study”**

**Framework / Presentation**

**(30 points possible)**

**Instructions: Write a 6 to 9 page “design of study” framework and present it to the class.**

This assignment, if approached correctly, is designed to help you draft the fundamental pieces of a methods chapter that can be later expanded and inserted into your actual dissertation. The idea here is that you will be applying what you learn to your own work. In other words, your task will be to translate each new area that we explore into a section of your eventual methods chapter.

Remember that you will need to work with your dissertation committee chair through the process of developing a methodological approach for your dissertation work as well as in constructing a research question. One danger in teaching a methods course is that the instructor becomes your “shadow” dissertation chair, taking over the responsibility for guiding you through developing a research question and research plan for your dissertation. This is NOT my intention. Involving your own chair and readers in your work in our class is essential, therefore, if you are going to build the relationship with him or her necessary to efficiently and effectively complete your doctoral dissertation.

Given that qualitative methodology and design are not as standardized as quantitative, neither are the procedures for presenting your design and method (likely, the third chapter of your dissertation). There are, arguably, some fundamental pieces of information that should be included regardless of the specific qualitative methodology you choose to employ. The template offered here should only be taken as a general framework, understanding that parts of it will be changed for each variety of qualitative method.

**Introduction**

A restatement of what it is that you want to find out and why. *Since you will likely explore this fully in your dissertation Chapters 1 and 2*, this should be limited to only a paragraph or two here.  The introduction can also include a brief description or restatement of the context under study.  What is the specific environment or reality in which the study will take place?

**Why Is This Study Suited to a Qualitative Design?**

You will need to explain the nature of the study here, emphasizing that it fits one of the common reasons for selecting a qualitative approach. These usually include one or a combination of such things as:

* There has been little or no previous research on the topic.
* No recognized theory has been developed relevant to the topic.
* The study is exploratory.
* The individual experiences of the sample subjects are at least partly the product of individual interpretation.
* A given phenomenon, situation, or response may be functional for one person but not for another.
* The context of an experience is a major element of its nature; the task is to identify the conditions under which a certain relationship or condition or response holds true.
* Other identifiable reasons why the phenomenon is not suited to quantitative methods.

**Restatement of the Research Purpose *(from your dissertation Chapter 1)***

This should be a brief reiteration of the “problem” to be researched; and also the purpose of the study.

 **Restatement of the Research Question(s) *(from your dissertation Chapter 1)***

This should be a brief reiteration of the research questions that are generated from observations, theory, prior research and/or experience; and also indicates the data to be collected and analyzed.

 **The Specific Methodology Employed?**

**- A.  The Specific Qualitative Design**

 **1**. Describe the type of methodology employed (e.g., grounded theory,

 ethnography, biographical, phenomenological, case study, etc.) and why you think

 that method is most appropriate for what you are proposing. Cite references to

 support your arguments. These questions may be helpful:

1. If I could discover the meaning of one person’s lived experience, I

would ask \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (individual) about \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

 = Biography

1. If I could discover the shared lived experiences of one quality or phenomenon in others, I would want to know about \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

 = Phenomenology

 3. If I could experience a different culture by living/ observing it, I would choose to experience \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

 = Ethnography

 4. If I could discover what actually occurred and was experienced in a single lived event, that event would be \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

 = Case Study

 5. If I could discover a theory for a single phenomenon of living as shared

 by others, I would choose to discover the theory of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

 = Grounded Theory

 **2**. Describe your goal. Are you going to generate theory, apply theory, test the extension of theory into new contexts, or do something else?

**- B. Sources of the Methodology.**

Identify the sources on which you draw for your ideas and specific activities. In addition to recognized generalists, be sure that you have consulted recognized leaders in the line of inquiry you have chosen.

**- C. Role of the Researcher**

 **1**. Explain the role of the researcher in qualitative research. There are numerous explanations of this in the research literature upon which you can draw.

 **2.** Describe your own education and experience, identify any advantages or

 problems these might create.

 **3**. State any known biases. Bring to light your own cultural systems of coming to know, knowing, and experiencing the world.

**- D. Design Specifics.**

 **1.** Unit of Analysis:  Who or what will be the subject of the design.

 **2**. Sample Population:  Explain what sampling rationale was employed. For example,

* Explain how and why you chose the setting(s) you did. If appropriate and possible, cite sources to support your choices.
* Explain how you gained entry to the setting(s) and how - if it was necessary -- you secured permission to study the informants or the situation(s).
* Describe the size of the sample and the characteristics of the informants who make it up. Describe whether this is a representative sample, purposeful, convenience sample, etc., and why it is appropriate for your needs. Cite sources to support your choices.
* Explain who will be interviewed, observed, etc. Give as much information as possible (number, gender, race, age, position, experience, etc.) while remaining consistent with confidentiality and other ethical concerns.

 **3.** Data Collection Methods.

* Identify the methods to be used (e.g., interviews, participant observation, observer, journals, document review, artifact analysis, etc.) and explain why that method or combination of methods is appropriate to this study. Cite sources to support your choices.
* Describe the specifics of how the method(s) will be implemented. For example, if you plan to do interviews, you need to explain:

 1) Why there is a need to interview.

 2) How many interviews you plan to do, why you need that many, when they will be done.

 3) What type(s) of interview(s) (structured, open-ended, in-depth, unstructured, etc.) you are

 going to conduct - and why. Cite sources to support your choices.

 4) How the interviews will be conducted - and why. For example, will you record the interview?

 Why or why not? Will you take notes during the interview? If so, what will the notes record –

 expressions, body language, your sense of the person's honesty, other things? Why? Cite sources

 to support your choices.

 5) For at least the first interview, you will need to identify the questions you will ask and explain

 why you are asking each. You will need to explain how each relates to your overriding research

 question(s). You will need to describe the source of each of your questions. Was the question suggested by prior research? Your own experience or hunches? Something else?

 6) If you plan additional interviews, you need to explain how the questions

 will be developed, if you plan to create an interview guide, etc. Where

 possible, cite sources to support your choices.

 **4.** Post-Activity Data Management. You will need to explain how you will handle the data following the

 interview, observation, review, or other activity. For example,

* Will you set aside a block of time to deal with it while things are still fresh in your mind? Will you let the data sit for a while to allow yourself to gain some perspective on it? Where possible, cite sources to support your choices.
* If you tape recorded an interview, will you transcribe the whole interview or will you listen to it and extract relevant information? Explain why you decided what you did. Where possible, cite sources to support your choices.

 **5.** Data Analysis.

* Explain that data collection and data analysis will proceed simultaneously. This is the "constant comparison data analysis method". Cite sources where appropriate to support your description of the process.
* Explain how qualitative analysis is based on data "reduction" and "interpretation" aimed at identifying categories and themes. Outline the specific steps you will take in accomplishing this work to demonstrate that it will be done systematically. Cite sources where appropriate to support your choices.
* Explain how you will develop matrices to facilitate visualization of relationships among data pieces.
* Explain the coding procedure(s) you plan to use. Cite sources where appropriate to support your choices.
* Discuss whether or not you will use a qualitative analysis software program and why. If you do intend to use one, identify it by name and explain why you chose it.

 **6**. Verification of Interpretation.

* The value of qualitative research turns on the researcher's ability to keep the data, the interpretations, the reductions, and the resulting conclusions closely linked to the reality from which they came. Toward that end, you need to explain how you will monitor your own work.
* Remember that "validity" and "reliability" are notions of quantitative research. Your job is to convince your readers that your analysis, interpretations, and conclusions are truthful (credible; plausible; believable) - this addresses the equivalent quantitative notion of "internal validity".
* Applicable (transferable; generalizable) - this addresses the equivalent quantitative notion of "external validity". This usually will be very limited. Qualitative research does not look for universals that exist free of context. In fact, it is just the opposite. Qualitative research seeks results that not only are context bound but - in fact - also describe the context.
* Consistent (dependable, rooted in the data and representative of all or most of it) - this is as close to the quantitative notion of "reliability" as qualitative research can get. Because of human variations in both the researcher and the subjects, replication of a qualitative study may not be possible.

 a. Explain your plans for triangulation - or explain why triangulation is not possible.

 b. Explain "member checks" with participating informants

 1) Describe follow-ups to interviews, observations, etc. with a

 reporting back to the data source people.

 2) Describe taking the categories, themes, etc. back to the data

 source people for verification.

 3) Describe taking the descriptions, categories, themes, etc. to

 people who have had the same experience but are not participants

 in the study.

 c. Explain the possible use of an "auditor" or why one might not be used.

 d. Explain how you will subject your conclusions to analysis in the light of

 relevant research.

Further examples of ways to ensure trustworthiness of the data analysis include:

* collaborate
* literature review: look the silences, what is not there, where are the holes
* intense examination of the methodology: methodology and theory must remain consistent
* triangulation: utilize multiple data sources
* perform member checks: have the participants look at the data to confirm researchers interpretations of the data
* peer reviews: have peers review research questions and transcripts for accuracy, consistency, and authenticity
* discuss underlying epistemological assumptions: do they match wityh what you are trying to accomplish
* academic rigor: do you have thick description
* accurate description of the environment or context under study
* accuracy of the transcripts and date used: verify this
* consider bias and background of the researcher: this will help the reader make informed decisions regarding the verisimilitude of the research process
* describe the methodology
* field journal as often as possible: discuss issues like choice of participants, the data gathering process, the research questions, the methodology and it applicability
* be self-reflexive
* conduct and audit trail
* consider resonance of the methodology and the data

**What Will the Product Look Like?**

Describe what writing form the final qualitative report will look like (narrative; story; literary; performance; poetic; polyvocal; mixed genre; impressions; etc.).

**The “Design of Study” Presentations will take place during Sessions 10, 11 & 12:**

Each student should share handouts for all class members and guests, and employ at least one of the following:

 1. overhead transparencies

 2. posters

 3. computer-assisted presentations like powerpoint

 4. videotapes

 5. audiotapes

 6. other interesting methodologies as applicable. (You are to present this, not just read it!)