

Qualitative Research Methods

Institute of Mental Health
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Course Convenors

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Description

This course will introduce key methods of data collection and data analysis in qualitative research. It will survey techniques such as - ethnographic data collection, interviewing and focus groups along with data analysis methods such as - thematic and content analysis. The course will comprise of five 90 mn lectures each day, followed by five 90 mn seminars dedicated to hands-on applications of the topics discussed during the lectures. The two convenors of the course will hold 90 mn surgeries per day to discuss research projects and deal with queries on a one-to-one basis.

Learning Objectives

- To provide a good grounding in the fundamentals of building a body of qualitative data;
- To enable students to compare the strengths and weaknesses of the common methods of qualitative data collection and analysis;
- To provide some hands-on experience with methods of qualitative data collection and analysis.

Day 1: Quality in qualitative research

Elena Gonzalez-Polledo & Aude Bicquelet

This lecture will introduce the aims and scope of the course and outline the main epistemological issues in qualitative research. It will present the various philosophies that underpin current approaches to qualitative methodologies in the social sciences and explore concepts of validity, and reliability in qualitative data analysis. Reviewing a range of examples, it will enable students to assess the quality of qualitative analyses and to make practical informed decisions about research design.

Key readings

- Bauer MW & G Gaskell (2000) *Qualitative Researching with Text, Image and Sound*, London: Sage, Chapter 1.
- Flick, U. (2009) *An Introduction to Qualitative Research*, London: Sage. Chapter 11 'Sampling.'
- Lury, C. and N. Wakeford (2012). *Inventive methods : the happening of the social*. London ; New York, Routledge.
- Law, J (2004): *After Method: Mess in Social Science Research*, London, Routledge.
- Tracy, S. (2010) 'Qualitative Quality: Eight 'Big Tent' criteria for excellent qualitative research' *Qualitative Inquiry*, 16(10): 837-51.
- Silverman, D (ed) (1997): *Qualitative Research: Theory, Method and Practice*, Thousand Oaks and New Delhi, Sage.
- Blaikie, N.W.H. (1991) 'A critique of the use of triangulation in social research', *Quantity and Quality* 25, 115-36.
- Lincoln, Y. and Denzin, N. 'The seventh moment: Out of the past' in in N K Denzin and Y S Lincoln (eds) *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, 2 edition, London: Sage, p1047.
- Koro-Ljungberg, M. (2010) 'Validity, responsibility and aporia', *Qualitative Inquiry*, 16(8): 603-10.
- Carteris-Black, J and Seale, C (2010): *Gender and the language of Illness*, Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan.
- Penaranda Correa, F (2013): 'The Evaluation of qualitative research' *Qualitative Inquiry* March 2013 vol. 19no. 3 209-218.

Suggested reading

- Svensson, L and Dumas, K (2013): 'Contextual and analytic qualities of research methods exemplified in research on teaching' in *Qualitative Inquiry* July 2013 vol. 19no. 6, pp 441-450.
- Seale, C. (1999) *The Quality of Qualitative Research*, in *Qualitative Inquiry* December 1999 vol. 5 no. 4, pp 465-478.
- Barbour R (2001) 'Checklist for improving the rigour in qualitative research: a case of the tail wagging the dog?' *British Medical Journal*, 5 May 2001, 1115-1117.

Day 2: Documents and ethnographic data collection.

Elena Gonzalez-Polledo

Drawing on contemporary debates across the social sciences, this lecture will discuss two sets of techniques of qualitative data collection. The first half of the lecture provides a practical overview of working with documents, field archives and digital materials, which are often a primary source of qualitative data. Analysing utility of documents in multidisciplinary methodological designs, this lecture raises questions about the kinds of queries and claims researchers can make through collecting and analysing documents, as well as about the limitations of documentary research.

The second half explores strategies of ethnographic data collection. No longer confined to the discipline of anthropology, ethnography is a key methodology that allows researchers across disciplines to connect with people and processes on the ground. Drawing on insights by leading theorists, the lecture provides an overview of ethnographic methodologies in qualitative fieldwork, focusing on participant observation as a key method of collecting and contextualising data, but integrating participatory methodologies, including diary methods, and working with non-traditional data such as diagrams, photographs and drawings as part of the ethnographic process.

Key readings

- Van Maanen, J. (1988). *Tales of the field. On writing ethnography*. University of Chicago Press
- Geertz, C. (2003) *The Interpretation of Cultures*, New York: Basic Books. (Chapter 1 on thick description)
- Emerson, R.M, Fretz, R.I. and Shaw, L.I. (1995) *Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Hammersley, M. (1992) *What's Wrong With Ethnography: Methodological Explorations*, London: Routledge.
- Marcus, G. (1998) *Ethnography Through Thick and Thin*, Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Pink, S. (2007) *Doing Visual Ethnography*, 2 edition, London, Sage.
- Berger, J. (1972) *Ways of Seeing*, London: Penguin.
- Banks, M. (2001) *Visual Methods in Social Research*, London: Sage.
- Pink, S (2009) *Sensory Ethnography*, London: Sage.
- O'Connor, H. and Goodwin, J. (2010) 'Utilizing Data from a Lost Sociological Project: Experiences, Insights, Promises' *Qualitative Research* 10(3): 283-98.
- Taussig, M (2011): *I swear I saw this: drawings in fieldwork notebooks, namely my own*. Chicago, University of Chicago Press.
- Goffman, E. (1961). *Asylums : Essays on the Social Situation of Mental Patients and Other Inmates* New York: Doubleday. (especially chapter: *The Underlife of a Public Institution: A Study of Ways of Making Out in a Mental Hospital*)
- Joanou, J.P. (2009) 'The bad and the ugly: Ethical concerns in participatory photographic methods with children living and working on the streets in Lima,

Peru', *Visual Studies* 24(3): 214-223.

Jenkins T. (1994). 'Fieldwork and the Perception of Everyday Life'. *Man*. 29 (2): 433-455.

Suggested reading

Padfield, D., et al. (2010). "A slippery surface... can photographic images of pain improve communication in pain consultations?" *International Journal of Surgery* 8(2): 144-150.

DeWalt, K. M., & DeWalt, B. R. (2010). *Participant observation: A guide for fieldworkers*. (2nd edition). AltaMira Press. (Chapter 7 on informal interviewing, Chapter 8 on writing fieldnotes and Appendix 1: sample fieldnotes).

Hookaway, N. (2008) 'Entering the blogosphere: some strategies for using blogs in social research', *Qualitative Research* 8(1): 91-113.

Day 3: Qualitative interviews and focus groups

Elena Gonzalez-Polledo

Conducting effective interviews and focus groups involves developing key skills for qualitative researchers. This lecture will discuss different types of qualitative interviews, their strengths and weaknesses, and focus on the conceptual and practical issues involved in setting up, preparing for, and successfully conducting interviews. Particularly, we will consider the ideal dynamics of interaction between an interviewer and an interviewee and the way these shape data collection and analysis. We will also discuss the particularities of conducting focus groups, discuss their defining characteristics and the possibilities they afford as particular group interviews. We will explore key examples that show multiple strategies to design and manage focus groups, focusing on fostering interaction among participants in order to produce useful data.

Key readings

- Becker, H. and Geer, B. (2004) 'Participant Observation and Interviewing: A Comparison' (and a subsequent exchange with Martin Trow) in Seale, C. (ed) *Social Research Methods: A Reader*, London: Routledge.
- Holstein, J.A. and Gubrium, J.F. 'The Active Interview' in D. Silverman (ed), *Qualitative Research: Theory, Method and Practice*, 2nd edition, London: Sage, pp 140-161.
- James, N. and Busher, H. (2009) *Online Interviewing*, London: Sage.
- Kvale, S. (2007) *Doing Interviews*, London: Sage.
- Foddy, W. (1993) *Constructing Questions for Interviews and Questionnaires: Theory and Practice in Social Research*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Gubrium, J.F. and Holstein, J.A. (2002) *Handbook of Interviewing Research: Context and Method*, Thousand Oaks and London: Sage.
- Krueger, R. A., & Casey, M.A. (2000). *Focus Groups. A Practical Guide for Applied Research*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Morgan, D.L. (1997). *Focus Groups As Qualitative Research* (2nd edition). Thousand Oaks: Sage. Kitzinger, J. (1994) The methodology of focus groups: The importance of interaction

Suggested reading

- Gaskell, G. (2000) 'Individual and Group Interviewing' in M. Bauer and G. Gaskell (eds), *Qualitative Researching: Text, Image and Sound*, London: Sage, pp 38-56.
- Schulze, B., & Angermeyer, M. C. (2003). Subjective experiences of stigma. A focus group study of schizophrenic patients, their relatives and mental health professionals. *Social Science & Medicine*, 56(2), 299–312.
- Tiggemann, M., Gardiner, M., & Slater, A. (2000). "I would rather be size 10 than have straight A's": A focus group study of adolescent girls' wish to be thinner. *Journal of Adolescence*, 23(6), 645–659.

Day 4: Thematic Analysis

Aude Bicquelet

Thematic analysis is a basic strategy used by many researchers to find key patterns of argumentation in text corpora. This lecture will introduce the functions of codes, corpus construction along with various analytical strategies to systematically extract and categorize content from qualitative data (i.e. classical and hybrid approaches). The focus will be on practical techniques for applying thematic analysis and understanding how it differs from other approaches such as grounded theory and discourse/argumentation analysis.

Key readings

- Feredey, J. and Cochrane, E.M. (2006) 'Demonstrating Rigor Using Thematic Analysis: A hybrid approach of inductive and deductive coding and theme development,' *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 5(1): 80-92
- Attride-Stirling, J. (2001) 'Thematic Networks: an Analytic Tool for Qualitative Research', *Qualitative Research* 1(3): 385-405.
- Boyatzis, RE (1998) *Transforming Qualitative Information*, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Bradley, E.H, Curry, L and Devers, J (2007) Qualitative data analysis for health services research: Developing taxonomy, themes, and theory. *Health service Research* 42: 1758-1772.
- Braun, V, and Clarke, V (2006) 'Using thematic analysis in psychology', *Qualitative Research in Psychology* 3: 77- 101.

Suggested reading

- Saldaña, J. (2009). *The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers*. Sage, Thousand Oaks, CA. Sage, Thousand Oaks, CA
- Thomas, J. and Harden, A. (nd) 'Methods for the thematic synthesis of qualitative research in systematic reviews' *Methods for Research Synthesis Node, Evidence for Policy and Practice Information and Co-ordinating (EPPI-)Centre, Social*

Day 5: Content Analysis

Aude Bicquelet

Content Analysis is a set of methods for analysing and drawing valid inferences from texts. These methods are used across the social sciences to explore explicit and covert meanings (also called manifest and latent content) and to test hypotheses about texts. This lecture will introduce the main analytical steps involved in Classical Content Analysis. It will also focus on validity and reliability issues and will consider various strategies to strengthen the robustness of the results obtained through classical content analysis.

Key readings

Hirschman, E.C. (1987). People as products: Analysis of a complex marketing exchange. *Journal of Marketing*, 51. (98-108).

Cunningham, G. B., Sagas, M., Satore, M. L., Amsden, M. L., & Schellhase, A. (2004). Gender representation in the NCAA News: Is the glass half full or half empty? *Sex Roles: A Journal of Research*, 50(11/12), 861-870

Hsieh, H.-F., & Shannon, S.E. (2005). Three approaches to qualitative content analysis. *Qualitative Health Research*, 15(9), 1277-1288.

Krippendorff, K (2004) *Content Analysis: An Introduction to its Methodology*, 2nd edition, London: Sage

Mayring, P. (2000). *Qualitative content analysis*. Forum: Qualitative Social Research,

Neuendorf K A (2002) *The Content Analysis Guidebook*, London: Sage.

Suggested reading

Althaus S L, J A Edy, P F Phalen (2001) 'Using substitutes for full-text news stories in content analysis: which text is best?' *American Journal of Political Science*, 45(3): 707-724.

Janowitz M (1976) 'Content analysis and the study of socio-political change,' *Journal of Communication*, 26(4): 10-21.

Kracauer S (1952) 'The challenge of qualitative content analysis', *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 16: 631-42.

Krippendorff, K (2004) 'Reliability in content analysis: some common misconceptions and recommendations', *Human Communication Research*, 30(3): 411-33.