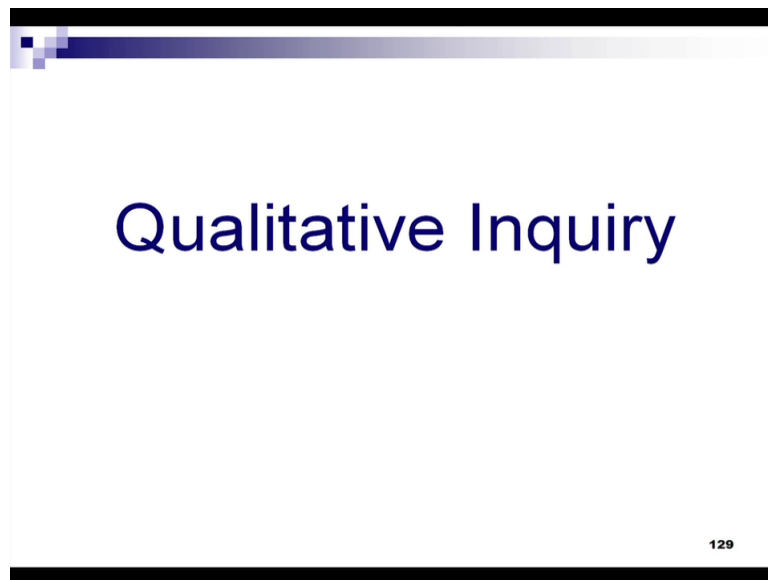


Qualitative Research Methods
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Lecture 16
Introduction to Qualitative Theory

Welcome back to the NOC course title qualitative research methods, my name is Aradhna Malik and I'm helping you with this course and in this lecture we are going to start with the whole notion or the whole concept of qualitative research design or the qualitative inquiry. So we will talk about qualitative inquiry.

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We have discussed qualitative research, we discussed an introduction to qualitative research, we discuss the whole bunch of things, but in this particular lecture we are going to start a discussion on qualitative inquiry. What qualitative inquiry is? How it shapes up Etc., so this lecture will introduce you to the whole process of qualitative inquiry and things will be taken up in greater detail as we go along, okay.

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Research design (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000)

- “ How will the design connect to the paradigm or prospective being used? That is, how will empirical materials be informed by & interact with the paradigm in question?
- How will these materials allow the researcher to speak to the problems of praxis & change?
- Who or what will be studied?
- What strategies of inquiry will be used?
- What methods or research tools will be used for collecting & analyzing empirical materials?”

130

So the starting point of qualitative enquiry is research design and research design means what is the framework of the study that we are going to conduct, so in the previous lectures we talked about the mind set we are going to approach qualitative research, from the ideas that go on in your mind, the anchors we have in order to approach a particular idea that we want to study, a particular concept a phenomenon that you want to study, now this stage onwards once we have decided on a paradigm we want to use, then we move on to designing the framework for a research now the fun begin.

So “how will the design be connected to the paradigm or prospective being used? So the questions we ask are number one; what our minds it is? And how will the framework we use connect to this mindset that we have decided to approach our research from? That is how will empirical materials be informed by and interact with the paradigm in question. So the materials that we used, data we collect, the methods used and how will the material collected interact with and be informed by or be influenced by or be guided by the design that we used.

So we are using a design of framework to arrive at an answer to the question we have asked. We want to study of phenomenon, why do we want to study a phenomenon because some stimulus has been provided to us from the environment, from the literature, from within us, there is no reason behind our wanting to study a particular phenomenon. I will take the example of psychological research, research in child development, my Masters in child development, so I know little bit more about that.

When we talk about child development a lot of studies, a large number of days have been or initially were conducted on children that did not seem normal, it was the abnormality in behavior, in the development of children that sparked an interest in studying this behavior, that were not normal. The same goes for research in medicine, in treatment, so when do we treat people, when something is working we don't want to study but when something is not working that is when we study it.

Then we try and find out why something is not working, so you know if you take the example of any kind of study in the sociological sciences, a most of the studies are stimulated by a notion of abnormality, something that is not happening the way it is supposed to happen, as informed to us by something that has preceded it. We see something going on in a pattern we don't bother about it, but the minute a pattern is broken, the moment that pattern is interrupted, we want to go in and we want to study it and that is what stimulates our interest, that is what sparks an interest in the phenomenon.

Very few of us are really keen on studying the normal situation or studying things in their normal setting, something as a pattern it doesn't even become evident, so we do it many of us do it, but the percentage of those studying abnormality, those studying I would say abnormality but not normalcy is much higher than those studying real chunks of life and that is you know, when we talk about qualitative research.

We have to find out what is it that we are studying and why we are studying it and what mindset do we bring to the study that we are going to conduct. So how will the output be influenced by this mindset that we are approaching the questions from, what is our research question? Why have we asked that question? why should we or anyone else spend any time or any resources on us wanting to answer that question.

And how will this interact with the paradigm in question, so how will this be influenced by and how will it be related to the paradigm in question, how will it be an extension of the mindset or how will it fit into the mindset that we are approaching it from. Then how will the materials allow the researcher to speak to the problems of praxis and change, so the material that we use or the materials that we decide on or the materials that we arrived at.

How will these materials allow the researcher to the to speak to or to address the problems of practical reality. Praxis is the connection between theory and practice, praxis means how theory, how ideals, how our thinking, what we discover actually fits in with real practical life. So how will these materials allow the researcher address the problems of this connection and change in the situation, the context that is being studied, that is another question we ask?

Then who or what will be studied? What are we going to study? Who are we going to study? is it a phenomenon, is it a situation, is it a context, is it people, is it one person, is it one organization, et cetera, is it the behavior of a group of people or is it the unwillingness of the people to behave in a certain manner, so you know not behaving, not speaking, not taking action are also problems that are studied.

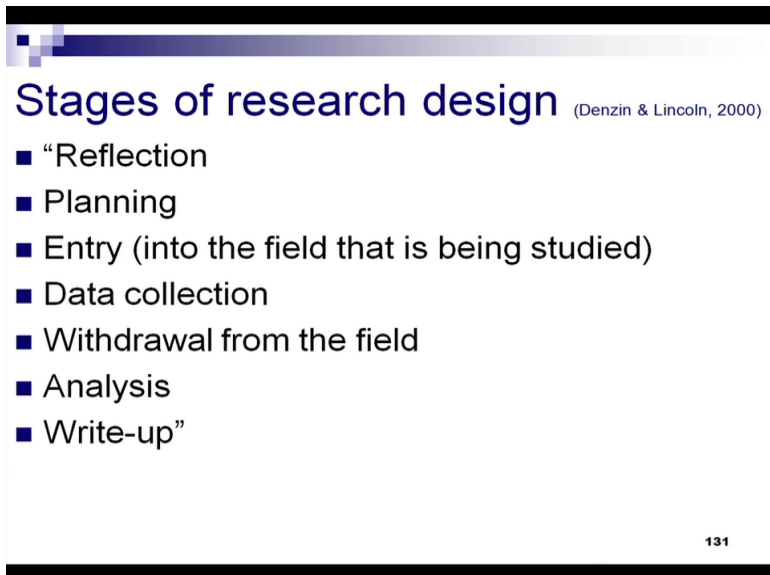
So who or what are we going to study, is another thing that forms part of the research design. Then what strategies of inquiry will be used? How are we going to study, what we set out to study? And specifically, you know we don't specifically use the word method because method is only a very small, though very important constituent of strategy, but strategy involves, may involve, just one method for the way that method is used it constitutes a strategy.

So what strategies of inquiry will be used? Then what methods of research tools will be used for collecting and analyzing empirical materials? At the end of the day we need to go into the field, we need to establish a connection with the field, we need to get the information that we need from the field in order to answer the question we have asked, produce a dissertation, research paper, or a report and be done with it.

I'm just talking but very practical aspects of research, why do we conduct research? You want to get a PhD, you want to get your Masters, you want to write your M.Phil, you want to get a degree out of it, you want to get funds out of it, you want to solve a practical problem, so you want to write a policy paper, you want to get an answer to a question and then use that answer to make a difference to the very field that you have studied.

So we all have our goals, ultimately, what kind of methods will be used in order to answer the question, we have set out to answer, okay and what kind of tools will be used to collect and analyze these materials, this data that we get, okay.

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Stages of research design (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000)

- “Reflection
- Planning
- Entry (into the field that is being studied)
- Data collection
- Withdrawal from the field
- Analysis
- Write-up”

131

Stages of research design, questions have been addressed, now what are the stages of research design, the first stage is Reflection. I keep telling my students that unless they have studied the literature thoroughly, unless they have understood what has been done before they even thought of a problem, they can't even arrive at a problem. We need to reflect, yes, you may be stimulated by something you see, something you observe, and urge you have.

And I will share a personal example with you at this point and I am going to send a copy of this video to my PhD supervisor, Professor Frank Dance who's in the United States and I will, you know he told me, try it, upfront he told me, you can study whatever you want to study but first you find out, how do I decide what I should be studying so a writeable, so a significant dissertation can come out it and he said you have to live with whatever you study.

So what are you interested in and I was quite taken aback, so he said what stimulates you most? What do you absolutely love? I said children and that's why I got a degree in child development, he said what else do you love? I said I enjoy technology, I love technology, I am a techno feel, I did not become an engineer but I enjoy technology, he said okay, what bit of technology related to children or what kind of technology are children using.

So this was the year 2000 onwards, so we decided on and then we came to a connection, he said okay computers and children, are you comfortable? I said yes. So we started with these two broad areas and then I studied everything I could, about the relationship between

computers and children, my PhD dissertation was not qualitative, a qualitative research design, but that is one process, one way of arriving at a question.

I gobbled up everything and it took me quite some time to arrive at a research question, but I said okay, I want to study computers and children. And eventually I ended studying the impact of communicative technology and exposure to media screens on the communicative development of children. So that took a long time, so I kept digging, digging, digging, digging and I tried to find out what was it, that had not been studied or answered fully.

And you have to reflect, you have to know what is going on and then you have to think about it and you have mull over it and then you have to figure out what questions were studied and which questions still remain unanswered, that you have still not been able to find an answer to. And you keep thinking and you keep wondering, so this whole process of going into the field, going into the literature, finding out what has been done.

And what has not been done and why has not been done and how, whether you will be able to do it or not, what are the questions that still remain unanswered is what is called as reflection, you have to keep wondering this, constant bug off why? Why? Why? Why? Has to be there in your mind. Why? What? What? What? So the WH? Questions should be constantly bothering you. The next stage is planning okay.

So you have already arrived at a research question by the time you start designing your research, you've already decided on a strategy of inquiry, but you still wondering why? Why? Why? and you keep reflecting and you should be willing to accept changes to your original question, you should be willing to accept somebody saying that you are doing an absolutely shoddy job and you should be willing to revisit it and go.

And improve upon it, instead of feeling bad about somebody calling your very, very hard work as absolutely not acceptable. So that is the first in research design. You reflect, you are open to reflection, you are open to thinking about it, you are open to wondering about it and then you plan, how you will approach the subject of research. Then is entry into the field at is being studied, how will you gain an entry into the field that is being studied.

How will you approach the context that you are going to study, then is data collection, in qualitative research we have discussed in the earlier lectures, we have to establish relationship with the context that we are going into. The relationship between the observer and the observed, drives research, it drives the question, it drives the answers and it can influence, it will influence what is studied and how it is studied.

So we start with that assumption will come to that in a little bit, but that is a given, you have to establish rapport and you observe the situation and you come out and then you will say well we have or we also have something called as non participant observation, agreed. But there is enough evidence that as soon as the observed realizes, that they are being observed the behavior is likely to be affected, even if you do not interact with them.

Even if you do it in as inconspicuous a manner as possible, once the observed realizes that they are under, they are being observed they, their behavior will be affected. So there is an entry, then you collect the data, then you withdraw from the field, you collect data and then we pull out from the field, so that pulling out stages also difficult. How do we establish relationship and how do we start coming out.

How do we start distancing ourselves from this field, that we were so closely bonded with, observing, interacting with, influencing, how do we start pulling out, how do we start dissociating ourselves from that field. Then is the analysis, how will you analyze the data you have collected, because in qualitative research we tend to connect a large amount of data that is somewhat connected to each other.

So we start making sense of whatever we get the rich, it's very rich, is very complex, these relationships matter, so we take everything, we bring it back, we disassociate ourselves from the field that we are studying, then we close our offices and we hide in our little case and we start analyzing it. And how do we analyze it and we know that we are constantly interacting with the data, even though we may not be at that moment of time in touch with the field that has been studied.

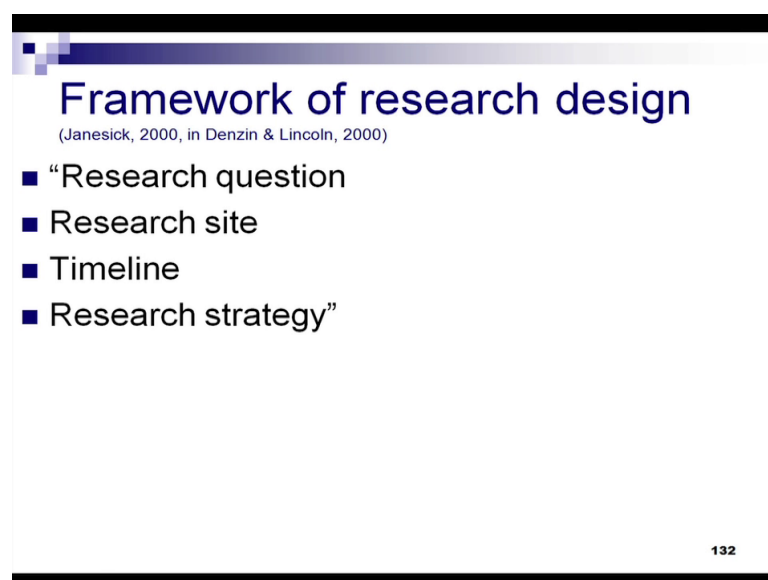
And then months we have analyzed everything comes the hard reality that we have to sit and write them. Which many of us considered to be a very painful job, but it's absolutely necessary, okay, so the purpose of research is to have some kind of an output, that people who

are likely to be affected by it, can use. So if you are a student, the purpose of your research could be writing up a dissertation report, whatever it is, that will help you get your degree.

If you are an activist the purpose of your research could be to find answers that can be implemented in the field, et cetera. So depends, these are just two prominent examples, but the numbers of examples are numerous, so the write up is very, very important and how you will write it up, is also part of your research design.

And it should be to the extent possible, at least a tentative idea about all the stages should be there in your mind, before you even start attempting your research, that's what I keep telling my students, don't rush into things because things will change, but have a plan, as robust a plan in place as possible, before you start.

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Framework, so the framework of the research design and again this is based on a paper, I am a very big fan of the book I showed you in the previous lecture, this is the handbook of qualitative research second edition and you know I have the first edition and have the second edition and this is what we used to learn about research design and I think this is one of the best books on research, on qualitative research, that one can ever have because it contains the large number of very specialized articles by style words in the field.

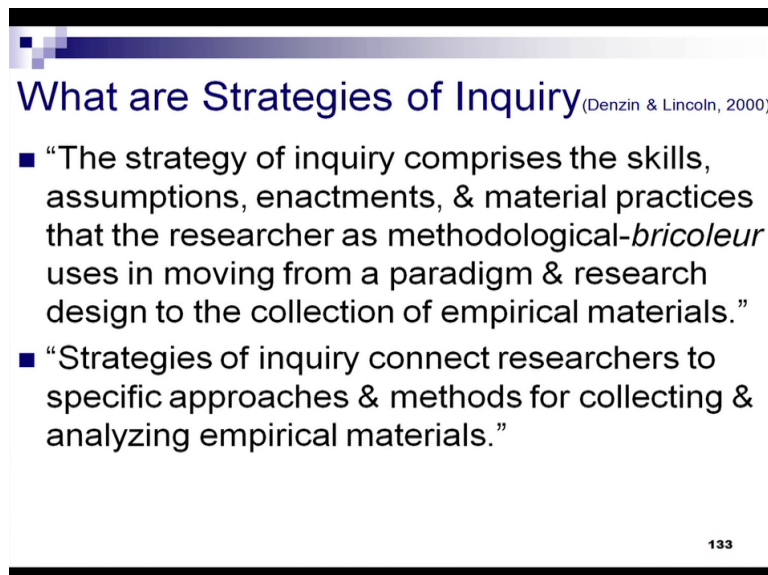
So there is a, you know there is a paper in this book by Janesick and she talks about research design and so she tells us that the framework of research design should contain at the very least these four rod pillars, the first is the Research question absolutely essential, your

research question should be absolutely clear write it up paste it on the wall above your workstation that is what I did, when I was doing my PhD.

So it keeps you anchored to what you are doing, look at it, remember it, remind yourself of it, you should be able to speak it out in the middle of the night, when somebody wake you up it should be that clear in your mind. Research question is of utmost importance. Then research site, where are you going to conduct your research, then the timeline after all we need to have an output for tentative timeline is absolutely necessary.

And a Research strategy now these four broad pillars will come together and help you make this framework that will eventually help you operationalize your research.

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What are Strategies of Inquiry (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000)

- “The strategy of inquiry comprises the skills, assumptions, enactments, & material practices that the researcher as methodological-*bricoleur* uses in moving from a paradigm & research design to the collection of empirical materials.”
- “Strategies of inquiry connect researchers to specific approaches & methods for collecting & analyzing empirical materials.”

133

What are the strategies of inquiry, what do we mean by the word strategies of inquiry strategy, “The strategy of inquiry comprises the skills, assumptions, enactments and material practices that the research as methodological-bricoleur uses in moving from a paradigm and research design to the collection of empirical materials. So now we are coming to the nuts and bolts of qualitative research.

We discussed the idea of a bricolage and a bricoleur, in the very beginning just to remind you a bricolage is this very beautiful quilt, that senior leaders in the family is make out of scraps of cloth that is available to them, so they have this very nice patchwork quilt, if you look at individual pieces they look very mundane and boring, but the elder ladies in our family, is so creative.

And they are so brilliant, will cut it up into such nice shapes and put the shape together and beautiful design images out of this scrap cloth and then they make quilts out these. So that nothing goes waste and this happens in a many, many communities of not all, we was in examples of that so that whole patchwork, beautiful patchwork quilt made out of seemingly, not important scraps of cloth is known as a bricolage.

And that is the analogy that is used here and a bricoleur is somebody who makes this bricolage, somebody who make something very beautiful, very creative, very useful out of seemingly, an important seemingly waste pieces of information is a bricoleur and that is what a qualitative researcher does. I keep stressing on the word seemingly because independently it may not be a very much value, but when it comes into the situation.

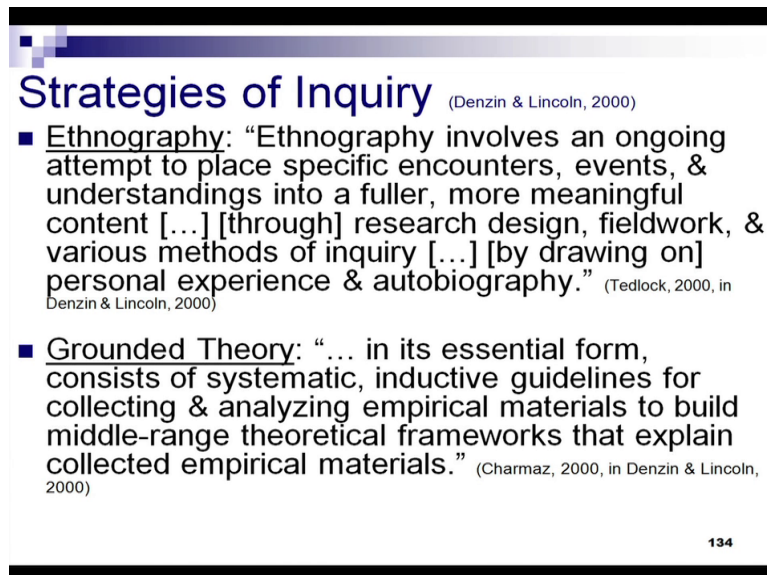
And when it is adjusted, I won't even say modified, when it is adjusted, appropriately and fitting with other pieces of seemingly unimportant information that are also adjusted appropriately, the end result comes out to be very, very beautiful, very, very useful. So that is what the strategy inquiry comprises of. It comprises of the skills one has to put this bricolage together, the assumptions one enters into the qualitative research situation with the enactments and material practices.

So what the researcher actually does as methodological bricoleur uses in moving from a mind set, a paradigm and research design. So there is a mindset and there is a framework to put that research design into practice and then to the collection of the materials that you actually need, so what is elderly ladies in the family did was, they didn't use all these of these scraps of cloth the meticulously selected, those pieces of cloth that would fit in with each other.

They had a sense and that came with years of practice and observation, very keen powers of observation, so the type of material, the type of prints, the types of colors, that would go together, would all somehow blend in with each other, independently they would look very disconnected, but when they were brought together from the large collection of random pieces of cloth, when these things carefully selected these pieces, were carefully selected, they would just blend in.

And they knew which piece, would go with what, so your skill is of utmost importance, the assumptions you bring to the table are of utmost importance, the way you put these pieces together is what most important and that is the strategy of inquiry. “Strategies of inquiry connect researchers to specific approaches and methods for collecting and analyzing empirical materials.” So how do we conduct the research, okay.

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Strategies of Inquiry (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000)

- **Ethnography:** “Ethnography involves an ongoing attempt to place specific encounters, events, & understandings into a fuller, more meaningful content [...] [through] research design, fieldwork, & various methods of inquiry [...] [by drawing on] personal experience & autobiography.” (Tedlock, 2000, in Denzin & Lincoln, 2000)
- **Grounded Theory:** “... in its essential form, consists of systematic, inductive guidelines for collecting & analyzing empirical materials to build middle-range theoretical frameworks that explain collected empirical materials.” (Charmaz, 2000, in Denzin & Lincoln, 2000)

134

Some samples of strategies of inquiry that we will cover in much greater detail, later are the first one is Ethnography, “Ethnography involves an ongoing attempt to place specific encounter, events and understandings in to a fuller, more meaningful content, through research design, field work and various methods of inquiry by drawing on personal experience and autobiography.”

Sounds very complicated, very simply put, we go into a situation with explicit aim of understanding it or with a very clear aim of understanding the situation, we become a part of the situation, we study the situation or the phenomenon as an insider, then we pull out of the situation, we analyze our experiences in light of the phenomenon that we studied as an insider, that is call ethnography and ethnography has been very, very widely used in anthropology.

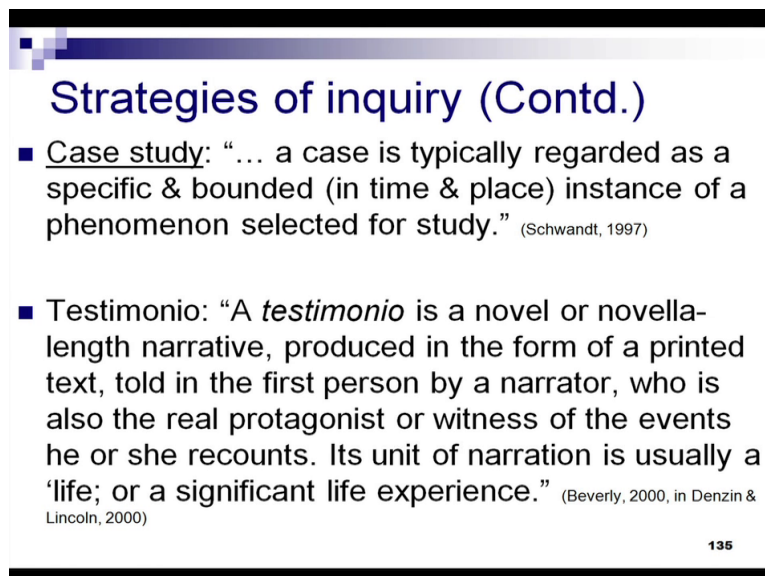
Many anthropologist have known to go into, cultures that they wanted to study, marry into those cultures, study those cultures, live those cultures and then write about those cultures as insiders, we will deal with it in greater detail later, but this is just an introduction to what

ethnography is, it's a very nice, very interesting, very engaging and very complex way of conducting qualitative inquiry.

Then another one is grounded theory, very complex, “in its essential form, consists of systematic, inductive guidelines for collecting and analyzing empirical materials to build middle-range theoretical framework that explain collected empirical materials.” So we find material will discuss this also in greater detail, but grounded theory relates to our, to the process of collecting material, then finding themes, finding patterns in this material, analyzing it and building theory out of these themes and patterns that one sees in the material one has collected.

And then using this themes and patterns to explain why or how this pieces of information really work or whatever like, we will talk about this also in greater detail, again this is different from ethnography, but this is also very systematic way, way of collecting or going into a of doing qualitative research okay.

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Strategies of inquiry (Contd.)

- Case study: “... a case is typically regarded as a specific & bounded (in time & place) instance of a phenomenon selected for study.” (Schwandt, 1997)
- Testimonio: “A *testimonio* is a novel or novella-length narrative, produced in the form of a printed text, told in the first person by a narrator, who is also the real protagonist or witness of the events he or she recounts. Its unit of narration is usually a ‘life; or a significant life experience.’” (Beverly, 2000, in Denzin & Lincoln, 2000)

135

Another strategy of inquiry that we will deal with his case study, “a case is typically regarded as a specific and bounded in time and place instance of a phenomenon selected for a study.” Slice of life, you know pathology or if you we all had medical test, they will take samples, they will take a sample of your blood at specific time, will take your blood pressure at a specific time, they will analyze it, biopsy is more complicated way of doing it.

So you take a cross section of an object of a living object and analyze it under a microscope, a case study is doing the same thing with a real life process or phenomenon. You take a slice of life which is explained, which is bounded in time place, you define the boundaries, you say at this time, at this in this place, within these confines, within you clearly defined the context that you are conducting the same.

And you describe a phenomenon of one unit of Information and one Organization, one you know type of behavior of a person, one disease et cetera, how the disease of one person was treated, et cetra. Medical Science actually uses this method quite a lot, we will discuss this also, very, very interesting. Another one is testimonio, “a testimonio is a novel or novella length narrative, produced in the form of a printed text, told in the first person by a narrator, who is also the real protagonist or witness of the events.

He or she recounts, its unit of narration is usually life or a significant life experience.” And it's written in a first person, so I did this, I went there, I experienced this, I felt this, that is how, it is you know many of us are familiar with the word testimonial. So these two words are connected, testimonio is a first person account of a situation or a phenomenon or a novel length narrative, it is a description in terms of I, I, I, I did this, we did this, with my experiences, my meaning any researchers in first person.

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Strategies of inquiry (Contd.)

(Kemmis & McTaggart, 2000)

- Participatory Action Research (PAR): "... is an alternative philosophy of research (& social life) associated with liberation theology, neo-Marxist approaches to community development, & human rights activism."

"Participatory Action Researchers believe in the shared ownership of research projects as well as the value of community based analyses of social problems."

136

Then the next one is participatory action research and I am sorry there is a bullet point here that should not be there because this is the last one that he will cover in some detail or at least I will introduce you to this participatory action research or PAR "is an alternative philosophy of research and social life associated with Liberation theology, neo-Marxist approaches to community development and human rights activism."

"Participatory Action Researchers believe in the shared ownership of research projects as well as the value of community based analysis of social problems." When we talk about participatory action research, we talked about research with A: the explicit aim of going into a situation as participants and improving that situation for the welfare of the common people and B: being part of that situation, studying the situation and doing something about something that we feel is not write about a social problem.

We will discuss this also in greater details, so these are some of the four or five, you know very, very important, very or I would say some of the more significant, of course others are also significant the people have time only to cover maybe just these five strategies of inquiries. But these are very widely used and very, very applicable to modern day Social Science Research.

So this is all we have time for in this lecture, we will continue with some more discussion, along you know on qualitative inquiry in the upcoming lectures, thank you very much for listening.