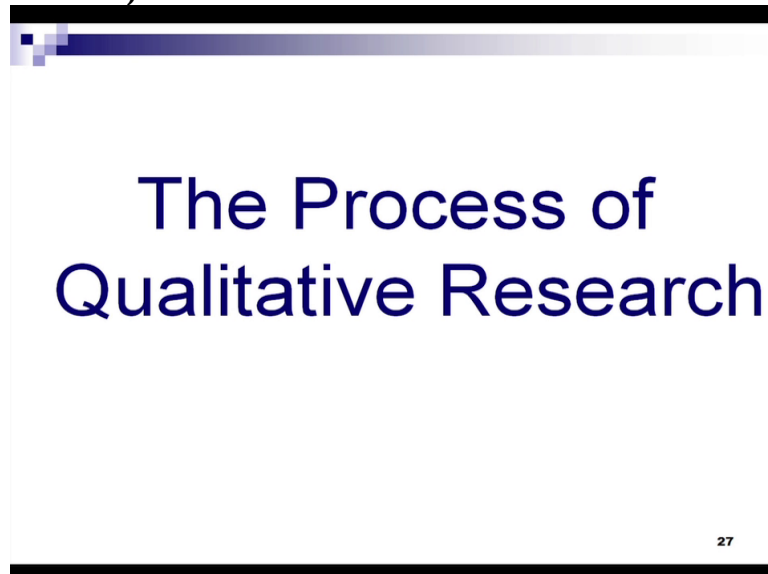


Qualitative Research Methods
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Lecture – 5
The Process of Qualitative Research

Welcome back to the NOC course titled Qualitative Research Methods, my name is Aradhna Malik and I teach at the Indian Institute of Technology in Kharagpur, West Bengal India, and I am helping you with the course and we talked about various things till now. So, we will move on to the way qualitative research takes place, the process of qualitative research in this lecture so that's get on with it.

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The book that I have used for this part of the lecture is the handbook of qualitative research that is edited by Denzin and Lincoln and this is from an article by Denzin and Lincoln in that book and you'll get all the references, as the courses uploaded.

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The perspective

Self and other – The act/ process of research assumes that the self is divorced from the other and it is by virtue of this divorce or detachment that one is expected to achieve objectivity. However, qualitative research goes a step further and accepts the self as an undetachable part of the process of research.

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The perspective here, now when we talk about the process of qualitative research, we need to situate our research and the perspective is the Self and the other - the act or process of research assume that the self is divorced from the other and it is by virtue of this divorce or detachment that one is able to that one is expected to achieve objectivity. However qualitative research goes a step further and accepts the self as an undetectable part of the process of research.

And the qualitative researchers say that we know that whatever we are studying, is likely to affect us, is going to affect us, we cannot study anything in the depths that we would like to study at in, unless we are close to it, unless we are involved with it, we cannot study anything from the perspective of an insider, we cannot study a phenomenon that affects insiders, unless we too are affected by that phenomenon and that is what makes qualitative research, what it is, that is what in which is qualitative research, the way it is supposed to or expected to be enriched.

And so even though modern day research focuses on this divorce or detachment, of the studied from the one who is studying it, qualitative research assumes that the phenomenon being studied and the person studying it have to be connected in some way or another, for the person studying the phenomenon to understand it in as much clarity as possible, in as much detail as possible.

And we assume that, we understand it, we situate the research in that understanding and then we take things forward, with this understanding we move on to the different perspectives of research.

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Phase 1: The researcher as a multicultural subject (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994)

The researcher acknowledges where one is coming from and accepts oneself as rooted in

- history and research traditions
- conceptions of the self and other
- ethics and politics of research

The researcher identifies each of the above and factors them into the perspectives where the assumptions for one's research question, design, analyses and interpretations emerge.

Phase one: The researcher as a multicultural subject. The researcher acknowledges where one is coming from and accepts oneself as rooted in the history and research traditions. I know what I have been taught about research, I will conduct research in the manner that I have been taught to effective it. I will conduct research from the perspective, from the way I have been taught to conduct.

I understand research in the way that I have been taught to understand it and this, me having a history of understanding, what research is and how it should be conducted has an impact on how I conduct research. What I believe to be true, whether I am a positivist, whether I am a post positivist, whether I am a feminist, whether I am a structuralist, whether I am a post structuralist, whether I have a constructivist or an interpretivist define or decides situates the way I am going to interpret the data I receive.

The data I collect will influence, what I filter out as not making sense and what I keep as what makes sense to me, what informed me about that, about the phenomenon I am study. So all of what I have been trained to believe in, what I have instinctively started believing in, what I have learnt to believe and will decide, will define, will direct, what I pick from the field and that will in turn impact what I analyze and how I analyze it.

Conceptions of the self and the other, how do I see myself from the perspective of a researcher, do I see myself as a person, who is involved in the research, do I see myself as a person totally detached from the research, do I see myself as a person being affected by the phenomenon I am studying to some extent, do I see myself as a lionized lone ethnographer, who do I see myself as and what do I see the object of my study as.

Many years ago, you know during my strength abroad a very dear friend, who I have great regard for was passing by, we used to have something called as the festival of nations at University of Denver, which is there a study and in this festival of nations, different people from different countries would put up the stalls, then we would have songs and dances and food, etc.

So we were passing by a stall and this very dear, very wonderful, warm friend that I have, made a comment, that has still you know it makes me cringe, every time I think about it and she said so what do your people, you know is this the kind of attire your people wear or is this way your people do things and from her perspective, maybe she wanted to sound more respectful, but the minute she said your people, you know it immediately distance somebody, who was being referred to from the person, who was referring to her.

For us people who are more community oriented, we treat everybody envelope everybody in the notion of us, we always talked in terms on we, it's not about you and me, it is not about me, it is about us. So, I cringe every time, I hear the phrase your people, you people, your culture is different from my culture. Many times, these phrases indicate that the person being studied is socially at a lower hierarchy than the person studying these cultures.

Even though the person studying the culture, may not want to indicate this, which was the case and my friends situation, she does not do that on purpose, but they came out it seem as if, she was objectifying this unique culture that she saw and that felt very, very uncomfortable. So who do you see yourself as, is it the self and the other or is it us, is it just a unique trade.

I am I so detached from you that I see you as a tiny minuscule portion on the planet that needs to be studied in greater detail, that can be discarded if required, that does not make that is no way connected to me because I am comfortable in my own skin or are we connected to

each other, you are human being, I am a human being, everything you do and say affects me and vice versa, your happiness is welcomed, is shared, your sadness told me to support you. So, we are part of one rays called humanity. Where are we coming from and that is what this part talks about.

How do I situate myself, do I situate myself as different, from everybody I m studying or do I situate myself as a part of the phenomenon struggling to get out as an objective observer and study the phenomenon. Ethics and politics one understands that one needs to present facts that are going to be politically correct, one needs to study facts in a manner that, they study phenomena in a manner that they do not hurt sentiments of the people being studied.

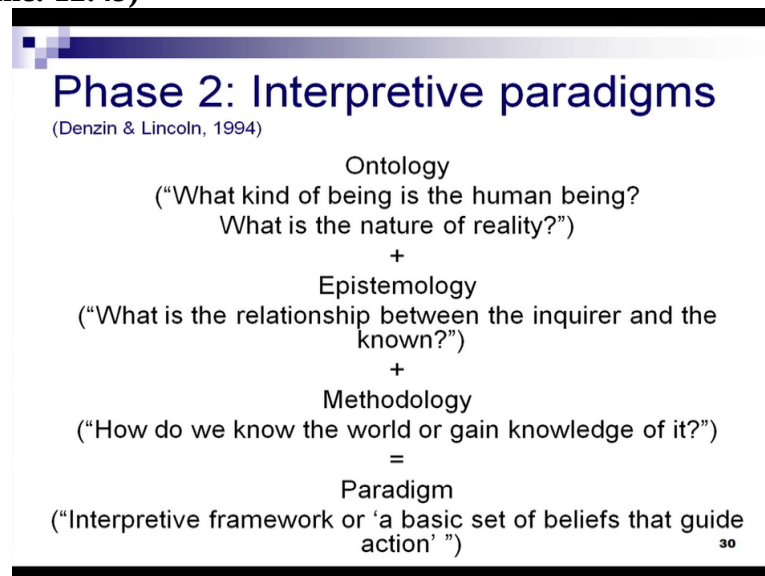
Study phenomena from the perspective and represent those phenomena, in such a way that they are not going to or they inflict the least amount of damage or they bring the least amount of hurt or anguish to the people being studied. And this is especially true, when phenomena in developing countries are studied by researchers from the developed countries. Where phenomena in countries where there is a lot of social strife are being studied by people, who belong to country is that are relatively socially stable.

So you know this whole concept of self and the other comes into picture, where or the politics ethics of research comes into picture, where you know one studies phenomena and then one doesn't still want to do uproot or once doesn't want to destabilize, one wants to get as much information from the people involved in the situation, that is being studied without disturbing the stability they have acquired, for their current state, despite the unrest in their environment. So where does one draw the line, understands that this is a very, very difficult thing to achieve. Okay.

The researcher identifies each of the above and factors them into the perspectives where the assumptions for one's research question, design analysis and interpretation emerge. So one identify these things, one writes them down, one describe them and then says that coming from this one situation which way, what one is going to say in these assumptions and highlight these assumptions, puts them out in black and white on the table for anyone reading the representation of the phenomenon that is being studied or anyone reading the description of the phenomenon that has been studied. So the reader be the person who is trying to get the

essence of what has been studied, understands the context, that what has been studied is rooted in.

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Phase 2 integrative Paradigms, after one has identified oneself as a multicultural, multifaceted researchers. The second phase is identifying the integrative paradigms and in order to do that what are Paradigms? Paradigms consist of a combination of ontology, epistemology and methodology. Ontology is what kind of being is human being? What is the nature of reality? What is knowledge, to answer all these questions? Okay.

Epistemology is what is the relationship between enquirer and the known? What why I want to study? Why do I want to study it? What am I going to get out of what I study? Where will I draw the line? How much do I want to get out of the situation? What is the purpose behind my study? That is epistemology. What is the relationship? Why am I spending this much time energy into it? How does it relate to what I already know and what I hope to know about this in future? And how will it help me contribute to the field that I am hoping to contribute to?

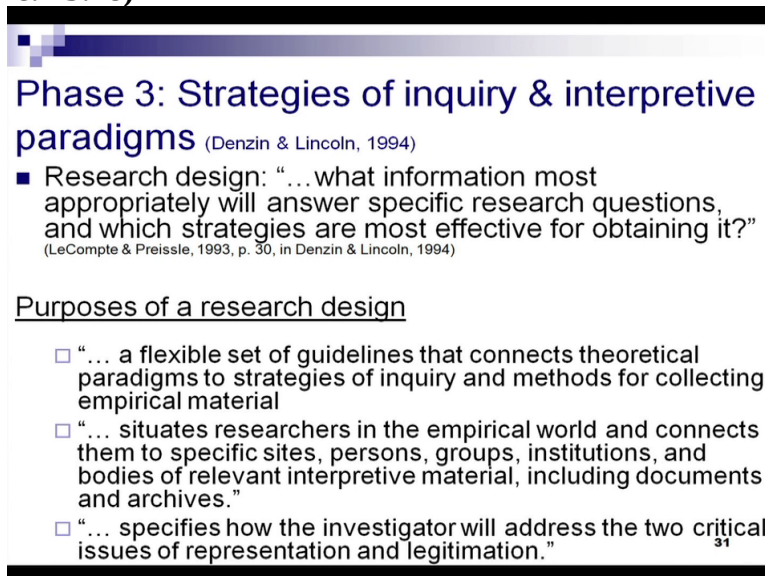
So what is the relationship between the enquirer and the known? Where am I coming from? What is my background? Where am I situated? Okay, why am I my studying it and what is the context that I am studying it from? That is the epistemology.

Then comes methodology, how do we know the world or gain knowledge if it. So, I study a variety of methods to find out, what I set out to find out and I study them in great detail. It's not just methods, it is methodology a study of methods, how will I understand the world that

has set out to understand, that study of methods contributes to methodology and all three put together, why my studying what I am studying? Where am I coming from and how do I intend to study? What I intend to study? Form the paradigm, the background.

The interpretive framework or basic set of beliefs that guide action, based in all this is my interpretive paradigm. This is the way because of after getting answers, to the top three questions, I situate myself and I say based on all of these answers my interpretation is going to be rooted in this context. This is how I am going to interpret the information I collect.

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Phase 3: Strategies of inquiry & interpretive paradigms (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994)

- Research design: "...what information most appropriately will answer specific research questions, and which strategies are most effective for obtaining it?"
(LeCompte & Preissle, 1993, p. 30, in Denzin & Lincoln, 1994)

Purposes of a research design

- "... a flexible set of guidelines that connects theoretical paradigms to strategies of inquiry and methods for collecting empirical material
- "... situates researchers in the empirical world and connects them to specific sites, persons, groups, institutions, and bodies of relevant interpretive material, including documents and archives."
- "... specifies how the investigator will address the two critical issues of representation and legitimation."

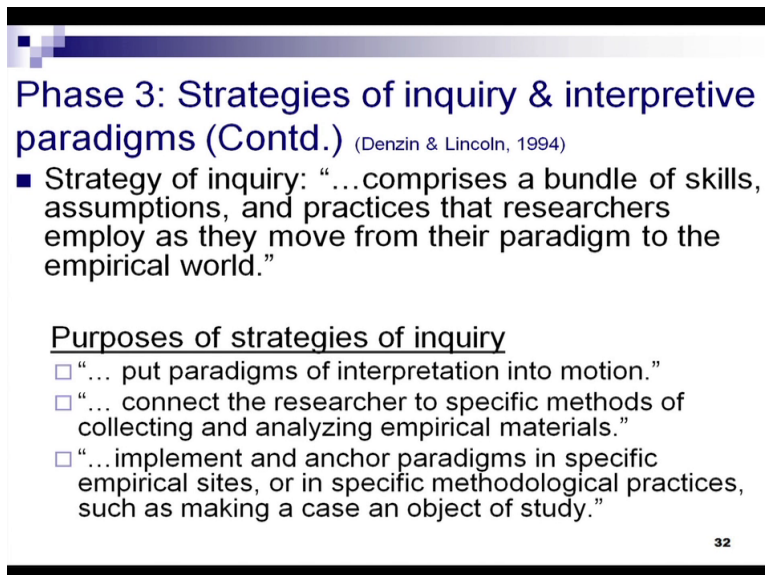
The Third Phase is strategies of inquiry and integrative paradigms. The Research Design is what information most appropriately will answers specific research questions and which strategies are most effective for obtaining it? So what kind of information will help me, will help me answer the questions that I set out to answer and how do I go about getting this kind of information.

The purposes of a research design, a plan, a framework is that provide us with a flexible set of guidelines that connects theoretical paradigms to strategies inquiry and methods for collecting empirical material. Its situates researchers in the empirical world and connects them to specific sites, persons, groups, institutions, and bodies of relevant integrative materials, including documents and archives.

So why am I doing what I am doing? Who do I need to speak to? What are the resources that I need to connect to? How do these resources connect with each other? How will I get the

information that I need? And specifies how the investigator will address the two critical issues of representational and legitimation. How will I write up my results? From whose perspective? What will I do with the written? How will I put them? How will I express my results in a way that they will be accepted? And how will I legitimize my results? And that is what the research design comprises of.

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Phase 3: Strategies of inquiry & interpretive paradigms (Contd.) (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994)

- Strategy of inquiry: "...comprises a bundle of skills, assumptions, and practices that researchers employ as they move from their paradigm to the empirical world."

Purposes of strategies of inquiry

- "... put paradigms of interpretation into motion."
- "... connect the researcher to specific methods of collecting and analyzing empirical materials."
- "...implement and anchor paradigms in specific empirical sites, or in specific methodological practices, such as making a case an object of study."

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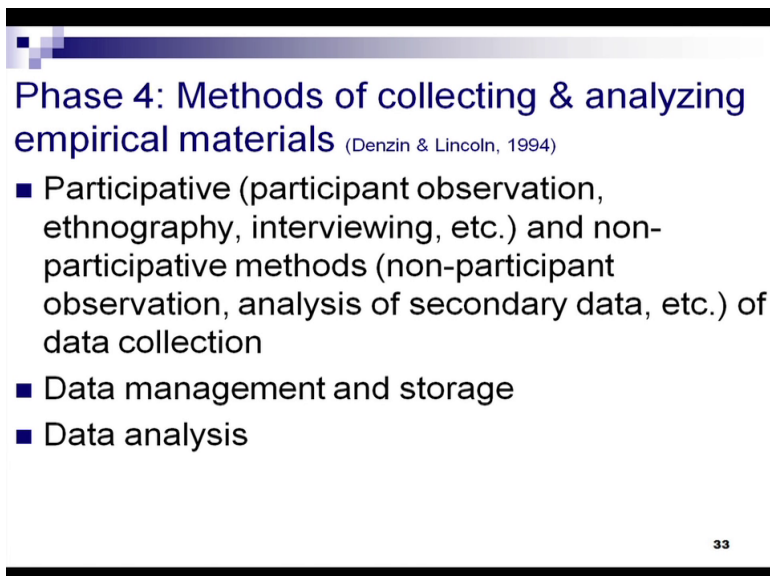
Strategy of inquiry comprises a bundle of skilled assumptions, and practices that researcher's employee as they moved from their paradigm to the empirical world. So paradigm is what is situate understanding in. Empirical knowledge or empirical representation or the empirical world consists of objectivity. I have situated myself, now how do I connect it to these detached researchers from whose perspective I am going to be talking.

So that anyone studying the phenomenon, from that position gets the same kind of results. Okay. The purpose of strategies of inquiry, put paradigms of interpretation into motion, strategies of inquiry actually operationalize whatever we have been planning, they connect the researcher to specific methods of collecting and analyzing empirical materials. So, once I know how I will do, what I will do, then I start getting the energy, I start identifying these different methods, I start getting the energy to go out and do what I need to do.

Implement an anchor paradigm in specific empirical sites, or in specific methodological practices, such as making a case or an object of making a case and object of studies. So what am I going to do? How am I going to do it? Why am I going to do it? How does it connect to

what I already know? Research design helps us make a framework; strategies of inquiry help us operationalize that framework into action.

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Phase 4: Methods of collecting & analyzing empirical materials (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994)

- Participative (participant observation, ethnography, interviewing, etc.) and non-participative methods (non-participant observation, analysis of secondary data, etc.) of data collection
- Data management and storage
- Data analysis

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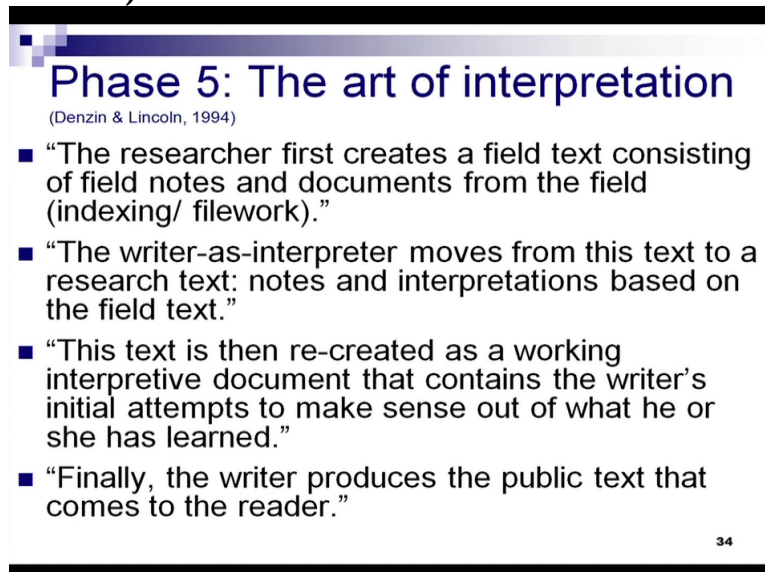
Then comes the next phase, after we have decided what we want to do, then we start collecting and analyzing empirical materials, so some methods are participating we can have two broad categories of methods of collecting data, we can have participative method in which we actually go out and interact with the objects of our study and we can have non-participative methods, I not saying nonparticipant method, these are methods that do not require our participation. Okay.

So participative method would be, participant observation, ethnography, interviewing. Non participative method would be non-participant observation, analysis of secondary data, etc. You know, so we are not really participating in the study, we are in the phenomenon, we are studying, we are really observing it, we are analyzing it based on the data that we have obtained, through methods that do not require us, to connect, to engage with the object of phenomenon of our study.

Data management and storage that is an other accept, so we find out what type of method, we are employing and why, by then how we going to manage and store out data and then how do we analyze the data that we have stored. Because we can't start analyzing the minute we start collecting data, we collect the data we keep it and after a significant chunk of the data comes in and we start analyzing it. So what are we going to do to safeguard the data that we have

got, how and when do we start analyzing it, why do we analyze it the way we analyze it and that is the fourth phase.

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Phase 5: The art of interpretation

(Denzin & Lincoln, 1994)

- “The researcher first creates a field text consisting of field notes and documents from the field (indexing/ filework).”
- “The writer-as-interpreter moves from this text to a research text: notes and interpretations based on the field text.”
- “This text is then re-created as a working interpretive document that contains the writer’s initial attempts to make sense out of what he or she has learned.”
- “Finally, the writer produces the public text that comes to the reader.”

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Fifth phase, the last phase and the most important phase. The researcher first creates a field text consisting of field notes and documents from the field, this is known as indexing or file work. So researcher creates a indexes information that has been received, since we are dealing with descriptive information, a large volume of information we need to index it, we need to put it into different categories, we need to file it, we need to swift this sense making information, sense making material, from this material that does not make sense. Okay.

There maybe something that you need to go back to in order to situate, what we have pulled out as the most sense making material. There may be certain aspects of the material we have collected, that can be safely discarded without going back to it again. A lot of noise, a lot of relevant information that we may have gathered, that we may have collected, in the hope that it may help us connect the dots, but then we start connecting dots, material that we have collected, ceases to make sense. So we do all that in this indexing of fieldwork phase.

Then the writer as interpreter moves from this text to a research text, notes and interpretations based on the fields text. So we have got our field text, we have got our index, we have decided what we want to study, then we start making notes. We revisit what we have filtered out and we start making notes based on what we see emerging out of this filtered information that is in front us.

This text is then re-created as a working interpretive document that contains the writer's initial attempts to make sense out of what he or she has learned. Once we have noted down what we see, then he start connecting the dots and we write a first draught and say this is what it is likely to indicate and then the writer produces the public text that comes to the reader and between the third and forth point, I tell my students one should be prepared for at least forty to fifty drafts.

You cannot finalize an acceptable piece of writing till it has gone through forty to fifty revisions, so we look at it, we connect the dots, we put it on one side, we sleep over it, we go back to it, look at it, we connect some more dots, we make some more, you know so we go back and forth between points three and four, thirty to forty times and then we produce something that we think will be acceptable for publication and then we send it for review and it comes back with a reject stamped on it.

And occasionally the reviewer will be kind enough to give us detailed comments on this paper that we hope to and save this is what you need to include and if you are lucky the comments will not include the collection of more data. The comments will include suggestions for further analysis of data. Many times the reviews a very kind, very nice and they tell us where exactly we can go to get more backing for the concept that we are claiming to have studied, that is the most helpful type of review, most constructive, the reject does not hurt, when you get that kind of a review. Okay.

And that is all we have time for, but let's revisit this, the five phases, so we start with the researcher as a multicultural subject, we situate ourselves, we then move on to identifying the interpreter paradigm and paradigms are a combination of ontology, what we are studying? How do we connect it epistemology? How do we connect what we know how we intend to study it? And who we are?

And then methodology and how do we know the world and all that constitutes a paradigm and then we move on to the strategies of inquiry which is research design and the strategies of inquiry here, strategies of inquiry the way we operationalize our research design and then we move on to the methods of collecting and analyzing empirical materials and then we move on to finally interpreting what we have collected and making it public presenting it in an acceptable formed for the users. So that is the process of qualitative research methods.

Now thank you very much for listening this is all we have time for in this lecture, we will move on to some more insight, some more ideas, some more ways of understanding qualitative research methods in the next class, thanks a lot for listening.