Introduction to Qualitative Research
Overview

• What is qualitative research?

• How do I conduct and present qualitative research?
Defining Qualitative Research

• Qualitative research is the rigorous attempt to produce findings or results by describing, explaining and/or interpreting qualitative patterns in terms of words, numbers, matrices, pictures, sounds, or other forms of representation.
Defining Qualitative Research

• Open-Ended Questions
  – Who
  – What
  – Where
  – When
  – Why
  – How
Defining Qualitative Research

• Naturalistic Inquiry

• Discovery-Oriented Studies

• Learning perspectives of others

• Studying complex and natural phenomena
Defining Qualitative Research

• Inductive, Deductive, and Abductive Logic

• Scientific, Artistic, Critical, and Change Styles

• Primary, Secondary, Meta, and Mixed Designs
Defining Qualitative Research

- Epistemology
- Theoretical Perspective
- Methodology
- Method or Procedures
Defining Qualitative Research

• Constructionism
  – Symbolic Interactionism

• Ethnography
  – Participant Observation
Methodologies

• Generic: Descriptive, Content Analysis, Qualitative Analysis, Qualitative Inquiry

• Designer: Ethnography, Phenomenology, Grounded Theory, Narrative Analysis

• “Knock-offs”: Confusing procedures with methodologies (e.g., open coding with Grounded Theory)
The Well-Read Qualitative Researcher

• Generic Qualitative Research Textbooks Do Not Provide Enough Information to Prepare You to Conduct Your Dissertation

• Better Readers Are Better Researchers

• Better Readers Are Better Writers
The Well-Read Qualitative Researcher

• You Need to Be Well Read in Your Methodology
  – Primary Method Texts
  – Contemporary Primary Research Papers
Conducting Qualitative Research Dissertations at Fischler

- Applied Orientation
- Creating Local Knowledge of Global Significance
- Case Study and Generalization
Conducting Qualitative Research
Dissertations at Fischler

• Discovering
  – What works?
  – How things work?
  – Why things work?
Qualitative Research Concept Paper

• The Problem: Not Knowing – What, How, or Why

• Background and Significance: Declaring Gap in Knowledge Both Locally and Globally
Qualitative Research Concept Paper

• Preliminary Literature Review: Determining What Is Known and Not Known about the Problem

• Research Question:
  – Discovery-Oriented
  – Open-Ended
Qualitative Research Concept Paper: Selecting a Methodology

- Best Fit with Research Question
- Generic or Designer
- Know “Active Ingredients”
- Consider Specific Approaches
Qualitative Research Concept Paper: Methodology

• Justification: Justify Qualitative Research in General and the Proposed Qualitative Research Methodology in Particular

• Participants: Sample and Sampling

• Instruments: Self of the Researcher
Qualitative Research Concept Paper: Methodology

• Procedures: Conceptual, Operational, and “Citational”

• Limitations: Avoid “The Lament”

• Anticipated Outcomes: Knowledge and Wisdom
Case Study Exemplar

- University-Based Mental Health Clinic
- Master’s Students in Clinical Practica
Qualitative Research Concept Paper Example

• The Problem: Student Case Documentation of Clinical Progress

• Background and Significance: Needed Evaluation of Recent Changes in Practicum Policies and Procedures
Qualitative Research Concept Paper Example

- Preliminary Literature Review: Significant Gap in Research on Case Documentation (e.g., progress notes)

- Research Question: How do master’s students document clinical progress in their therapy cases?
• Justification:

  – Lack of local and global knowledge suggests a discovery-oriented inquiry to which qualitative research is appropriate

  – Sequential flow of clinical cases as represented in progress notes calls for an analytical qualitative research approach: Recursive Frame Analysis (RFA)
Qualitative Research Concept Paper Example: Methodology

• Participants: 206 De-identified Progress Notes from 30 cases

• Instruments: Self of the Researcher as Recursive Frame Analyst
Qualitative Research Concept Paper
Example: Methodology

• Procedures:
  – Data Generation
  – Data Collection
  – Data Preparation
  – Data Analysis
  – Quality Control
Qualitative Research Concept Paper

Example: Methodology

• Limitations:
  – Who
  – What
  – Where
  – When
  – Why
  – How
Qualitative Research Concept Paper

Example: Methodology

• Anticipated Outcomes:

  – RFA of Semantic, Sequential, and Pragmatic Qualitative Patterns in Progress Notes
  – Implications for Program Administrators, Faculty, Supervisors, Students, and Clients
  – Contributions to Researchers and Body of Knowledge
The “Nuts and Bolts”

- Researcher Self-Development or Becoming the Instrument
  - From Conception to Operation to Application
  - Mastering the Data Collection and Analytical Skills
  - Demonstrating Competencies
  - Building Endurance
  - Pre-Piloting and Piloting
The “Nuts and Bolts”

- Managing the Study and the Study about the Study
  - Quality Control Procedures: Journal, Diary, and Audit Trail
  - Avoid the Drift
  - Keeping Things Plumb
The “Nuts and Bolts”

• Write Right Away
  – Abstract Approach
  – Record Findings as They Are Found
  – From Memos to Body of the Text
  – Consistent Style of Reporting
The “Nuts and Bolts”

- Codes
- Analysis
- Memos
- Evidence
She came in and stated wanting to work on herself and her relationship with the men in her life.

**[RC1]** Relationship with Self: How they relate to themselves can be a therapeutic goal clients set for themselves when they want to address personal issues. For example, in Case 1, Session 1, the client stated she was “wanting to work on herself.” **[RC: 5/31/09]**; See **Therapeutic Goals** **[RC: 5/31/09]**
She came in and stated wanting to work on herself [RC1] and her relationship with the men in her life. [RC2]

[RC2] Relationships with Others: How they relate to others can be a therapeutic goal clients set for themselves when they want to address relationships issues with the people in their lives. For example, in Case 1, Session 1, the client stated she was “wanting to work on her relationship with the men in her life.” [RC: 5/31/09]; See Therapeutic Goals [RC: 5/31/09]
Codes to Analysis to Results

- Codes

- Categories
  - Problems
  - Solutions
  - Resolutions
Codes to Analysis to Results

• Results suggested

  – 20 Cases with Positive Resolutions – Tipping Points

  – 10 Cases with Negative or Unclear Resolutions – No Tipping Points or Disruptions to Client-Therapist Alliance
Implications

• Changes in the Clinic

• Contribution to Knowledge on Case Documentation

• New Questions for Research
Things to Remember

• Maintain Coherence and Build Confidence
• Stay Focused on the Research Question
• The Role and Place of the Literature
• Local Generalization First
Things to Remember

• Errors of Exuberance and Deficiency
• Data as Star
• Active Voice
• One Degree – One Study
Resources

Resources

• *The Qualitative Report* and *The Weekly Qualitative Report:*
  [http://www.nova.edu/ssss/QR/](http://www.nova.edu/ssss/QR/)

• Email me: ron@nova.edu