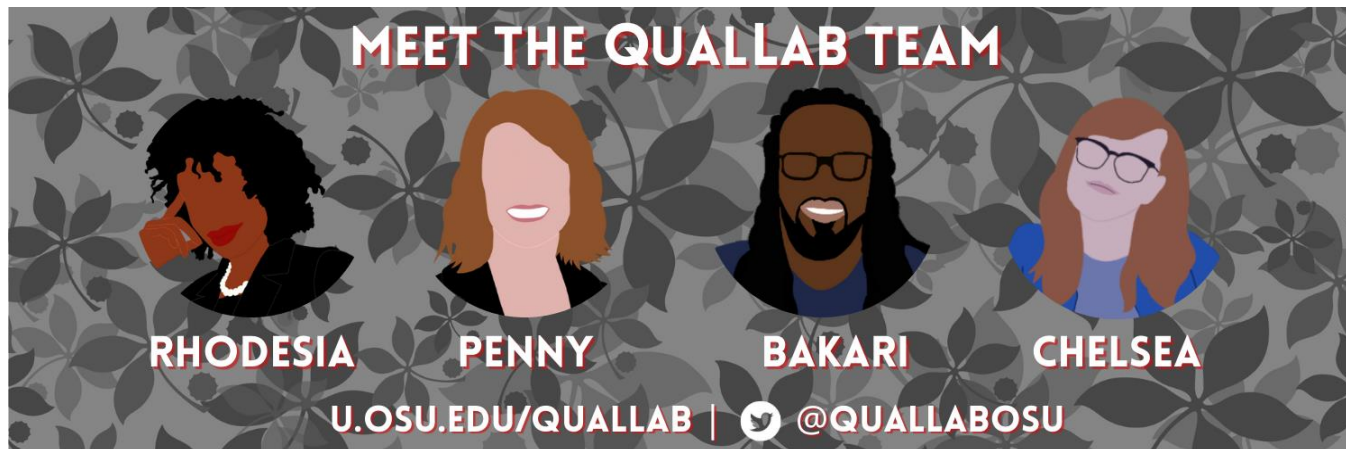




# Qualitative Research 101: The “Top 5” Methods



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## **This “101” presentation offers introductory information about:**

1. The “Top 5” approaches to qualitative studies, including seminal scholars.
2. Cited texts, to support exploring each of the approaches.
3. Considerations in qualitative data collection and analysis.
4. Considerations regarding ethics and other elements of a study.

# 5 Parts of A Research Study

John Creswell

1 – Introduction / Problem Statement

2 – Literature Review, etc.

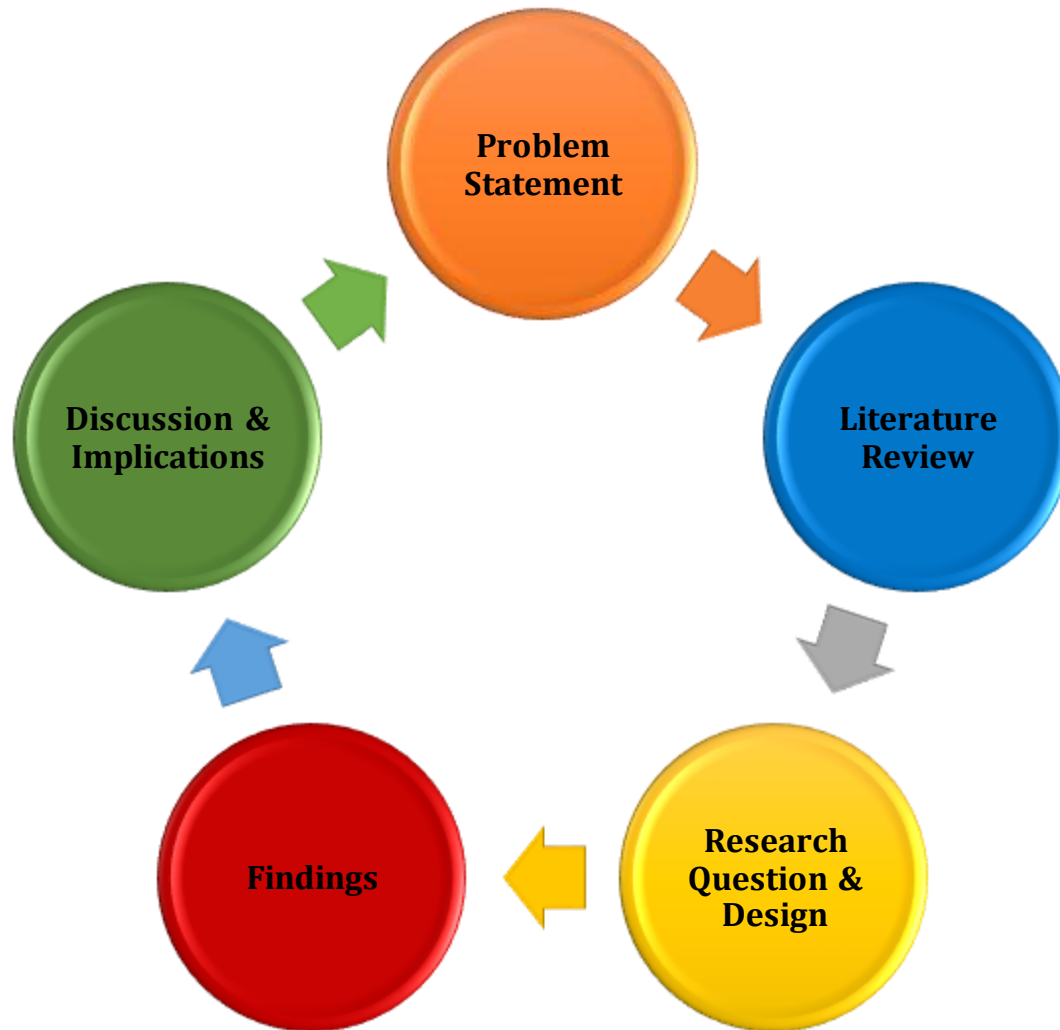
3 – Research Question, Methodology & Methods

4 – Findings *(with evidence)*

5 – Discussion, Implications, & Conclusion *(your thoughts grounded in findings & furthering existing literature here)*



# Qualitative Inquiry is Iterative





## Research Paradigms

**Paradigms:** allow for the study of a topic from different frameworks

- **Positivism:** the belief that there is only one universal or “correct” truth for a phenomenon, and the study outcomes is measured in the proximity of that truth for “correctness”.
- **Constructivism:** the belief that people create subjective knowledge about a phenomenon by interacting with their environments, based on their social positioning and characteristics. Their subjective knowledge about that phenomenon evolves its known universal “truths.”
- **Critical perspective:** the belief that knowledge about phenomena is created by examining and working to shift imbalanced power dynamics that are exercised at interpersonal, cultural, and structural levels in societies – based on peoples’ differential social identities and statuses.
- **Poststructuralism:** the belief that “truth” and knowledge about a phenomenon are fluid and contextual, that each only has the meaning that an individual gives it, and that each is given meaning through “doing” or “performing” the knowledge within a certain context.



## Case Study Overview

The intensive study of a particular “something” as a case: person, group of people as a social unit, phenomenon, environment, situation or condition, etc.

### Goals:

- To understand a case’s particularities in relation to its many real-life contexts (e.g., cultural, historical, social, etc.)
- To come to that understanding through the heuristic process of the case itself – particularly when its boundaries are not always clear

### Methods:

can be qualitative or quantitative, but are evidence-based

### Major Contributing Scholars:

- Stake (1995, 2000)
- Merriam (1988, 2009)
- Yin (1994, 2008)
- Patton (2002)
- Flyberg (2011)



## Ethnography Overview

An intensive study of humans' daily lives (in societies, groups, institutions, etc.) that requires researchers to live with their study participants and do as they do. (Wolcott, 2010).

### Goals:

- To understand participants in their typical environments and conditions
- To understand participants' operative definitions of time, place/space, social identities, interpersonal relationships, production, etc.
- To build theories about culture, society, and human behaviors and attitudes

### Methods:

- “thick description” of participant observations over time as primary; other qualitative

### Major Contributing Scholars:

- many; modern contributors were sociologists and anthropologists who were affiliated with the U. of Chicago



# Grounded Theory Overview

Developing a theory about a topic of study by analyzing empirical data.

## Goals:

- To minimize influences of researchers' preconceptions about the topic of study
- To conduct data collection and analysis together, to support theory-building
- To build theory about the topic of study that is neither context-specific (as is the case with a case study) nor broadly generalizable (as is the case with statistics)

## Methods:

- inductive coding from study data that has been collected qualitatively

## Major Contributing Scholars:

- Glaser and Strauss (1967/1968, 1971)
- Strauss and Corbin (1990, 2015)
- Clark (2005)
- Charmaz (2006/2014)
- Charmaz and Bryant (2007)





## Narrative Inquiry Overview

Studying a topic by interacting with participants who know that topic, and who share their knowledge about it through stories (or, organized narrative events)

### Goals:

- To discover human experiences as they are lived, rather than as they are theorized – sometimes as “counter-stories” if they challenge convention
- To experience situations, emotions, and events that we normally would not
- To identify the details, vividness, needs, processes, etc. of human lives

### Methods:

- participant interaction over time; other qualitative

### Major Contributing Scholars:

- Clandinin and Rosiek (2007)
- Dewey (1986/1938)
- Pennigar and Dayes (2007)



# Phenomenology Overview

Studying a participant's lived experience: (a) what is it like to be them within the context of the study topic and (b) what elements constitute their lived world?

## Goals:

- To identify how people live, or “do” their lived experiences, (a) in their own terms, and (b) not contextualized by theory
- To understand the intentionality in how people “do” their lives: how do they consciously interact with time, place, space, objects, concepts in their lived world?

## Methods:

- in-depth interviewing over time is primary, to understand the “why” and “how” of a phenomenon; participant observation; experiential texts (e.g., journals)

## Major Contributing Scholars:

- Husserl (1932)
- Shutz (1962)
- Merleau-Ponty (1962)



## Ethical Considerations

### Power and Agency:

- How does a researcher account for their power as such, respect and honor the power and agency of their study's participants, and incorporate both into their study design?
- How transparent will they be with study participants?

### Cultural Differences and Positionality:

- How do the race, nationality, gender, class, sexual identity, ability, geographic identity, etc. of each researcher and participant influence the research process?

### Safety:

- How will researchers protect participants' privacy and confidentiality?



# Other (Ethical) Considerations

Choosing the appropriate paradigm for your study:

- Positivism and post-positivism
- Interpretivism and constructionism
- Critical perspectives and postmodernism/poststructuralism

Choosing a study sample and context based on intentional criteria

**Reflexivity and Bias:**

- How do a researcher's personal feelings and experiences with a research condition, topic, or population impact how they view their study elements and interact with them?



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# **Your Research Decisions Matter!**

# Resources: Qual 101

- Atkinson, P., Coffey, A., Delamont, S., Lofland, J., & Lofland, L. (2001). *Handbook of ethnography*. SAGE Publications Ltd doi: 10.4135/9781848608337
- Bryant, A., & Charmaz, K. (2019). *The SAGE Handbook of Current Developments in Grounded Theory*. SAGE Publications Ltd. doi: 10.4135/9781526485656.
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