

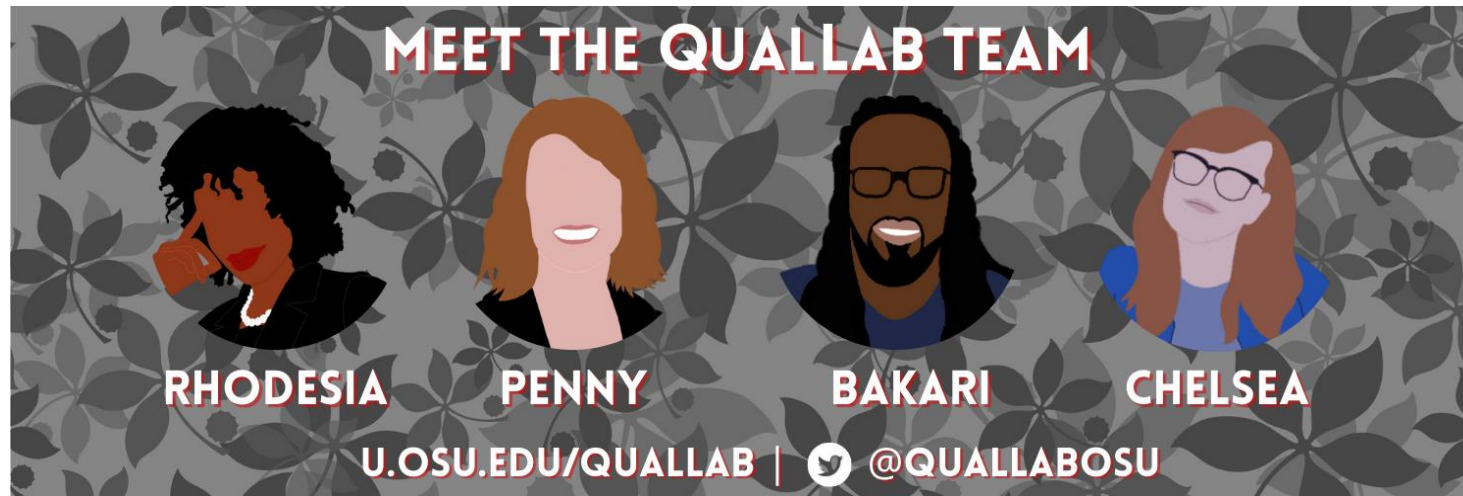


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# Introduction to Grounded Theory



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*Authored by Adrian Bitton, Chelsea Gilbert, Bakari Lumumba & Penny A. Pasque (2021)*

*Note: This resource guide offers very basic information for scholars new to Grounded Theory. Please see the resources listed for more depth.*

# The Basics: 5 Parts of A Research Study

John Creswell

1 – Problem Statement / The “So What”

2 – Review of Literature, etc.

3 – Research Question, Methodology & Methods

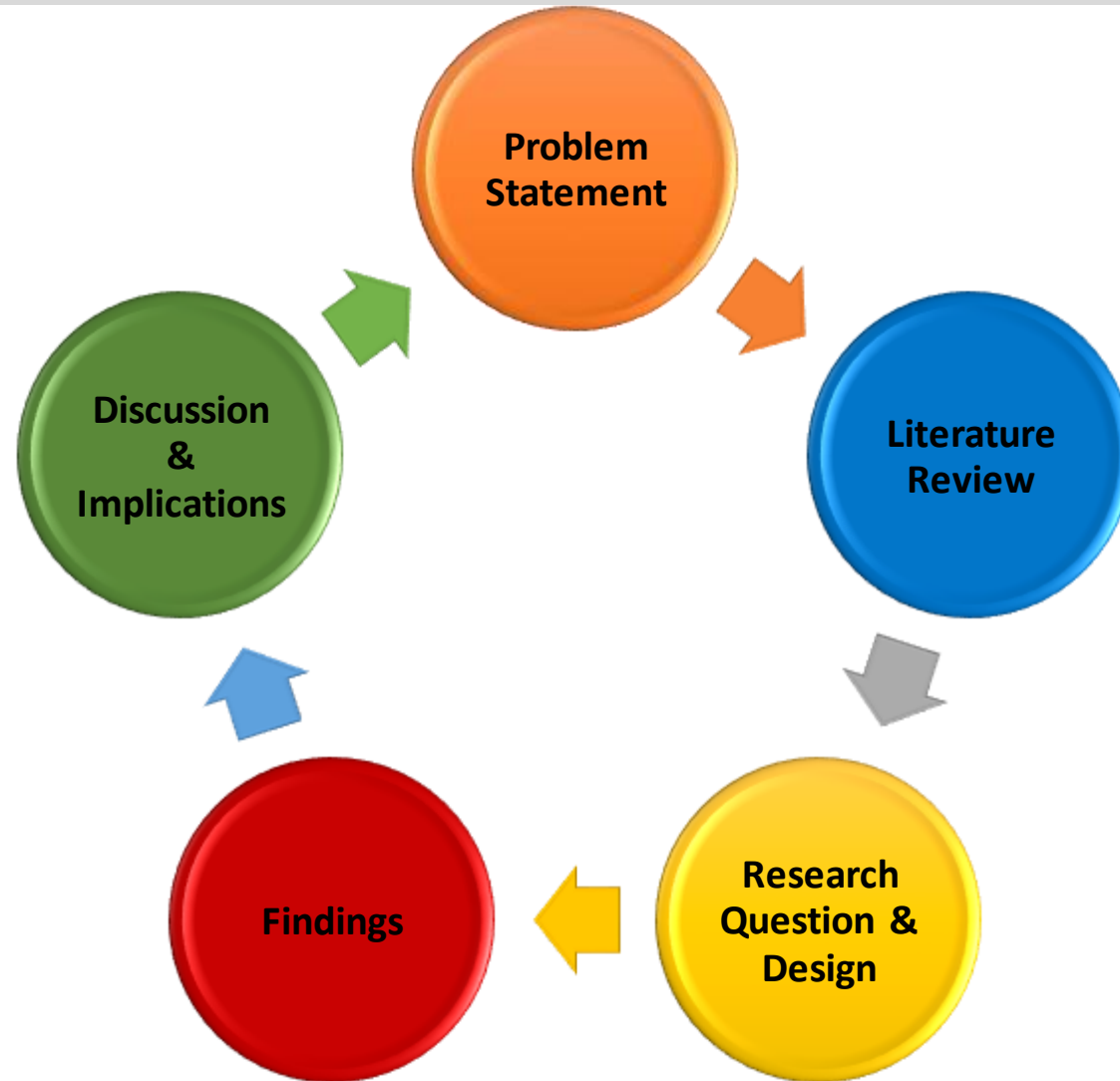
4 – Findings *(with evidence)*

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

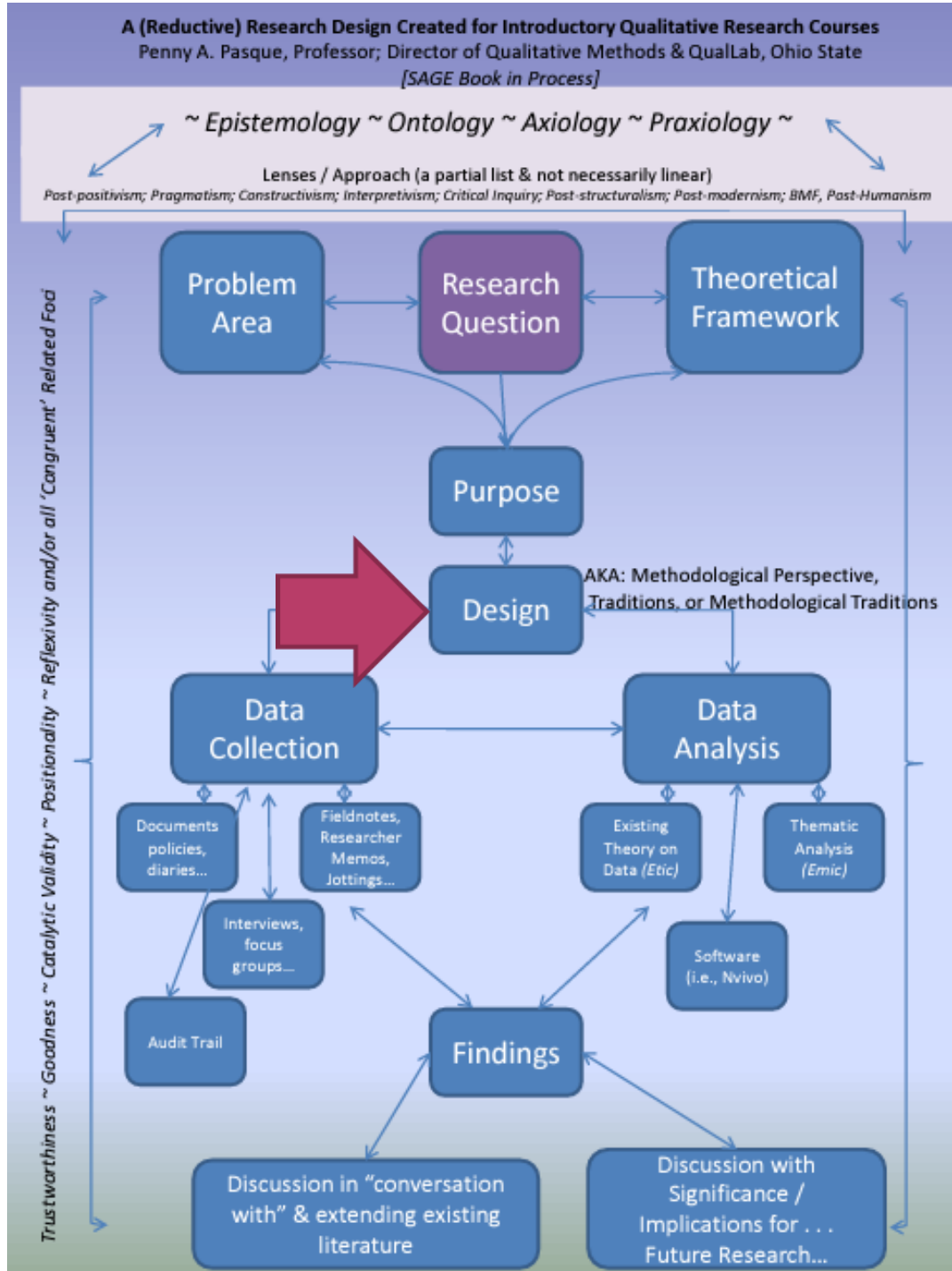


# The Basics: Qualitative Inquiry is Iterative

Pasque, Carducci, Kuntz & Gildersleeve (2012)



# Researcher Decision Points (AKA "Cheat Sheet")



Today: Grounded Theory

Pasque, P. A. (2021).  
 Figure: Qualitative Research Design  
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Your Research Question Dictates the Research Design, Methodological Approach, and Congruent Methods

## Grounded Theory

- Developed by Glaser & Strauss (1967) from a post-positivist perspective
- Grounded in a belief that theory can emerge through qualitative data analysis (Strauss, 1987)
- Charmaz developed grounded theory from a constructivist perspective; She also incorporates theoretical sampling (Charmaz, 2000)
- Involves multiple stages of collecting, refining, and categorizing data (Schwandt, 2001)



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## Grounded Theory

***Follow the methodologist who matches your researcher paradigm!***

### **Postpositivist Grounded Theory**

Glaser & Strauss; Strauss & Corbin  
*Most used in & across fields*

### **Constructivist Grounded Theory**

Charmaz

*Strauss & Corbin or Charmaz are often  
used in student affairs*

### **Postmodern Grounded Theory (AKA Situational Analysis)**

Clarke

### **Situational Analysis utilized in a Critical Paradigm**

Salazar Pérez & Canella

*Example in Early Childhood Education*



## Grounded Theory Paradigms

### Post-Positivist

(Glaser & Strauss; Strauss & Corbin)

The postpositivist paradigm is conceptualized as having an objectivist epistemology and critical realist ontology (Annells, 1997). Post-positivists believe that maintaining the certainty that absolute truth is discoverable through science is untenable in today's world (Letourneau & Allen, 2006). This paradigm accepts that truth and universal laws exist and that the discovery of these truths is near possible.

***Researchers uncover Truth with a capital "T"***



## Grounded Theory Paradigms

### Constructivist (Charmaz)

"Constructivist Grounded Theory acknowledges the standpoints and starting points of the researcher, the influence of the research situation, and controversies about the representation of research participants, and it emphasizes engaging in reflexivity" (Denzin et al., 2018, p. 416).

*Researchers uncover Truth with a lowercase "t" or multiple truths*



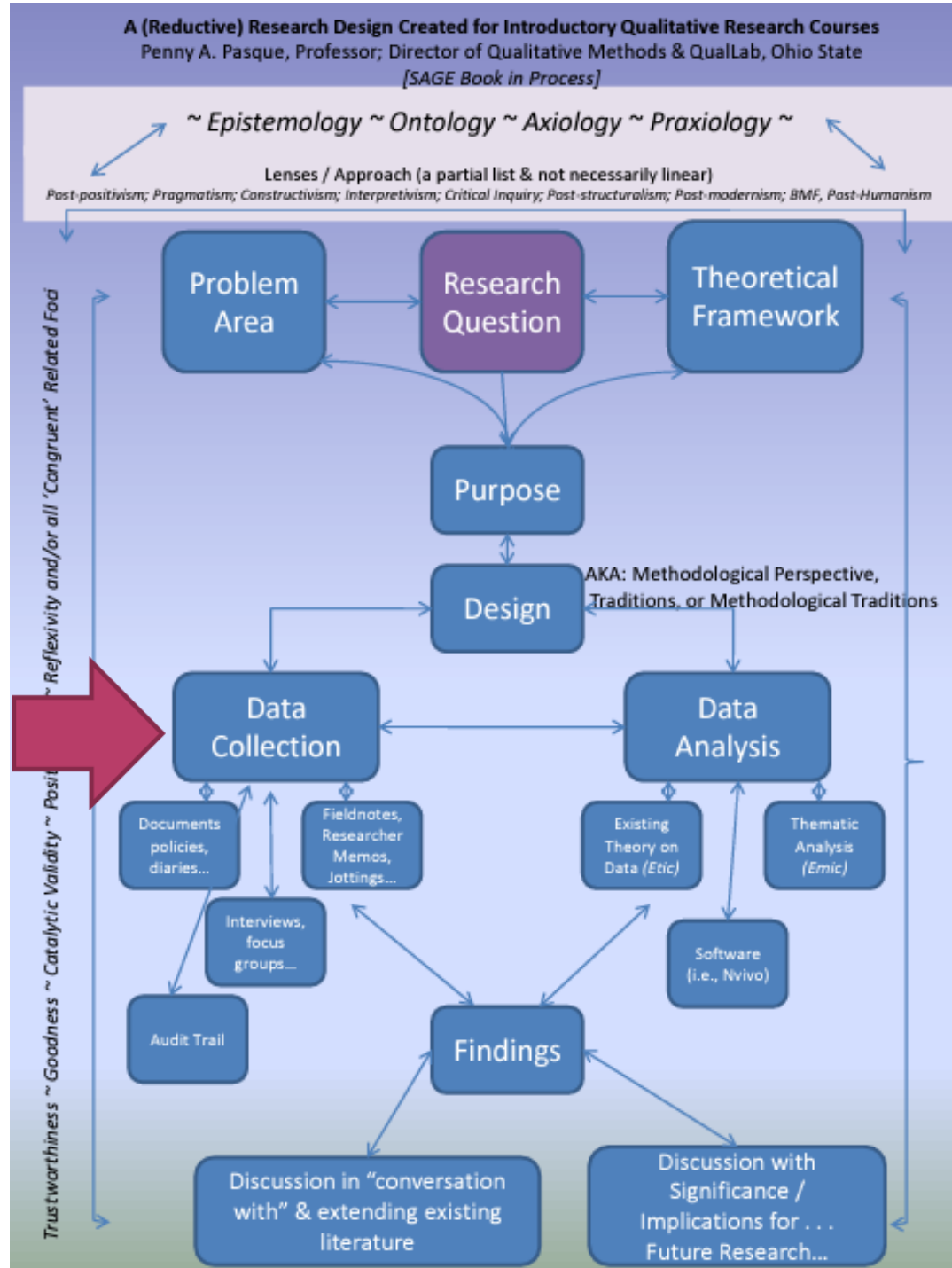


## Grounded Theory Paradigms

### Postmodern (Clarke)

Postmodern Grounded Theory is rooted in scholarship that seeks to address “almost unthinkably complex, interrelated and interactive global” situations while simultaneously acknowledging the “ungraspable of this world” (Usher 1997, p. 30).

# Researcher Decision Points (AKA "Cheat Sheet")



Today: Grounded Theory

Pasque, P. A. (2021).  
 Figure: Qualitative Research Design  
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## **Data Collection Methods**

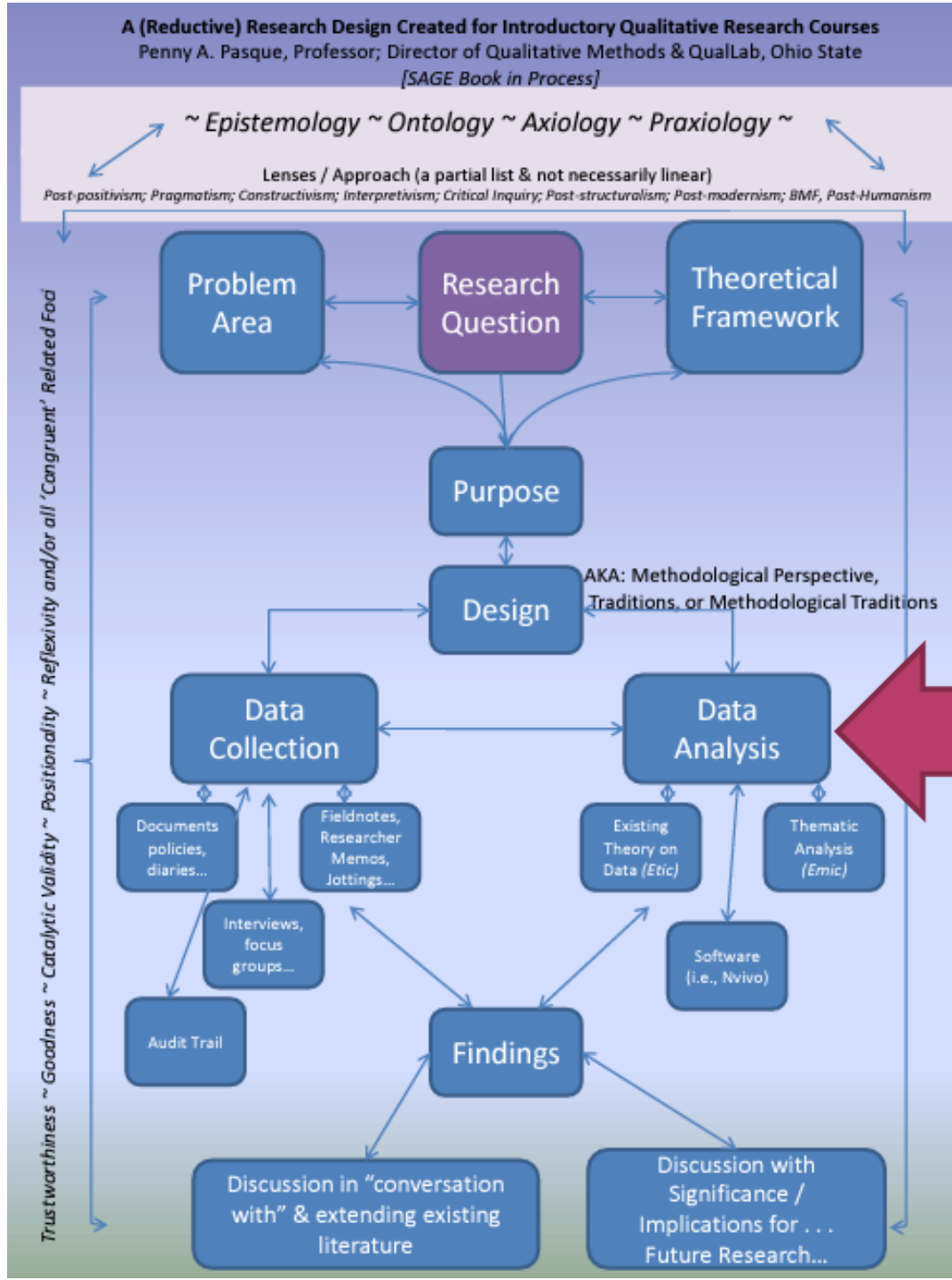
Data Collection Methods for grounded theory may include, but are not limited to, individual interviews, field observations, and content analysis (Jones et al., 2014, Bhattacharya, 2017).

# Data Collection

- Structured Interviews
- Closed or Fixed-Response Interviews
- Semi-Structured Interviews
- Informal, Conversational Interviews
- Walking Interviews
- CRiT Walking
- Standardized, Open-Ended Interviews
- Topical Interviews
- Life History Interviews
- In-Depth Interviews
- Evaluation Interviews
- Focus Groups
- Collect Artifacts
- Sister Circles
- Arts Based Interviews
- Photovoice / Photo Elicitation
- Draw a Picture
- Make a Meal Together
- Chose a Tarot Card
- Create RQ's with the community
- And many more...

Intentionally collect data to answer your research questions; but avoid self-fulfilling prophecy

# Researcher Decision Points (AKA "Cheat Sheet")



Today: Grounded Theory

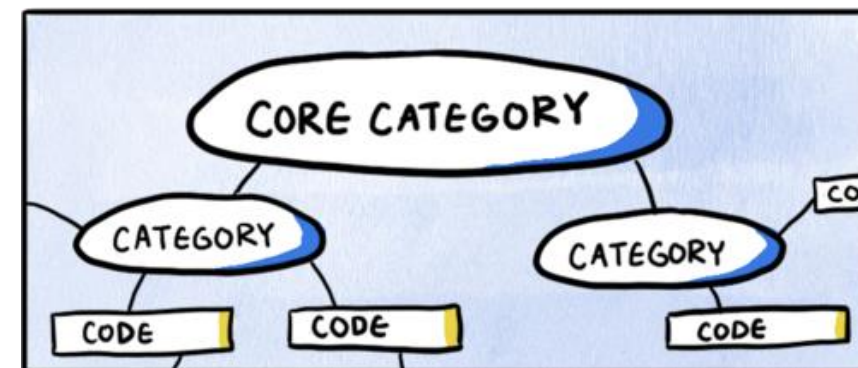
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## Analysis and Interpretation

- Open coding
- Axial coding
- Select coding
- Constant comparative analysis

*See Strauss & Corbin or Charmaz  
depending on the paradigm & scholar you're following*





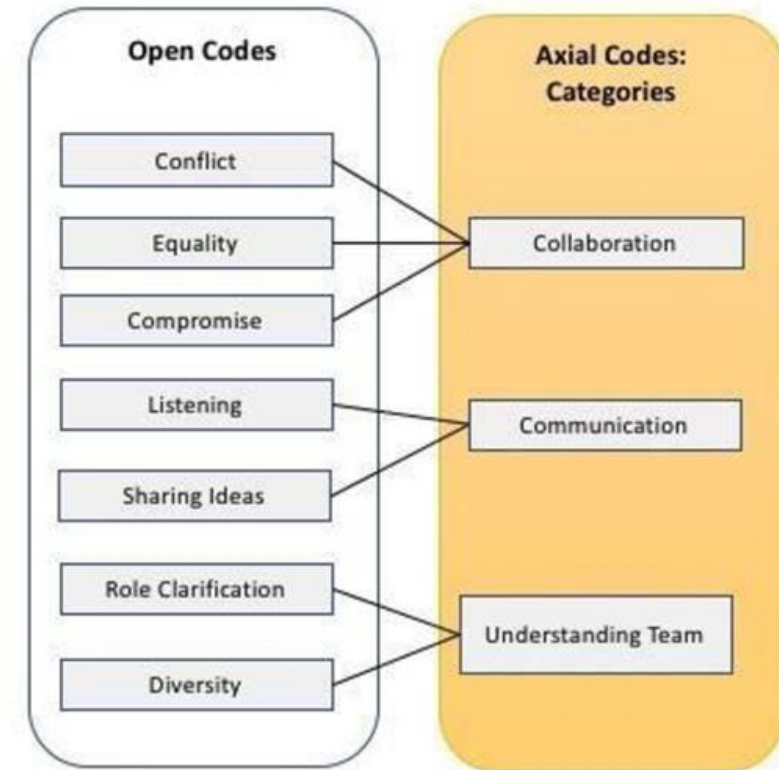
## Analysis and Interpretation | Open Coding

A common method in grounded theory methodology is **open coding**, which “requires a brainstorming approach to analysis because, in the beginning, analysts want to open up the data to all potential and possibilities contained within it”  
(Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p. 160).



## Analysis and Interpretation | Axial Coding

Relating concepts to each other is referred to as **axial coding** and is part of putting back together the open codes into categories (larger concepts) that relate to one another (Charmaz, 2006).







## Analysis and Interpretation | Select Coding

**Select coding** is the last step in grounded theory, where you connect all your categories together around one core category. In doing so you define one unified theory around your research.

**Selective coding** occurs later on in your research and connects categories you have developed from your qualitative data in previous coding cycles, such as axial coding.

**Selective coding** is the culmination of the grounded theory process and its purpose is to either define a new theory or modify an existing theory based on your research. You will be able to state your theory simply in just a couple of words or sentences and should be stated clearly in your research report.

*(How To Do Open, Axial and Selective Coding in Grounded Theory, 2021)*



## Analysis and Interpretation | Constant Comparative Method

4 stages:

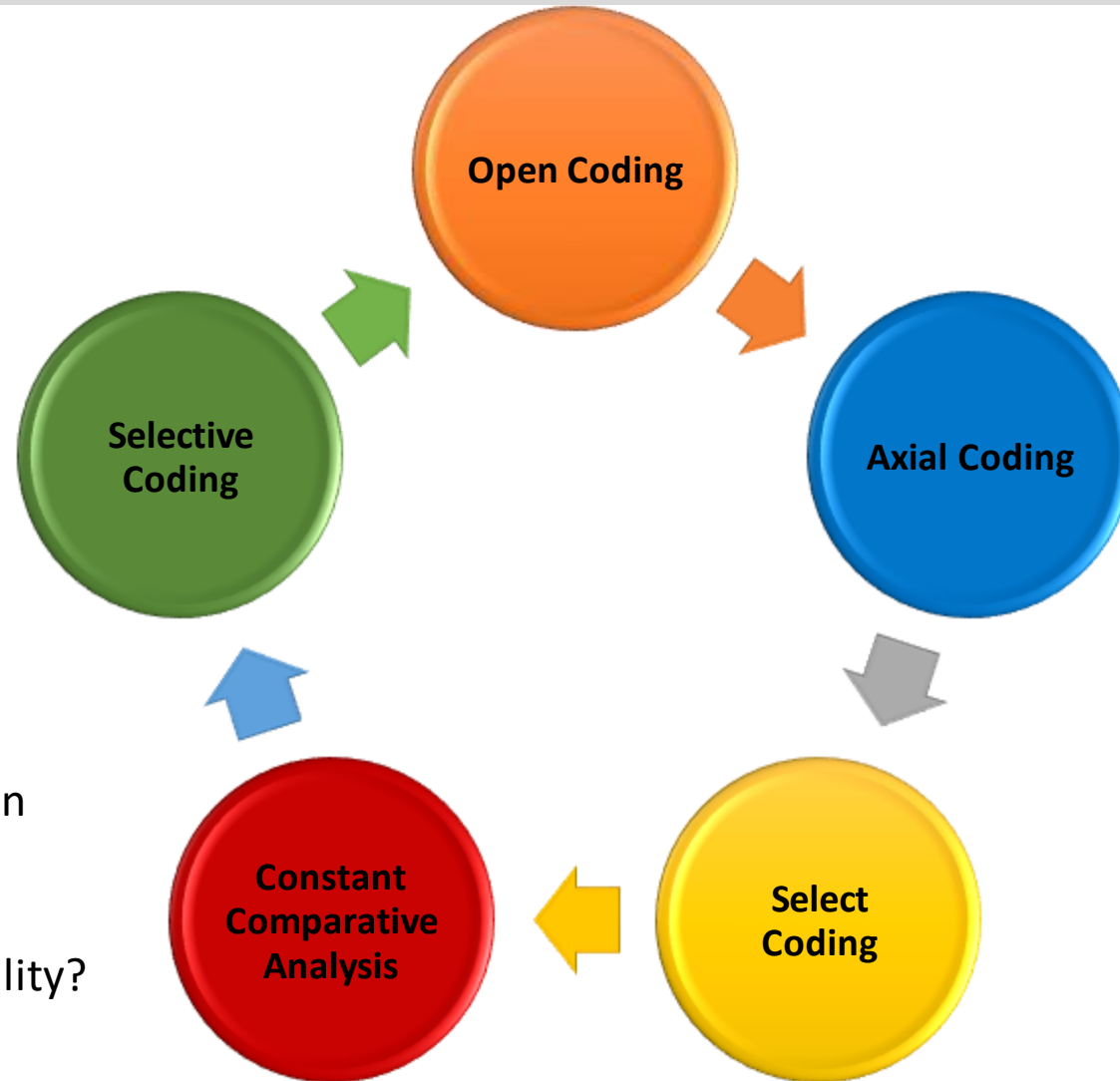
Involves the continuous  
sorting, analysis, and  
coding of the data  
throughout the collection  
process

- (1) comparing incidents applicable  
to each category
- (2) integrating categories and their  
properties
- (3) delimiting the theory
- (4) writing the theory

(Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 105)

# Remember: Qualitative Inquiry is Iterative

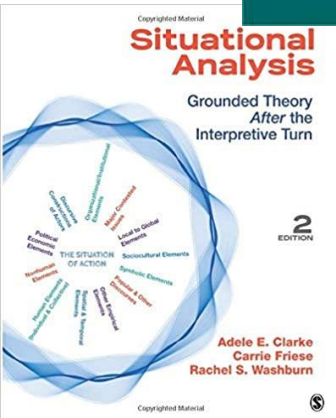
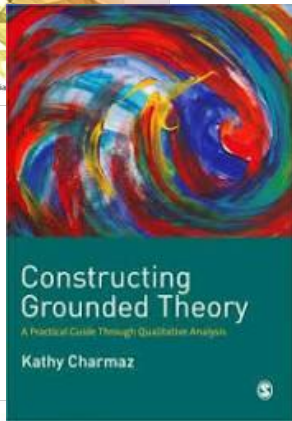
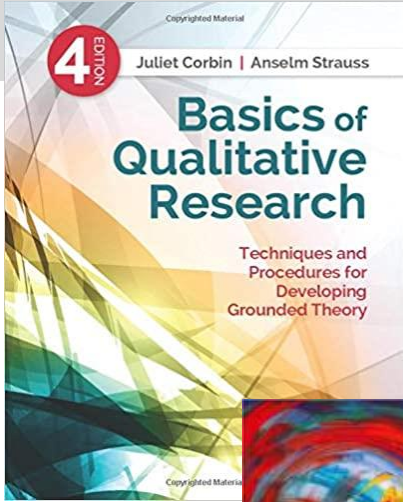
Pasque, Carducci, Kuntz & Gildersleeve (2012) applied to Grounded Theory



- Analysis takes longer than you think!
- What are your steps for trustworthiness / credibility?



# Resources: Grounded Theory



- Bhattacharya, K. (2017). *Fundamentals of Qualitative Research: A Practical Guide*. Routledge.
- Bryant, A., & Charmaz, K. (2019). *The SAGE Handbook of Current Developments in Grounded Theory*. 55 City Road, London: SAGE Publications Ltd.
- Charmaz, K. (2014). *Constructing Grounded Theory*. London: Sage Publications.  
[Or, START HERE!]
- Clarke, A. (2017). *Situational Analysis: Grounded Theory After the Interpretive Turn*. (2<sup>nd</sup> Ed). SAGE.
- Corbin, J., & Strauss, A. (1990). [Grounded theory research: Procedures, canons, and evaluative criteria](#). *Qualitative Sociology*, 13, 3-21.
- Corbin, J. & Strauss, A. (2015). *Basics of Qualitative Research: Techniques and Procedures for Developing Grounded Theory*. SAGE. [START HERE!]
- Delve. (2021). (software Tool). <https://delvetool.com/blog/openaxialselective>
- Denzin, N. & Lincoln, Y.S. (2018). *The SAGE handbook of qualitative research 5th (Ed.)*. SAGE.
- Pasque, P., Carducci, R., Kuntz, A. K., & Gildersleeve, R. E. (2012). *Qualitative inquiry for equity in higher education: Methodological innovations, implications, and interventions*. *ASHE Higher Education Report*. 37(6). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.



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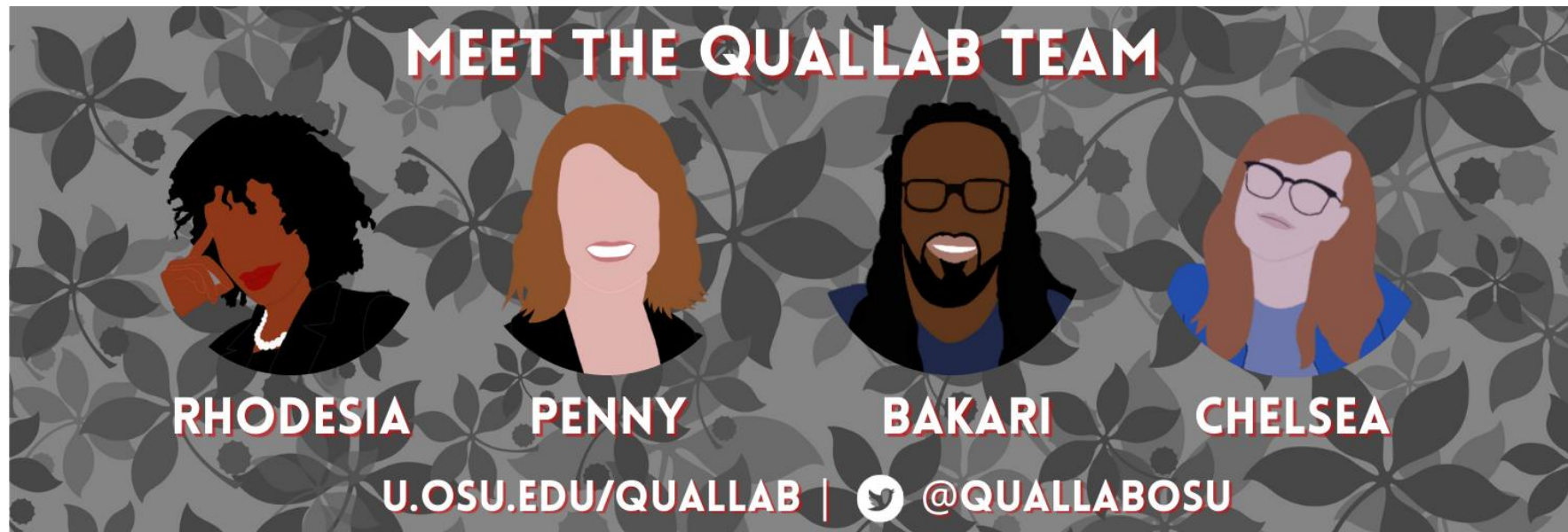
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