CONQUER QUALITATIVE METHODS
ENSURING RIGOR IN QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

Moderator:
Elizabeth Burner

Panelists:
Zach Meisel
Megan Ranney
Kristin Rising
Disclosure of commercial relationships

- Elizabeth Burner - none
- Zach Meisel - none
- Megan Ranney - none
- Kristin Rising - none
Common Critiques of Qualitative Methods

- Anything goes
- Replication impossible
- Generalizability limited
- Researcher bias
Why even bother?

- Learn about how and why
- Hear silenced voices
- Overcome dissonance in results
- Knowledge
What kind of knowledge?

- Inductive vs Deductive

- Constructivist vs Positivist
Excellence in Qualitative Research

- Rigor is Trustworthiness (Guba and Lincoln)

- 8 criteria for excellence in qualitative inquiry (Tracy 2010)

- COREQ guidelines
Trustworthiness is Qualitative Rigor

- Trustworthiness includes
  - Credibility
  - Confirmability
  - Transferability
  - Dependability

Guba, Lincoln, 1985
Credibility

Confidence in truth of findings

- Prolonged Engagement
- Persistent Observation
- Triangulation
- Peer debriefing
- Negative case analysis
- Referential adequacy
- Member-checking
Transferability

Findings are applicable in other contexts

- Thick description
- What to include?
- Archives?
Dependability

Consistency and repeatability

- Generally proved by credibility
- Interrater reliability for generating codebooks and themes
- Inquiry audit/external audit
- Audit Trail
Confirmability

How much the findings are shaped by respondents/data rather than researchers own biases

- Inquiry audit (external)
- Audit trail (internal)
- Reflexivity
Audit trail – what to include?

- Paper or electronic fine, as long as it’s all there
- All data and analytic decisions
- Who made which decisions
- Keep track of dissention!
- Keep organized by either time or type
8 criteria for excellence

- Worthy Topic
- Rich Rigor
- Sincerity
- Credibility
- Resonance
- Significant Contribution
- Ethics
- Meaningful Coherence

Tracy, Qualitative Inquiry, 16(10) 837--851, 2010
Design

- **Worthy Topic:** relevant, timely, interesting

- **Ethics:** plan, plan, plan for all possibilities
Data Collection & Analysis

Rich Rigor – abundant data, iterative analysis, complex descriptions

Sincerity – transparency, especially about biases and decisions amongst team

Credibility – thick description, rich quotes, triangulation, multiple viewpoints
Dissemination

■ **Resonance** aesthetic representation, naturalistic generalization, transferable findings

■ **Significant Contribution** theoretically, practically, morally or methodologically: always consider heuristically

■ **Meaningful Coherence** interconnecting prior literature, your research questions, your findings and interpretations
COREQ Guidelines: like CONSORT for qualitative inquiry

■ Domain 1: Research team & reflexivity
■ Domain 2: Study design
■ Domain 3: Analysis and findings
Research team and reflexivity

- Personal Characteristics
  - Interviewer
  - Credentials
  - Occupation
  - Gender
  - Experience and training

- Relationship w/participants
  - Established relationship
  - Participant knowledge of the interviewer
  - Interviewer characteristics
Study design

- Theoretical Framework
- Participant Selection
  - Sampling, method of approach, sample size, non-participation
- Setting
  - Setting of data collection, presence of non-participants, sample description
Study design: Data collection

- Interview guide
- Repeat interviews
- Audio/visual recording
- Field notes
- Duration
- Data saturation
- Transcripts
Analysis and findings

Data analysis
- Number of data coders
- Description of the coding tree
- Derivation of themes
- Software
- Participant checking

Reporting
- Quotations presented
- Data and findings consistent
- Clarity of major themes
- Clarity of minor themes
Data Collection Method
specific advice

- Individual interviews
- Focus Groups
- Ethnography/Observation/Participant Observation

Document review (including digital documents)
Analysis Approach ≠ Data Methods

- Grounded Theory (classical and constructivist)
- Thematic Analysis
- Case study analysis
- Ethnography
- Phenomenological Analysis
- Discourse Analysis
- Intuitive Inquiry
- ....
Data Collection is key...
- Rich sources
- Train interviewers extensively
- Iterative process is best
- Sampling strategies

But analysis is critical too
- Match goals and research questions
- Applicable to the data sources
- Clearly described
- Deviations must be described
PANEL DISCUSSION
Remote Question 1

How do you plan a question guide? What is your attack plan?
Remote Question 2

Do you have trouble with the IRB? How do you handle ambiguity re: # of participants, changes to the question guide?
Remote Question 3

What is your strategy for training interviewers? For training coders?
Remote Question 4

Do you report frequency of codes? What is your stance on this?
Remote Question 5

How much supporting information do you include in your publications? (how much of your audit trail)
Remote Question 6

Do you have a favorite set of guidelines to follow?
Remote Question 7

What do you ask of mentees and junior collaborator's who want to start a qualitative project?
Remote Question 8

Any suggestions on training seminars or intensive “camps”?