

Qualitative Research: The Interplay of Theory and Method

Dr. Annamary Consalvo, Associate Professor

The University of Texas at Tyler

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Series offered by The Office of Research, Scholarship, and Sponsored Programs (ORSSP)

Qualitative Research Focus... (a reminder)

- Focused on meaning; lived experiences of the participants

Qualitative researchers seek to gather meaningful data

Examine perceptions, motivations, and experiences that are significant (meaningful) to people

- Rather than focusing on numbers and statistics, qualitative research analyzes texts (written word, images), talk (spoken word, conversations), and interactions (encounters, events)

Examines social processes, not probabilities or predictions

- Qualitative research is an iterative and you could say, creative craft; no single “recipe” for qualitative research
- **Theory:** An account of social reality; provides a framework for analyzing data collected from the social world

This workshop will explore how....

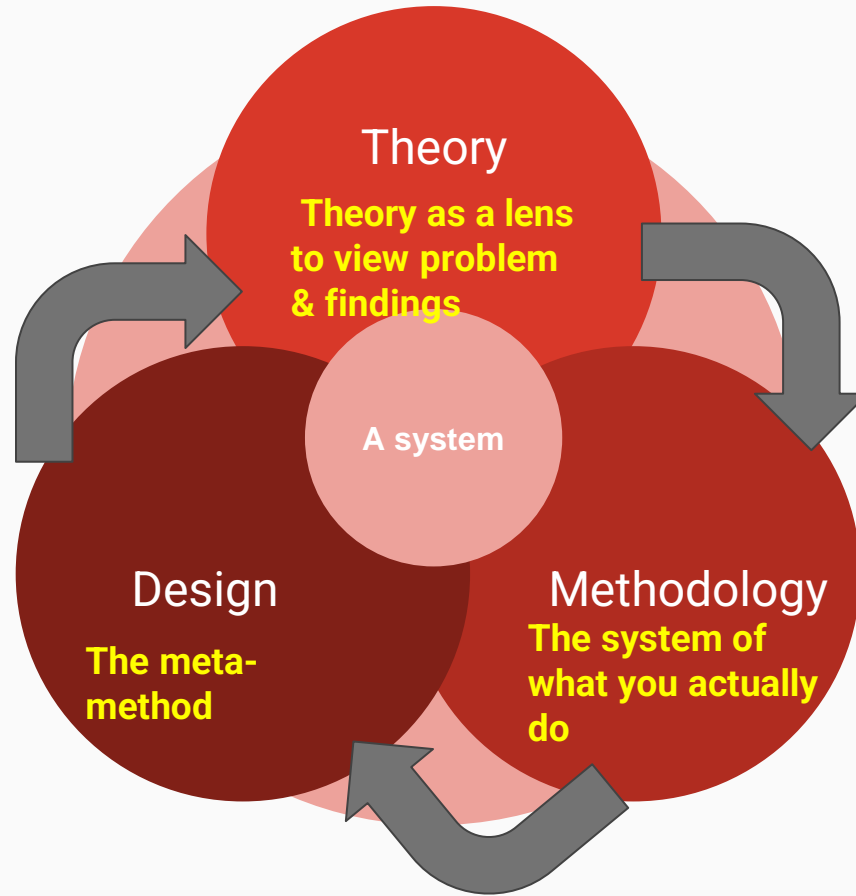
Selection of theoretical frame and method
matter in qualitative research.

This workshop will explore.....

The interplay between selected
frames and methods

The impact on the outcome of
a given study as reported in three
given articles.

Geographies of Qualitative Research



Three Common Qualitative Design & Methods

Will take you through three studies' use of theory...

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n change is
de..."
ourdieu's
apital"

Worthy et al. "We know for a fact" ...
"authoritative discourse"

Clouder et al.
"How practitioners learn in practice"
"Ecological systems theory"

Ethnographic

Data Sources

Observations

Insider \longleftrightarrow Outsider

Participant observations

Interviews > Transcripts

Loosely structured

Unstructured

Field notes

Narrative

Document/content analysis

Film, audio recordings, transcripts

Discourse Analysis

Conversation Analysis (the study of turn-taking)

Non-verbals

Qualitative

Researcher log to support an Audit Trail and "thick description"

Memo writing: Methodological, theoretical, early hunches

Noting frequency

Open coding > refined codes > Themes

Open-ended survey

Focus group interviews

Narrative qualitative study:

Example #1

Loosely structured interviews

**Bahktin's "authoritative
discourse".**

Worthy, J., Svrcek, N., Daly-Lesch, A., & Tily, S. (2018). "We know for a fact": Dyslexia interventionists and the power of Authoritative Discourse. *Journal of Literacy Research, 50*(3), 359-382.

“The authoritative word demands that we acknowledge it, that we make it our own; it binds us, quite independent of any power it might have to persuade us internally” (*Dialogic* p. 342).

A. **Authoritative Discourse:**

“By *authoritative discourse* we understand that monologic discourse that seeks to impose itself in relation to others, without openness to questioning, negotiation of meanings, with well-demarkated hierarchical characteristics.”

(Magalhães, Ninin, & Lessa, 2014, p. 144)

Bakhtin, Mikhail M. (1981). *The dialogic imagination: four essays*. Edited by Michael Holquist. Trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist. Austin, Texas: Texas UP.

Magalhães, M. C., Ninin, M. O. & Lessa, Â. B. (2014). The discursive dynamics in teacher education: Authoritative discourse or internally persuasive discourse? *Bakhtiniana*, 9(1), 138-156.

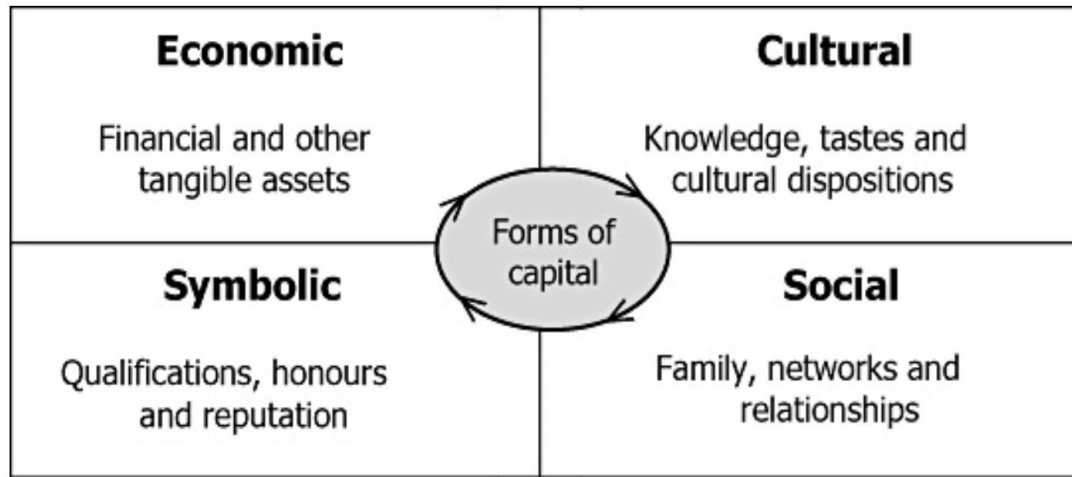
Ethnography qualitative study:

Example #2

Observations, interviews,
video/audio tape records.

Bourdieu's "capital"

Maloch, B. (2005). Moments by which change is made: A cross-case exploration of teacher mediation and student participation in literacy events. *Journal of Literacy Research*, 37(1), 95-142.



Bourdieu's Concept of Capital. Source: Adapted from Maclean et al., 2006: 29.

THE FORMS OF CAPITAL

Pierre Bourdieu

Richardson, J., *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education* (1986), Westport, CT: Greenwood, pp. 241–58

Qualitative study:

Example #3

Qualitative semi-structured
interviews

**Bronfenbrenner's ecological
systems theory**

Clouder, L. et al., (2022). Education for integrated working: A qualitative research study exploring and contextualizing how practitioners learn in practice. *Journal of Interprofessional Care*.36(1), 24-33.

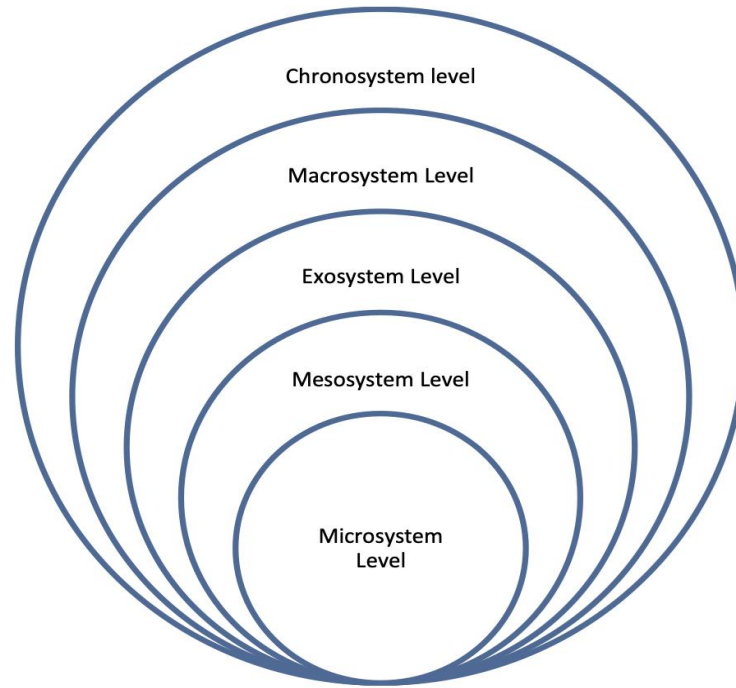


Figure 1. The social ecological model (adapted from Bronfenbrenner, 1986; (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

Bronfenbrenner, U. (1986). Ecology of the family as a context for human development: Research perspectives. *Developmental Psychology*, 22(6), 723–742. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0012-1649.22.6.723>

Desperately Seeking Theories

What now?



So you need
a theory for a
research
proposal

- Theory: An account of social reality; provides a framework for analyzing data collected from the social world

A starting
point:
Ask yourself

- Am I interested in how this **culture** shapes life in this **site**?
- Am I interested in **relationships**?
- Am I interested in how **people learn**?
Adults? Children and youth? As groups? As individuals? As dyads?
- Am I interested in how **individuals make decisions and choices**?

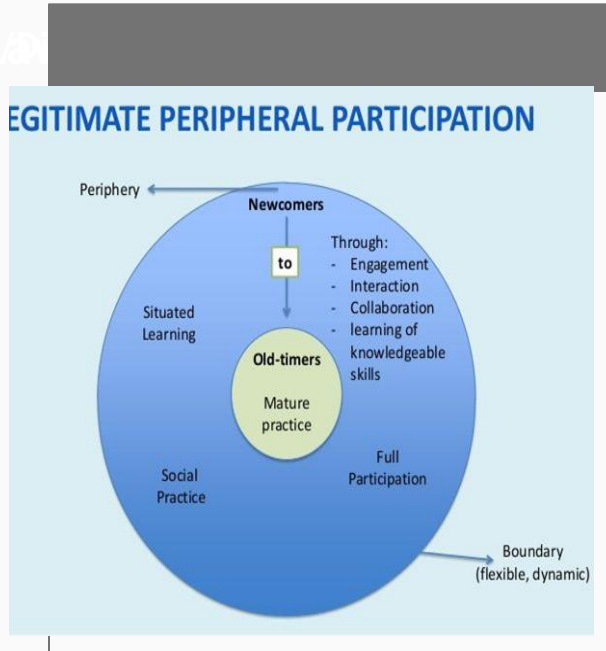
For example...
Look up
“Relationship
theories”

- Or Culture Building Theories
- Or any of the others
- See what you find. Then look for an article or two that USE those theories and read that section of the article. You can cite those (as long as they fit) with what you are contemplating.

Good place to start is **Google Scholar**

Many theoretical frameworks – these are just three Interpretive lenses.....

One theory of learning



A theory of culture building



A theory about how people make decisions



Many theoretical frameworks – three more **Interpretive lens....**

A theory of learning
and of culture
building
Funds of Knowledge

One theory of
relationships
~~Social Exchange~~
Theory

A theory about how
people make
decisions
Self-Determination
Theory

Students don't
come to class
with empty slates.

@ValentinaESL

- First Language
- Traditions
- Life experiences
- Culture
- Beliefs
- Background Knowledge

How can we leverage their
funds of knowledge?

According to the Social Exchange Theory,
humans weigh the costs against benefits
while forming relationships.

Costs

Benefits



A few
more....

- Nel Noddings – a theory of care
- Louise Rosenblatt – reading as a transactional process
- Norman Fairclough – the “crise” or crisis as the way IN
- Holland – figured worlds (identity building)
- Vygotsky – learning is socially constructed (zone of proximal development)

Selected references

- Gee, J. P. (Discourse) [many many here](#)
- Lave, J., & Wegner, E. Legitimate Peripheral Participation [resources HERE](#)
- Maslow, A. Hierarchy of Needs [resources here](#)
- Moll, L. C. et al. Funds of knowledge. [PDF HERE](#)
- Ryan, R. M., & Deci, E. L. (2000). Self-determination theory and the facilitation of intrinsic motivation, social development, and well-being. *American Psychologist*, 55, 68-78.

Questions?

Thank you for attending. I am happy to talk with you on an individual basis.

You can schedule a meeting [HERE](#) or email me at aconsalvo@uttyler.edu



Visit the [resources bank of the ORSS](#). See especially several excellent recorded webinars on Qualitative Research.