
RAPID QUALITATIVE RESEARCH DESIGN

This assignment gives students the opportunity to practice rapid qualitative research design.

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Supporting resources:

[Qualitative Research Methods: A Data Collector's Field Guide](#)

[Social Science Collaboration with Environmental Health](#)

[Perspectives: An Open Introduction to Cultural Anthropology, 2nd Edition](#) (see, especially, the chapter on "Doing Fieldwork: Methods in Cultural Anthropology.")

RAPID QUALITATIVE RESEARCH DESIGN QUESTIONS

- What is your research question?
- What social groups will you study and interact with?
- How will you gain access to the social groups you'll focus on? What privacy protections will be needed?
- How could you use participant observation to answer your research question?
- How could you use in-depth interviewing to answer your research question? What questions would you ask?
- How could you use focus groups to answer your research questions? What discussion prompts could you use?
- Who would find this research useful?

TIPS FOR RAPID QUALITATIVE RESEARCH DESIGN

- **What is your research question?**

Make sure your research question addresses the social and cultural aspects of environmental health -- and can be answered using qualitative methods. A qualitative study cannot determine cancer rates, for example. A qualitative study *can* advance knowledge of how different stakeholders perceive their situation and strategize to change it. A qualitative study can also advance knowledge of ways people interact -- often reproducing (consciously or unconsciously) social hierarchies, privileges and biases.

- **What social groups will you study and interact with?**

Identify a specific social group and describe where and how you would interact with individuals and subsets of this group. It may be useful to study how nurses perceive the health problems faced by mine workers, for example, to understand the expertise, biases and sympathies they bring to their work. To do this, you will need to identify specific groups or locations of nurses that you can interact with.

- **How will you gain access to the social groups you'll focus on? What privacy protections will be needed?**

Identify the community leaders, organizational administrators or government officials that would need to approve your research before you begin. Also describe how you will explain the research to the people you will study, what confidentiality you should and can promise, and the concerns you have about possible negative impacts your research could have on the people you study.

- **How could you use participant observation to answer your research question?**

Identify a specific place or organization where you could observe how people talk, interact, move around, and work to get the things you need. You could sit in a tea stall where workers hang out, for example, or you could work with an advocacy organization like a trade union or human rights organization.

- **How could you use in-depth interviewing to answer your research question? What questions would you ask?**

Make sure your interview questions will help you answer your research questions.

- **How could you use focus groups to answer your research questions? What discussion prompts could you use?**

Focus groups are especially good for identifying and eliciting information about group norms (shared ideas about what is true, expected, etc). What norms do you need to understand to answer your research questions? Focus groups are also useful in trying to understand variety within a group -- how people understand things differently, want different things, and have a different sense of effective action.

- **Who would find this research useful?**

In answering this question, try to be specific: identify organizations where you could send your research report or events where you could share your research results with practitioners.

REFERENCES

Please use [Chicago author-date style](#) (for reference list and in-text citations).