

# Centre for Qualitative Research

## MAIN TRAINING PACKAGE

### SESSION TWO

#### Planning and designing qualitative research

Dr Sarah Morgan-Trimmer

#### Session Summary

A philosophical paradigm incorporates ontology and epistemology, and can be thought of in terms of a spectrum between positivism and constructivism/interpretivism. The philosophical paradigm underpins and determines the nature of a qualitative research study.

Drawing on theory is generally considered good practice in qualitative research. Theoretical approaches may overlap with philosophical paradigms or methodology. Using theory deductively can shape what data are collected and how they are analysed. An inductive approach to theory is more exploratory and builds theory from data.

A methodology is an overarching framework, within which one or more methods can be employed. Some methodologies have different 'sub-types'. Not all qualitative research needs to fit within a specific methodology.

When choosing and applying methods it's important to fully understand them in order to apply them properly. Balancing pros and cons is a key aspect of selecting methods. Some data analysis methods are specific to a methodology.

Sampling strategies are usually purposive in qualitative research. Saturation is a commonly misunderstood sampling approach - it is useful when iterative data collection and analysis are being conducted, as in grounded theory.

The philosophical paradigm, theoretical approach, methodology, sampling and methods being used should be consistent with each other. It's important to know and respect methodological traditions. It may also be useful to adapt methods and be flexible once in the field, since qualitative research is not always completely controllable.

# MAIN TRAINING PACKAGE

## SESSION TWO

### Planning and designing qualitative research

Tuesday 23 February 2021

#### Summary

- Designing a research study should start with considering the research question.
- Varied methodologies and methods are available; they should be consistent with the underpinning philosophical paradigm and theoretical approach being used.
- Qualitative researchers often use purposive sampling strategies; saturation as a sampling strategy can be used with iterative approaches.
- Methodologies have traditions and sub-types which are important to respect, but adaptation and flexibility are also necessary sometimes.

---

#### Reading List

Bleiker J. et al. (2019) Navigating the maze: qualitative research methodologies and their philosophical foundations. *Radiography* 25 (1): S4-S8

Bradbury-Jones et al. (2014) How theory is used and articulated in qualitative research: development of a new typology. *Social Science & Medicine* 120: 135-141

Braun and Clarke (2019): Reflecting on reflexive thematic analysis. *Qualitative Research in Sport, Exercise and Health* 11 (4): 589-597

Bryman A. (2016) *Social Research Methods*. Oxford: OUP

Gale et al. (2013) Using the framework method for the analysis of qualitative data in multi-disciplinary health research *BMC Medical Research Methodology* 13: 117

Reeves S. et al. (2008) Why use theories in qualitative research? *BMJ* 337: a949

Saunders et al. (2018) Saturation in qualitative research: exploring its conceptualization and operationalization. *Quality and Quantity* 52: 1893–1907

---

#### Animation

[https://biteable.com/watch/swdtp\\_mtp2-2787709/c4165a5bc0773c29769d00e3c3a4d259](https://biteable.com/watch/swdtp_mtp2-2787709/c4165a5bc0773c29769d00e3c3a4d259)

cqr@bath.ac.uk

@CQRBath



@SWDTP



<https://www.swdtp.ac.uk>

<https://www.bath.ac.uk/research-centres/centre-for-qualitative-research/>