

Lois Campbell's List of Guidelines for Qualitative Research Studies

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I developed this list based on my experience as a committee chair and the "outside qual person" on committees. If you decide to use in a class, book, journal article, etc., please given appropriate credit. Thanks again for all your patience.

Some Items I Look for in a Thesis Prospectus (Methods Section)
Lois M. Campbell, 1994

1. Theoretical Framework

- does it make sense?
- does it fit with the research question being raised?
- does it carry through all data collection and analysis strategies?

2. Purpose of the Study

- does this make sense in light of the literature review?
 - does this make sense in light of the theoretical framework?
 - does this lead the reader to the research questions?
 - does this lead to the design of the study, e.g. ethnography, case study, life history?
 - > if using the term ethnography, etc. - is it truly that?
- Don't say ethnography unless it's truly an ethnography?

3. Research Question(s)

- do they fit within the theoretical frame?
- are these supported by the need for the study and rationale for the study?
- do these guide the data collection strategies? evidence?

4. Research Design

- are you selecting ethnography, case study, etc.?
- does selection of design fit with the theoretical framework, purpose and research questions?

5. Gaining Access

- how will you gain access to the site you desire?
- if you have completed a pilot study at this site, how does this affect continued work at the site?
- ethical considerations?

6. Researcher Role and Experience

- what role(s) will you take as a researcher, e.g. participant-observer, clinical interviewer, etc. ?
- do these roles fit with the research questions and theoretical

framework?

-what is your prior experience (research or otherwise) that affects this study (researcher bias)?

7. Selection of Site and Participants

-how will you select your site and participants?

-how will the confidentiality of participants be protected?

-will participants be co-authors? If so, will real names be used in the text?

-does selection fit with the theoretical framework?

-does selection fit with the research questions?

-what criteria will be used for selection?

-what sampling techniques will you utilize (yes - this happens in qualitative research not just quantitative research)?

8. Description of Sites

-If information is available, how are the sites described?

does the description create a picture for the reader - making the unfamiliar familiar?

9. Description of Participants

-If information is available, how are the participants described?

does the description create a picture for the reader - making the unfamiliar familiar?

10. Data Collection

-what data collection strategies will be utilized?

-- interviews (what types)?

-- field notes?

-- focus groups?

-- audio/video taping?

-are collection strategies fully described with appropriate literature cited when necessary?

-do the data collection techniques fit the theoretical frame?

-do the data collection techniques fit the research questions?

-do the data collection techniques fit the research design?

e.g., if you want case studies and want to do cross-case analysis, have you selected appropriate procedures so that cross-case analysis is valid?

-how are issues of validity, reliability, translatability, comparability, ethics addressed?

-how will data be managed?

-if using a computer program, how will it specifically be utilized?

11. Data Analysis

-is a particular technique being employed, i.e. constant comparison, analytic induction?

-does the technique fit with the research questions and theoretical framework?

-what type of coding procedures do you plan to employ?

-- open coding?

-- axial coding?

-- selective coding?

-- conditional matrix?

-- unitizing?

- theoretical sampling?
- are adjunctive procedures to be utilized?
- memos and diagrams?
- will narrative analysis be used?
- will you verify your coding with your participants? why/why not?
- how will you develop your categories, properties, themes, assertions?
- if using a computer program, how will it specifically be utilized?

12. Timeline of Project

- what is the basic timeline?
- does the timeline allow for appropriate data collection and analysis?

e.g. an ethnography will most likely take more than 2 weeks - a year would be more appropriate (for field work)

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