

A Few Key Terms in Qualitative Research

Access: entrée into an organization or group; passing through the gatekeeping process

Authenticity: credibility of informant and the research, relating to fairness, sophistication of the constructs and process, sophistication of understanding and development of the researcher, and actionable or empowerment capacity

Case Study: intensive study of one specific bounded social unit for thorough understanding

Crystallization: many sources of data that, when analyzed from multiple perspectives, suggest similar conclusions; transformative extension of triangulation

Emic: the participant perspective

Ethnography: study of human culture, often with the researcher embedded into the culture or group

Etic: the researcher perspective

Grounded Theory: a method of analysis wherein the categories and connections emerge from the data

Key Informant: Knowledgeable insider willing to share insights and access

Lived Experience: first-person account

Memos: a part of the analytic process in which the researcher explains coding, defines variables, and justifies next steps in emergent designs

Purposive Sampling: nonrandom selection of participants and cases, such as:

- ▶ Contrasting case
- ▶ Critical case
- ▶ Deviant case
- ▶ Negative case
- ▶ Typical case

Reflexing: the unfolding process, the researcher interacting with the data

Saturation: the point at which evidence suggests all relevant issues have been uncovered

Thick Description: description from the perspective of the natural actors in the setting, so someone who is not present experiences the same

Triangulation: three or more data sources that provide evidence of the same finding

Trustworthiness: the credibility (akin to internal validity), transferability (akin to external validity), dependability (akin to reliability) and confirmability (akin to objectivity) of qualitative research