Chapter 3: Method
(Exploratory Case Study)

This workbook is intended to help you to write Chapter 3 of your proposal. Each part of this workbook contains information that will help you to understand what should be included in Chapter 3 of your proposal:

- Critical points to include in each section.
- Issues to consider regarding alignment with other sections of the proposal.
- References to enhance your understanding of what is needed.

When you have read each part of this workbook, write the corresponding section of your draft proposal. Look for Write Your Dissertation writing prompts throughout the workbook; each one presents a list of everything you should address. Finally, each part of this workbook ends with two tools that will help you self-check your work: a checklist that highlights relevant advice from the *Dissertation Handbook*, and a list of tips provided by the Research Review Board.

When you have completed all parts of this workbook, you can put your work from all the parts together and you should have a finished Chapter 3 of your proposal.

The decision tree in **Table 1** will help you decide whether a case study is the appropriate design for your research. Examples for the various types of designs are provided so that you can see how other researchers used each design.

Table 1: Decision tree for choosing the correct qualitative design

Design	Questions answered	When used	Example
Case Study	How, why, What	Exploring a phenomenon in context, using one or more data collection methods. Describing in depth a case or cases.	Hew, K. F. & Hara, N. (2007) Knowledge sharing in online environments: A qualitative case study. *American Society for Information Science and Technology, 58*, 2310–2324.
Phenomenology	How do people experience a phenomenon?	Understanding the essence of the lived experiences of a group of people surrounding a phenomenon	Burton, C. R. (2000). Living with stroke: A phenomenological study. *Journal of Advanced Nursing, 32*, 301–309.

(Cont.)

Table 1: Decision tree for choosing the correct qualitative design (cont.)

Design	Questions answered	When used	Example
Grounded theory	What is the theory that explains the common experiences or behaviors of a group of people?	Explaining why people behave in a certain manner	Harley, A. E., Buckworth, J., Katz, M., Willis, S., Odoms-Yound, A., & Heaney, C. A. (2009). Developing long-term physical activity participation: A grounded theory study with African American women. *Health Education and Behavior; 36*, 97–112.
Ethnographic study	What are the shared patterns of a culture or a group?	Describing a culture sharing group	Baillie J., & Lankshear, A. (2015). Patient and family perspectives on peritoneal dialysis at home: Findings from an ethnographic study. *Journal of Clinical Nursing, 24*, 222–234.
Narrative	What are the stories of the individual experiences of a specific individual?	Exploring the life of an individual or individuals	Patsiopoulos, A. T.; & Buchanan, M. J. (2011). The practice of self-compassion in counseling: A narrative inquiry. *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice, 42*, 301–307.

The decision tree in **Table 2** will help you decide whether the exploratory case study is appropriate for your study. Examples are provided so that you can see how other researchers used each type of case study for their research.

Table 2: Decision tree for choosing the right case study

Type of case study	Questions answered	When used	Example
Exploratory	How, what?	Used when there is no single set of outcomes.	Seaton, J. X., & Schwier, R. A. (2014). An exploratory case study of online instructors: Factors associated with instructor engagement. *International Journal of E-Learning and Distance Education, 29*(1), 2–16.

(Cont.)

Table 2: Decision tree for choosing the right case study (cont.)

Type of case study	Questions answered	When used	Example
Explanatory	How, why?	Used to explain presumed causal links that are too complex for surveys or experimentation (Yin, 2014).	Chong, H., Wong, J. S., & Wang, X. (2014). An explanatory case study on cloud computing applications in the built environment. *Automation in Construction, 44*, 152–162.
Comparative	How are cases alike? How are cases different?	Used to compare two or more cases. Sometimes referred to as multiple case study because there is more than one case. But focus is on the comparison of the cases.	Rialp, A., Rialp, J., Urbano, D., & Valliant, Y. (2005). The born-global phenomenon: A comparative case study research. *Journal of International Entrepreneurship, 3*, 133–171.
Intrinsic (Stake, 2005)	Can answer all above questions but focus is very specific	Used to better understand a specific case.	Hellström, I. Nolan, M.,& Lundh, U. (2005). 'We do things Together' A case study of "couplehood" in dementia. *Dementia, 4*(1), 7–22.
Instrumental		Used to provide insight into an issue or help refine a theory. The case plays a supportive role, helping us to understand something else. The case may or may not be seen as typical of other cases.	Luck, L., Jackson, D., & Usher, K. (2007). STAMP: Components of observable behaviour that indicate potential for patient violence in emergency departments. *Journal of Advanced Nursing, 59*, 11–19. doi:10.1111/j.1365-2648.2007.04308.x
Collective		Similar to multiple case studies.	Scheib, J. W. (2003). Role stress in the professional life of the school music teacher: A collective case study. *Journal of Research in Music Education, 51*,124–136. doi:10.2307/3345846

Research Method

(This is the main heading for this chapter)

Introduce the Research Method section.

(Do not use this heading for this section.)

Background Reading for This Section

Your introduction to the Research Method section sets the stage for this chapter. Start by restating the purpose of your study and then present what will be in Chapter 3.

Critical Points to Address for This Section

Start by restating the purpose of your study. This statement is the same as the purpose statement presented in Chapter 1. Briefly preview the focus of Chapter 3, identify the major topics to be covered in the chapter, and end with a transitional sentence to the Description and Justification for Research Method and Description and Justification for Research Design sections.

Considerations for Alignment

- Purpose statement must be written exactly the same as it was in Chapter 1.
- Introduction should align with subsequent sections of this chapter.

Write Your Dissertation

In your dissertation template, write your introduction section, addressing each of the following points:

- Restate the purpose statement.
- Preview what is in Chapter 3.
- Identify major topics covered in this chapter.
- End with a transitional sentence to the next section.

Remember: Ensure that your writing is cohesive. The ideas should flow logically and with appropriate transitions between sentences.

Self-Check Your Work Against the *Dissertation Handbook*

Introduction

______ Begins with the purpose of the chapter, how it fits into the dissertation, and the organization of the chapter.

______ Describes the method of inquiry used (e.g., quantitative, qualitative, mixed method, meta-analysis, program evaluation, etc.).

______ Describes the specific research methodology chosen and how it derives logically from the statement of problem and the research questions.

Methodology Selected

(This is the main heading for this section)

Describe and justify your research method.

Background Reading for This Section

Chapter 7 in the *Field Guide*, particularly Section 7.5

The method used for an exploratory case study is a qualitative method. Qualitative methods are used to gain a deeper understanding of the perceptions of people regarding a particular phenomenon (Merriam, 2009). Yin (2010) described qualitative research as collecting data from a variety of resources, evaluating the data, analyzing evaluations to produce findings, and presenting the findings.

Critical Points to Address for This Section

Description of method. In this section, describe in detail why a qualitative study is the best way to do your research. Do not simply provide a tutorial regarding qualitative research. Instead, show the reader that you understand what the qualitative method is and when to use this approach. Be sure to provide citations.

Justification of method. Begin by describing the problem you are exploring, and then explain how the problem indicates the need for a qualitative approach in order to understand a phenomenon. Explain why a qualitative study is the most appropriate method. Explain why a quantitative approach is not appropriate for your research.

Considerations for Alignment

- Qualitative method must align with the purpose of your study.
- Qualitative method must align with the problem statement.
- Qualitative method must align with the research questions.
- Aligns with description in Chapter 1.

Suggested Resources for Enrichment

Creswell, J. (2013). *Qualitative inquiry & research design: Choosing among five approaches* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Klenke, K. (2008). *Qualitative research in the study of leadership*. Cambridge, MA: Elsevier.

Latham, J. (2010). *Frameworks to create the organization you really want!* Retrieved from http://www.drjohnlatham.com/Overall_Approach.html

Leedy, P. D., & Ormrod, J. E. (2009). *Practical research: Planning and design* (9th ed.). New York, NY: Pearson/Prentice-Hall.

Merriam, S. (2009). *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation* (2nd ed.). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Write Your Dissertation

In your draft dissertation, write a few paragraphs that describe and justify the method to be used, addressing each point provided.

- Describe the problem.
- Explain how the problem indicates the need for a qualitative approach.
- Explain why a qualitative study is most appropriate.
- Explain why a quantitative approach is not appropriate.
- Be sure to cite references.

Remember: Ensure that your writing is cohesive. The ideas should flow logically and with appropriate transitions between sentences.

Describe and justify your research design.

Background Reading for This Section

Sections 7.2 to 7.4 in the *Field Guide*

Chapter 12 introduction in the *Field Guide*

Figure 8.1 in the *Field Guide*

Yin (2009, p. 2) posited three conditions for use of a case study: the purpose must be to answer "how" or "why" questions, investigator must have little control over events, and the focus of the research must be on a contemporary phenomenon within a real-life context, especially when boundaries between the phenomenon and context may not be clearly evident. According to Creswell (2013), in case study research the researcher explores a "real-life, contemporary bounded system (a case) or multiple bounded systems (cases) over time, through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information" (p. 97).

When we speak about bounded systems, we are referring to a case being bound by time and place. Let's say you want to do a study regarding the use of YouTube by teenagers. The phenomenon is the use of YouTube by teenagers. You have a real-life contemporary bounded system (teenagers using YouTube). But you decide that this is too general, so you decide that you will look at four different groups of teenagers and their use of YouTube. You will collect data on Caucasians, African Americans, Hispanics, and Asians. The phenomenon is the use of YouTube by teenagers.

But what is your unit of analysis? The unit of analysis is what you are actually going to analyze. Remember, in case studies we want to triangulate the data in order to get a full, rich description of the phenomenon in question. You can do this in several ways:

- You can have different methods of data collection. For example, you can do surveys and interviews, collect artifacts, or even review YouTube videos and read articles about their use.
- You can have different cases from which to collect data.
- Or you can have different researchers collecting the data.

So you decide that you will break down your teenagers into cultural groups and will interview Caucasian, African American, Hispanic, and Asian teenagers who use YouTube. In addition, you will visit some of the chatrooms available for YouTube users to get a sense of what this is all about. Your units of analysis are your four groups of teenagers as well as the data you obtain from the chatrooms. In qualitative research it is very important to define clearly what your units of analysis are because this will form the basis of your actual analysis.

So now let's look at your research.

- What is the phenomenon you will investigate? Remember that a phenomenon is a contemporary event within a real-life context.
- What is the case? Remember that a case is bound by time and place. Is there more than one case? Is your study a single or multiple case study?
- What is your unit of analysis? Remember that the unit of analysis is the data you will collect from within the case.

Yin posited three types of case studies: exploratory, explanatory, and descriptive. There are also variations in terms of single case studies and multiple case studies. In addition, there are comparative case studies. Stake (2005) included intrinsic, instrumental, and collective research case studies as well. Each type of case study is unique, and used for different purposes and to answer different questions. When you indicate that you are doing a case study, it is important to delineate the type of case study you are doing.

The exploratory case study is used when there is no pre-determined outcome. According to Yin (2014), case studies are appropriate when asking "how," "why," "what," and "who" questions. In the exploratory case study, the questions answered are "how" and "what." Exploratory case studies are also appropriate when you wish to gain an extensive and in-depth description of a social phenomenon. The exploratory case study is used to explore presumed causal links that are too complex for a survey or experiment (Yin, 2014).

Case studies can be considered theory building or theory affirming. Eisenhardt (2007) stated that building theory from case studies involves using one or more cases to "create theoretical constructs, propositions, and/or midrange theory from case based, empirical evidence" (p. 25). In the exploratory case study we build a theory from our research. In explanatory or descriptive case studies we affirm an existing theory. According to Yin (1994), multiple case studies provide a better basis for theory building because having multiple cases allows for a comparison of those cases, which can lead to a stronger theory.

In case studies, we have a conceptual framework rather than a theoretical framework. Jabareen (2009) defined the conceptual framework as a network, or "a plane, of interlinked concepts that together provide a comprehensive understanding of a phenomenon or phenomena" (p. 50).

According to Jabareen, conceptual frameworks are comprised of ontological, epistemological, and methodological assumptions. Ontological assumptions are concerned with the nature of reality, while epistemological assumptions relate to how things really are. Methodological assumptions are concerned with building the conceptual framework and what this framework can tell us about the real world. Jabareen pointed out that the conceptual framework in qualitative research provides understanding rather than a theoretical explanation. Conceptual frameworks are derived from many discipline-oriented theories that become the data for the conceptual framework analysis. The idea of the conceptual framework in qualitative research is to analyze these theories in order to generate new interpretations and understanding.

Critical Points to Address for This Section

Description of the design. In this section, describe the exploratory case study and its uses. First, describe the case study design and its uses and how the case study differs from other qualitative designs. Then focus on the exploratory type of case study. Describe what the exploratory case study is. Then explain how the exploratory case study design differs from other case study designs. Further, explain why the exploratory type of case study is appropriate to your research as opposed to other types of case studies. Again, this is not to be written as a tutorial on case study design. Instead, your writing should show evidence that you understand the design. Be sure to cite references. Avoid textbooks and, instead, use scholarly authors such as Yin and Merriam.

Justification of the design. Describe the phenomenon being studied and discuss why exploring the perceptions of certain people regarding the phenomenon is the best approach to use. Explain how your research addresses Yin's three conditions for a case study. Explain how your research aligns with the concept of the exploratory case study. What questions are you addressing with your research and how do those questions align with the "how" and "what" questions of exploratory case studies? In addition, explain why other qualitative designs would not be appropriate for your study.

Remember, it is not enough to simply address these issues with a laundry list of facts. This section should be assembled into a logically flowing narrative of your research design and justification for the exploratory case study.

Considerations for Alignment

- Align your design with the problem being explored.
- Show how your design is congruent with the purpose of your study.
- Aligns with description in Chapter 1.

Suggested Resources for Enrichment

Bennett, A., & Elman, C. (2006). Qualitative research: Recent developments in case study methods. *Annual Review of Political Science, 9*, 455–476. doi:10.1146/annurev.polisci.8.082103.104918

Bergen, A., & While, A. (2000). A case for case studies: Exploring the use of case study design in community nursing research. *Journal of Advanced Nursing, 31*, 926–934. doi:10.1046/j.1365-2648.2000.01356.x

Eisenhardt, K. M. (2007). Theory building from cases: Opportunities and challenges. *Academy of Management Journal, 50*(1), 25–32. doi:10.5465/AMJ.2007.24160888

Ellet, W. (2007). T*he case study handbook: How to read, discuss, and write persuasively about cases.* Boston, MA: Harvard Business School Press.

Jabareen, Y. (2009). Building a conceptual framework: Philosophy, definitions, and procedure. *International Journal of Qualitative Research.* Retrieved from http://ejournals.library.ualberta.ca/index.php/IJQM/article/view/6118/5892

Jones, C., & Lyons, C. (2004). Case study: Design? Method? Or comprehensive strategy? *Nurse Researcher, 11*(3), 70–76. Retrieved from Academic SearchComplete database

Metoyer-Duran, C., & Hernon, P. (1994). Problem statements in research proposals and published research: A case study of researchers' viewpoints. *Library & Information Science Research, 16*(2), 105–118.

Payne, S., Field, D., Rolls, L., Hawker, S., & Kerr, C. (2007). Case study research methods in end-of-life care: Reflections on three studies. *Journal of Advanced Nursing, 58*, 236–245. doi:10.1111/j.1365-2648.2007.04215.x

Perry, C. (1998). Processes of a case study methodology for postgraduate research in marketing. *European Journal of Marketing, 32*(9/10), 785.

Simon, M. K., & Francis, B. J. (2001). *The dissertation cookbook: From soup to nuts, A practical guide to start and complete your dissertation* (3rd. ed.). Dubuque, IA: Kendall/Hunt.

Stake, R. (1995). *The art of case research.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Stake, R. (2010). *Qualitative research: Studying how things work.* New York, NY: Guilford Press.

(Cont.)

Suggested Resources for Enrichment (cont.)

Tellis, W. (1997). Introduction to case study. *The Qualitative Report, 3*(2). Retrieved from http://www.nova.edu/ssss/QR/QR3-2/tellis1.html

Tellis, W. (1997). Application of a case study methodology. *The Qualitative Report, 3*(3). Retrieved from http://www.nova.edu/ssss/QR/QR3-3/tellis2.html

Yin, R. K. (1993). *Applications of case study research.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Yin, R. (1997). Case study evaluations: A decade of progress? *New Directions for Evaluations, (76)*, 69–78.

Yin, R. (2004). *The case study anthology.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Yin, R. (2014). *Case study research: Design and methods* (5th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Write Your Dissertation

In your dissertation template, write your description and justification for your design, addressing each of these points:

- Explain the phenomenon and why exploratory case study is the best approach to exploring it.
- Explain how your study addresses "how" and "what" questions.
- Explain how Yin's three conditions are addressed.
- How does the exploratory case study align with the problem and purpose of your study.
- Why are other qualitative designs not appropriate?
- Why are other types of case studies not appropriate?

Remember: Ensure that your writing is cohesive. The ideas should flow logically and with appropriate transitions between sentences.

Address your research questions.

Background Reading for This Section

Chapter 5 in the *Field Guide*

Your research questions are the questions you will answer with your research. They must align with your problem statement and your purpose statement. You should never include questions that were not addressed in the problem and purpose statements.

In qualitative research, there is generally an overarching or central question followed by subquestions. Remember that exploratory case studies use "how" and "what" questions, so your research questions should follow this format. For example, you might ask, "What are the perceptions of online graduate students regarding completing a dissertation?" This would be your overarching question. Subquestions might be “What difficulties do online graduate students encounter when completing their dissertations?” and “How do online graduate students overcome these difficulties?”

Critical Points to Address for This Section

In this section you will address your research questions. These questions must be the same as those you presented in Chapter 1. Remember that your research questions are not your interview questions. They are the questions that will be answered through your research. Also include a narrative to show how your research questions align with the problem and purpose of your study.

Considerations for Alignment

- Research questions must align with the methodology being used.
- Research questions must align with the problem by addressing the problem.
- Research questions must align with the purpose.
- Do not include questions that are not mentioned in the purpose of your study.
- Research questions must align with those presented in Chapter 1.

Suggested Resources for Enrichment

Creswell, J. (2013). *Qualitative inquiry & research design: Choosing among five approaches* (3rd. ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Maxwell, J. (2013). *Qualitative design: An interactive approach.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Yin, R. (2014). *Case study research: Design and methods* (5th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Write Your Dissertation

In your dissertation template, write one to two paragraphs that introduce your research questions and show how they align with the problem and purpose. Then write the overarching question and the subquestions. Be sure to address each of these points:

- In a short narrative, introduce the research questions and explain how they align with the problem and purpose of the study.
- Address your overarching research question.
- Address your subquestions.

Remember: This content must be written exactly as it was in Chapter 1.

Remember: Ensure that your writing is cohesive. The ideas should flow logically and with appropriate transitions between sentences.

Address your role as the researcher.

Background Reading for This Section

Section 12.7 in the *Field Guide*

In qualitative research, the researcher becomes part of the research, because the researcher engages with the respondents through various methods of data collection and analysis. As a result, the researcher's preconceived biases or assumptions could easily influence data collection or data analysis. This has always been a criticism of qualitative research. To mitigate this concern, the qualitative researcher uses methods such as bracketing to try to ensure that his or her biases will not interfere with the research.

According to Tufford and Neuman (2010), there is much debate over the definition of bracketing and even when it should be used. Tufford and Neuman suggested several approaches to bracketing. One approach is to keep notes during data collection and data analysis so that the researcher can examine and reflect on his engagement with the data. Another method of bracketing is to conduct an interview with an outside source or colleague to allow the researcher to uncover and bring to awareness any biases or pre-conceived assumptions. A third approach is to keep a reflexive journal. The journal is started before the actual data collection begins. Tufford and Newman suggested that the researcher should explain the reasons for undertaking the research, any assumptions regarding the research, the researcher's own value system and any potential role conflict with the study participants.

Critical Points to Address for This Section

In this section, it is important to be transparent. You must describe your background and any potential issues it may have on your research. You must also discuss how you will mitigate any potential problems that you as the researcher might bring to the research. Discuss bracketing and keeping a reflexive journal.

Also consider how you as the researcher might be perceived by your participants, and discuss methods to address or at least mitigate any problems. For example, if you are a female doing research on how female executives are viewed by their male counterparts, your gender might influence how your male participants respond to your questions.

Considerations for Alignment

- Your role as the researcher should align with your design.

Suggested Resources for Enrichment

Chenail, R. J. (2011). Interviewing the investigator: Strategies for addressing instrumentation and researcher bias concerns in qualitative research. *The Qualitative Report, 16,* 255–262. Retrieved from http://nsuworks.nova.edu/tqr/vol16/iss1/16

Tufford, L., & Newman, P. (2010). Bracketing in qualitative research. *Qualitative Social Work, 11*(1) 80–96.

Write Your Dissertation

In your dissertation template, write your section on your role as the researcher and how you will mitigate any bias.

- Describe your role as the researcher in data collection.
- Explain the potential for researcher bias and ways to mitigate bias.

Remember: Ensure that your writing is cohesive. The ideas should flow logically and with appropriate transitions between sentences.

Write Your Dissertation

Now combine the material you wrote in this part of the workbook on research method and design, research questions, and your role as the researcher into one succinct section. Address all of the following points:

Metholdology Selected

A. Research method

- Detailed description of qualitative research with references
- Justification for research method
- Why other methods are not appropriate
- Alignment of method with problem and purpose

B. Research design

- Detailed description of case study research, with particular focus on exploratory case study research with references
- Justification for research design, both the case study and exploratory case study
- Why other designs are not appropriate
- Alignment of method with problem and purpose

(Cont.)

Write Your Dissertation (cont.)

Metholdology Selected

C. Research questions

- Short narrative to introduce the research questions and explain how they align with the problem and purpose of the study
- Overarching research question
- Subquestions

D. Role of the researcher

Remember: Be sure to use references. Avoid textbooks. Use the qualitative researchers familiar with this type of study (e.g., Yin).

Remember: Ensure that your writing is cohesive. The ideas should flow logically and with appropriate transitions between sentences.

Self-Check Your Work Against the *Dissertation Handbook*

Methodology

_______ Describes which qualitative methodology will be used.

- ____ Justifies choice of methodology using major and foundational sources.
- ____ Explains why other possible choices would be less effective.

_______ Describes specific research questions and subquestions (where appropriate) that are

- ____ Clear and succinct.
- ____ Congruent with the statement of problem.
- ____ Answerable.
- ____ Few in number.
- ____ Clearly stated.
- ____ Open-ended (*not* yes/no questions).

_______ Describes the role of the researcher in the data collection procedure.

- ____ Addresses the potential impact and minimization of researcher bias through methodological approaches.

TIPS from the Research Review Board

Describe how and justify why the research method and design is appropriate for your problem, purpose, and research questions.

Study Participants

(This is the main heading for this section)

Describe the population in your study.

Background Reading for This Section

Chapter 10 in the *Field Guide*

The population in your study includes the people you plan to interview who have knowledge regarding the phenomenon you are researching. There are several things to consider when selecting your population. First, the population must align with your problem and with your purpose. For example, if your problem is that immigrants to the United States often do not use healthcare facilities, and your purpose is to try to understand how immigrants view healthcare and the issues they face when accessing healthcare, your population would have to be immigrants to the United States. You would not interview physicians who provide services for immigrants (unless you wanted to get a different perspective to add to your data from the immigrants).

The next issue to consider is the size of your population. If you decide to use all immigrants to the United States, your population would be huge and you might see real differences between various ethnic groups and their use of healthcare. So it is best to try to narrow your population to a specific group, and even to a specific geographic location. So in this case you might want to limit your population to immigrants coming from Africa or, even more specifically, from Nigeria who now reside in New York City.

The next big issue is access to your population. It might be difficult to get access to Nigerian immigrants in New York unless you are also from the same cultural background or know someone who can act as a gatekeeper to help you to gain access to this population. Similarly, if your population belongs to, for example, employees at a specific company, you will need to get permission from the company to solicit them for your study.

Critical Points to Address for This Section

In this section, clearly describe the population you will be using for your research. The population used must align with your problem, purpose, and research questions. Include a description of the demographics of the population so that the reader will be able to determine whether the sample is representative of the actual population. For example, get an idea of how many Nigerian immigrants reside in New York. Also include such demographics as gender, age, education, and socioeconomic status as well. In addition, explain how you will access this population. If you plan to obtain participants from a specific organization, you must obtain permission from that organization prior to soliciting your sample. This signed permission must be in an appendix.

Considerations for Alignment

- Population must align with the specific problem presented in Chapter 1.
- Population must align with the purpose statement.
- Population must align with your research questions.

Suggested Resources for Enrichment

Creswell, J. (2013). *Qualitative inquiry & research design: Choosing among five approaches* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Maxwell, J. (2012). *Qualitative research design: An interactive approach.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Merriam, S. (2014). *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation.* San Francisco, CA: Jossey Bass.

Write Your Dissertation

In your dissertation template, write the section on your population, addressing each of these points:

- Who is the population?
- What geographic area are they in?
- What are the demographics of the population?
- Are they within a specific group or organization?
- How does the population align with the problem, purpose, and research questions of your study?
- How will you access this population?
- Is permission needed to access the population? If so, the signed permission must be in an appendix.

Remember: Ensure that your writing is cohesive. The ideas should flow logically and with appropriate transitions between sentences.

Describe and justify sampling in your study.

Background Reading for This Section

Chapter 10 in the *Field Guide*

Section 12.4 in the *Field Guide*

Sampling technique. Generally, in qualitative research your sampling technique will be non-random purposive sampling because you will be choosing specific people for your sample who meet the criteria for your study. However, there are other techniques available. Creswell (2013) listed 16 types of sampling techniques (p. 158). One approach is snowball sampling. Sometimes the population you are researching may not be readily available, so you would ask people already in your sample to identify others who might fit your criteria. The approach you use depends on the purpose of your study and the population from which you draw your sample.

Sample criteria. It is important to clearly describe the criteria you will use to define your sample. These criteria must be in alignment with your problem, purpose statement, and research questions. For example, if you plan to do a study on how high school teachers perceive the use of standardized tests, one criteria would be that your sample consist of only high school teachers. You might also want to use seasoned teachers, so you might note that your teachers must have at least five years of teaching experience. You may also wish to delineate the subjects taught by the teachers, so you might say that your sample will be high school algebra teachers with at least five years of experience teaching in a specific geographic location. Be certain that the information you provide regarding sample is aligned with the description of your sample in Chapter 1.

Sample size. Identify the anticipated sample size for each group of participants. For example, if you plan to collect data from teachers and parents regarding bullying, identify the estimated sample size for both the parents and the teachers. In qualitative research, we continue to collect data until data saturation has occurred. Stebbins (2001) described the conventional approach for determining sample size, theoretical saturation, as the point when no new information is produced from additional cases. There are various views on how many cases are needed to achieve data saturation. Some researchers indicate that it can be as few as three to five cases, while others believe that case studies require as many as 30 respondents. The number of respondents for data saturation is dependent on how homogeneous the sample is as well as on the qualitative design. The more homogeneous the sample, the fewer cases needed for data saturation. The more heterogeneous the sample, the more cases needed for data saturation. Indicate how many participants you will have in your sample and justify this number. If you have more than one group, indicate how many participants you will have in each group.

Accessing your sample. When determining your sample, consider how you will access the sample. Some populations are closed to outsiders, so gaining entrance may be difficult. At times, finding a gatekeeper who can gain entry for you might be necessary. You can also access sample populations through conferences, list serves, or even by advertising on social media or through the newspaper. Snowball sampling is often used when trying to access a population that may be difficult to reach through conventional channels. If you want to access a sample at a specific place of employment, you will need to get permission to solicit participants for your research.

Soliciting participants. You must also consider how you will solicit people to be part of your study. Will you send out an email? Will you make telephone calls? Will you set up a table at a conference or at some other site? It is important to make certain that people do not feel coerced to be part of your study and that their participation is confidential. Therefore, you would not set up a table at a conference and interview people who stop by. Instead, you would hand out information about your study and invite potential participants to contact you.

Critical Points to Address for This Section

Identify your sampling technique. Explain clearly what approach to sampling you will use so that the reader can understand exactly what you will be doing. Define the parameters of your sample carefully. Your approach will be nonrandom because you will take anyone who volunteers to be part of your study and fits the criteria. It will be purposive because you have defined clear criteria for your sample.

Once you have selected your sampling technique, you must justify why it is appropriate for your study. Base your justification on the purpose of your study and on the population and its availability to you. Ensure that the population chosen for your research is in alignment with your study purpose.

Be sure to describe your sample fully. This description allows the reader to determine whether the sample is representative of the population. It also allows the reader to determine whether the sample is similar to another population, which might make the results more transferable. Discuss how your sample is representative of the population being studied.

Next, discuss sample size. Always state an approximate number of people who will be interviewed and then discuss the concept of data saturation. Justify the number you have chosen. Do not just choose a random number. Remember the factors that might determine when data saturation has occurred, such as the type of design and the homogeneity of the population and sample.

Discuss how you will access your population. If permissions are needed, provide them in your appendix.

Finally, describe how you will solicit participation for your study from the population chosen. This description should be very detailed so that the reader can understand exactly how you intend to solicit people. Show that you have considered issues of confidentiality and free choice.

Considerations for Alignment

- Sample must align with the population.
- Sample must align with the specific problem of the research.
- Sample must align with the purpose of the research.
- Sample must align with the research questions.
- Sample must align with information provided in Chapter 1.
- Sample must align with the population.

Suggested Resources for Enrichment

Carlsen, B., & Glenton, C. (2011).What about *N*? A methodological study of sample-size reporting in focus group studies. *BMC Medical Research Methodology, 11*(1), 26.

Creswell, J. (2013). *Qualitative inquiry & research design: Choosing among five approaches* (3rd. ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Marshall, B., Cardon, P., Poddar, A., & Fontenot, R. (2013). Does sample size matter in qualitative research: A review of qualitative interviews in IS research. *Journal of Computer Information Systems, 54*(1), 11–22. Retrieved from http://iacis.org/jcis/articles/JCIS54-2.pdf

Merriam, S. (2009). *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation* (2nd ed.). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

O'Reilly, M., & Parker, N. (2013). Unsatisfactory saturation: A critical exploration of the notion of saturated sample sizes in qualitative research. *Qualitative Research, 13,* 190–197.

Stebbins, R. A. (2001). *Exploratory research in the social sciences* [Kindle edition]. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Write Your Dissertation

In your dissertation template, please write the section on study participants, addressing each of these points:

- Describe the general population and specific population.
- Describe your sampling method.
- Identify the criteria for selecting respondents.
- Describe the appropriateness of the sampling method based on the population and the purpose of your study.
- Describe how the characteristics of the sample align with the general population.
- Describe how you will access your sample.
- Describe how you will recruit participants.
- Discuss sample size and data saturation.

(Cont.)

Write Your Dissertation (cont.)

- Justify the sample size for each unit of analysis.
- Discuss issues of transferability.

Remember: Ensure that your writing is cohesive. The ideas should flow logically and with appropriate transitions between sentences.

Self-Check Your Work Against the *Dissertation Handbook*

Population and Sampling

______ Describes and justifies the context (including site) for the study.

______ Clearly defines both the general study population and the specific population.

- ____ Demonstrates (and documents) the ability to access the population.
- ____ Describes and justifies the sampling approach.
- ____ Describes how the characteristics of the sample population align with the general population.
- ____ Discusses how the sample selection impacts the generalizability of the study.
- ____ Identifies strategies for recruiting participants.
- ____ Specifies appropriate criteria for selecting participants.

______ Addresses the relationship between the researcher and the participants.

______ Justifies the number of participants.

TIPS from the Research Review Board

- Clearly describes the population and how it is being accessed.
- Clearly identify your sampling approach.
- Justify that your sample size is sufficient to achieve data saturation.

Data Collection

(This is the main heading for this section)

Background Reading for This Section

Section 12.6 in the *Field Guide*

Section 12.7 in the *Field Guide*

Approaches to data collection. There are various approaches to data collection. The most common approach is the interview. If you are conducting interviews, they can be done in person or via email, Skype, telephone, or any other method that allows participants to answer your questions. Carefully consider the best approach to collecting data and how you will collect it. Often distance is a problem, so face-to-face interviews are not always possible, although this is the preferred method of data collection.

When you do interviews, observe the behavior of your participants carefully and keep field notes regarding their behavior. Body language and facial expressions can sometimes be more revealing than the actual words spoken.

Type of data collected. Because you are exploring a phenomenon, the primary type of data you collect will be the responses of your participants. However, remember that in case studies we must triangulate our data, meaning that you must collect data from other sources as well. For example, you may decide to interview several different groups who have knowledge regarding the phenomenon. You may collect data using questionnaires, which generally consist of open-ended questions that a participant can answer in her own time frame. You may decide to collect news accounts or images regarding the phenomenon. You may even decide to collect artifacts from the phenomenon. Part of the data you collect consists of your field notes. These notes provide additional information that helps put the interview responses into context. Overall, the idea is to get a complete understanding of the phenomenon from as many sources as possible.

The research protocol. Yin (2009) believed a research protocol was an essential tool for conducting a case study. Your research protocol is included in an appendix. The protocol can increase the reliability of the research because it serves as a guide to ensure that the researcher will use the same data collection activities over a number of cases. The case study protocol serves as a procedural guide for data collection, coding, and analyzing interview sessions. Yin believed that the interview protocol script could help control the flow and sequence of questions that are part of the script.

Your interview questions should be written so that responses to them will answer your research questions. In addition, remember that exploratory case studies answer “what” and “how” questions. Be careful when writing interview questions:

- Do not ask yes/no questions. They add little value in terms of really exploring the perceptions of your participants.
- Make certain your questions are clear and ask what you intend.

- Do not use jargon or slang.
- Ensure that your questions are open-ended to allow your participants to share their perspectives.

In addition to the interview questions, you might also write probing questions to elicit more information, or you might simply be aware that you may need to probe further to fully understand what is being said.

It may also be important to include some demographic questions so you can describe your sample. When you ask personal questions such as age or salary, be careful that you ask for ranges rather than specific numbers.

Include in your research protocol or script your opening and closing remarks to your participants. Generally, start by thanking your participant for taking the time to be part of the study. In addition, explain the purpose of the study and remind them that they are free to stop the interview at any time. At the close of the interview, again thank them for their participation. You might ask them if they have any other insights that were not covered in your questions.

Audit trail. The audit trail provides a procedure that allows the researcher to outline decisions made throughout the research process and to provide rational for those decisions. It is important to maintain a chain of evidence that will allow the reader to understand how data were collected and analyzed and the rationale for any deviation. Providing an audit trail increases the rigor and trustworthiness of qualitative research. The audit trail consists of comprehensive notes related to the contextual background of the data and the rationale for all methodological decisions.

Pilot study. The pilot study is generally used to evaluate the research questions and identify any potential researcher bias. Generally the pilot study is conducted with a small subgroup drawn from the sample—three to five people is usually sufficient. The pilot study is conducted in exactly the same manner as the interview for the research, including getting informed concept from the participants. However, in addition to the interview questions, the researcher will also ask pilot study participants if they understood the questions, if any questions should be added, or if any questions should be deleted. Besides focusing on the interview questions, the pilot study gives the researcher the opportunity to find out how long the interview will last, whether the interviews will flow logically and coherently, whether any questions need to be changed, and to determine the type of data that will be obtained from the questions. The pilot study provides face validity for the interview questions.

Critical Points to Address for This Section

Data collection methods. It is important to describe carefully exactly how you will be collecting data. You should also give the rationale for your data collection methods. The reader should be able to follow your steps to actually replicate your research. Writing out a step by step approach to data collection may help to solidify your approach. Generally if you do interviews you will want to record the interview. This must be clearly spelled out in this section and you must also have this noted on the informed consent form.

(Cont.)

Critical Points to Address for This Section (cont.)

It is also important to consider how you will keep track of your data. Generally interviews are transcribed and then returned to the participants for review. This process is called member checking and lends more credibility to your results. In this section explain whether and how you will transcribe the data. In addition, if you are doing member checking, explain how it will be done.

Types of data collected. What type of data will be collected? If you conduct interviews or solicit responses from people, your data will be verbal, auditory, and perhaps visual if you videotape the interview. In addition, you may collect other types of data such as newspaper accounts, pictures, or artifacts. It is important to indicate exactly what types of data will be collected and the rationale for collecting that data.

The research protocol. Include the research protocol in an appendix. The protocol should include your interview script, and the script includes your interview questions, probing questions you might ask, and opening and closing remarks.

Audit trail. The audit trail enhances the rigor and trustworthiness of your research. In this section describe how you will conduct your audit. Often an audit is conducted by keeping a research journal in which you discuss the data collection within a contextual framework. The purpose of the audit is for the reader to be able to understand what was done within the context of the research and to understand any deviations that were made from the research protocol.

Pilot study. Clearly describe your pilot study participants. Then explain how the pilot study will be conducted. In your dissertation, include the results of the pilot study and discuss any changes made as a result of the pilot study. The pilot study provides face validity for your questions. It assures that your participants will understand the questions and that the questions ask what is intended.

Field tests. Field tests are often done in qualitative research to assess the quality of the research questions. In the field test, the researcher contacts three to five people who are experts in the type of research being conducted and asks them to review the interview questions. The focus is on alignment of the research questions with the research design and on the quality of the actual questions.

If you conduct a field test, describe your field test participants and how you conducted the field test. In your dissertation, include results of the field test and discuss any changes made as a result. The field tests provide another form of face validity for your questions.

Considerations for Alignment

- Alignment with the purpose of the research.
- Alignment with the research questions.
- Alignment with the research design.
- Should align with procedures followed.

Suggested Resources for Enrichment

Houghton, C., Casey, D., Shaw., D., & Murphy, K. (2013). Rigour in qualitative case-study research. *Nurse Researcher 20*, 4, 12–17.

Kitzinger, J. (1994). The methodology of focus groups: The importance of interaction between research participants. *Sociology of Health & Illness, 16*, 103–121.

Martinez, R., Lewis, C., & Weinder, B. (2014). Instrumentation issues in implementation science. *Implementation Science, 9*(118), 1–9. Retrieved from http://www.implementationscience.com/content/9/1/118

Merriam, S. (2009). *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation* (2nd ed.). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Yin, R. (2014). *Case study research: Design and methods* (5th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Write Your Dissertation

In your draft dissertation, write your section on data collection methods. Be sure to address each of the points listed below.

- Data collection method
- Types of data to be collected and unit(s) of analysis
- Research protocol
- Justification of data collection protocol
- How data will be generated, gathered, and recorded
- How data will be tracked
- Audit trail
- Pilot study, field test

Remember: Ensure that your writing is cohesive. The ideas should flow logically and with appropriate transitions between sentences.

Self-Check Your Work Against the *Dissertation Handbook*

Data Collection

_____ Describes and justifies the data collection method(s) (e.g., interview, focus group, observation).

- ____ Addresses what types of data will be collected and the unit(s) of analysis.
- ____ Includes detailed protocol(s) in an appendix for data collection (e.g., interview protocol/script, focus group protocol/script, etc.).
- ____ Justifies contents of data collection protocols by connection to the research questions posed in relation to the qualitative paradigm chosen.

_____ Clearly describes the process by which the data were generated, gathered, and recorded.

_____ Clearly describes the systems used for keeping track of data and emerging understandings (research logs, reflective journals, and cataloging systems).

TIPS from the Research Review Board

- Clearly describe all instrumentation.
- Propose a pilot test for any instrumentation lacking prior validation.
- Your interview or observation protocols will have face validity.

Procedures Followed

(This is the main heading for this section)

Background Reading for This Section

Section 12.6 in the *Field Guide*

In this section, describe and justify your data collection method. In case study research, it is necessary to triangulate your data. One way to triangulate data is to use different data collection methods. Creswell (2013) suggested that there are several methods for data collection in qualitative research. Qualitative researchers can use various documents, interviews, artifacts, and observations for case studies. Interviews can be semi-structured, structured, or unstructured.

In semi-structured interviews, the researcher has a set of questions but can deviate from the questions by asking additional questions to get clarification for any answers. Unstructured interviews are more like a conversation. The researcher might start the interview by saying, "Tell me about. . . ." Additional questions flow from responses to the previous questions. When conducting a structured interview, the researcher does not deviate from the interview script.

You can conduct interviews in several different ways. You can conduct semi-structured interviews with an individual or a focus group. Interviews can be conducted in person, via telephone, via online sites such as SurveyMonkey, by using Skype, or through email. In-person interviews are preferred because they give you the opportunity to observe each participant and to make notes regarding body language or how the person reacts to questions. But sometimes in-person interviews are not possible because of constraints caused by distance and cost. The telephone interview does not give you the opportunity to observe the participants, but you can be aware of changes in voice and make note of this. Using email or online sites can be convenient, but they do not allow you to see or hear the participants. In addition, when you use email or SurveyMonkey you run the risk of someone other than the intended participant answering your questions.

Gathering documents and artifacts relevant to the phenomenon being studied will provide additional information that you can use to supplement the data gathered from interviews. Data such as newspaper accounts, pictures, audio tapes, or video tapes can provide good sources of information regarding the phenomenon. Archival data can also provide valuable information. If you use archival data, remember that you probably must get permission to access it unless it is in the public domain.

Critical Points to Address for This Section

In this section clearly describe exactly how you will collect data and what will be collected. Provide a step-by-step account of the data collection process so that anyone could replicate your study. Explain what data will be collected and why it is being collected, and then explain how you will collect it.

Explain where the interviews will be held, and discuss issues of confidentiality that might be impacted by the setting. The research setting should be a place that provides a quiet confidential place to conduct the interviews. For example, libraries often have conference rooms that can be used at no cost, whereas it is not a good idea to hold an interview at Starbucks. If you are conducting your research within your participants' work setting, you will need to consider how you will protect the anonymity of your participants.

Also, if relevant, discuss when the interviews will be held. Generally, make certain that the interviews are held at a convenient time for your participants.

If you are videotaping or audiotaping your interviews, you must discuss this. In addition, this must be noted in the informed consent form.

If you will be using incentives to solicit participants, discuss this and explain what the incentive is and justify why you are using it. It is usually not a good idea to offer a cash reward for participation. If you offer too little, the incentive might not be effective. If you

(Cont.)

Critical Points to Address for This Section (cont.)

offer too much, data collection might be influenced because people may agree to participate because of the reward rather than because they are interested in helping you gather data. Some researchers offer other types of incentives, such as holding a drawing and giving the lucky winner a gift card of some sort.

Other issues to consider include how you will make participants comfortable during the interview, what the seating arrangement will be, whether you will provide food or something to drink, such as coffee or water. This information does not have to be provided in this section, but it should be included in your research protocol.

If you are conducting interviews, you must transcribe your recordings of them verbatim into written form. You can do this by listening carefully to each section and then typing it verbatim. This method can take a long time, especially if you are not a fast typist. Faster, automated ways include the following:

- You can buy transcription programs that that will transcribe the interviews from an audio or visual tape into written form.
- There are also apps available for your cell phone that allow you to transcribe taped interviews into your computer.
- You can also hire a transcriptionist to transcribe the data. If using a transcriptionist, you must have him or her sign a confidentiality agreement.

There should be no names identified on your recording or on the transcript. Instead, identify participants by using the personal identifier you have assigned to each person.

After the interview has been transcribed, return the interview to the participant for member checking. Researchers use member checking to ensure the accuracy and validity of their results. Ask participants to review the transcript of their interview for accuracy and to make any necessary additions, corrections, or deletions. The member-checked version of the transcript is the one you will use for data analysis.

If you are collecting written material, pictures, audio or visual tapes, or artifacts, explain where you will access this information. Sometimes consent is needed to use these resources. If that is the case, explain it in this section and provide a copy of the consent form in an appendix.

Create a research protocol that will include a detailed step-by-step account of exactly how your data will be collected. Provide the protocol in your appendix. In addition, maintain an audit trail while collecting and analyzing your data.

Considerations for Alignment

- Must align with the research method and design.
- Must align with the research purpose.
- Must align with information provided in Chapter 1.
- Must align with information provided in the data collection methods section.

Suggested Resources for Enrichment

Bloomberg, L. D., & Volpe, M. (2008). *Completing your qualitative dissertation: A roadmap from beginning to end* [Kindle Edition]. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Creswell, J. (2013). *Qualitative inquiry & research design: Choosing among five approaches* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Kitzinger, J. (1994). The methodology of focus groups: The importance of interaction between research participants. *Sociology of Health & Illness, 16*,103–121.

Polkinghorne, D. (2005). Language and meaning: Data collection in qualitative research. *Journal of Counseling Psychology, 52*, 137–145. doi.org/10.1037/0022-0167.52.2.137

Seidman, I. (2013). *Interviewing as qualitative research: A guide for researchers in education.* New York, NY: Teacher's College Press.

Stewart, D., & Shamdasani (2015). *Focus groups: Theory and practice*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Yin, R. (2014). *Case study research: Design and methods* (5th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Write Your Dissertation

In your draft dissertation, write your section on procedures followed, addressing each of the following points:

- Provide the sequence of steps that will be used to collect the data.
- Provide justification for each step of the data collection.
- Address the quality of the research.
- Explain the relationship of the pilot study to the full study.

Remember: Ensure that your writing is cohesive. The ideas should flow logically and with appropriate transitions between sentences.

Self-Check Your Work Against the *Dissertation Handbook*

Procedures Followed

______ States the sequence of steps followed in conducting the research, from deveopment of the research instrument(s) to data analysis.

______ Details all steps in a way that another researcher could follow the steps to reproduce the study.

______ Explains the relation of the pilot study to the full study, if applicable.

TIPS **from the Research Review Board**

- Describe and justify your data collection technique.

Trustworthiness

(This is the main heading for this section)

Background Reading for This Section

Section 12.9 in the *Field Guide*

According to Bloomberg and Volpe (2008), transparency in research procedures is crucial for establishing trustworthiness and credibility. Establishing transparency requires clear documentation of research procedures and developing a study protocol that can be easily followed.

According to Yin (2014), trustworthiness stems from triangulating the data and maintaining a chain of evidence. Yin suggested that having multiple sources of data helps to capture a broader range of perspectives, behaviors, and attitudes.

Research credibility refers to the degree the research accurately presents participants' perceptions, feelings, and actions. Credibility stems from the researcher being aware of any personal biases that might impact the research. It is important to discuss any personal biases and to explain how they may impact the research. It is also important to discuss how these biases will be mitigated.

In qualitative research, confirmability involves reflexivity and the use of an audit trail that links case data to study participant responses (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008). Yin (2014) suggested building a chain of evidence to improve case study reliability. Reliability is also a function of researcher trustworthiness and credibility (Yin, 2010). Journaling is one approach to establishing trustworthiness and credibility, because it allows for introspection regarding the data collected.

Dependability, which is similar to reliability in qualitative research, refers to being able to replicate cases procedurally without attempting to replicate results, according to Yin. So it is important to replicate data collection in exactly the same manner with each participant.

Qualitative research results cannot be transferred or generalized to a different population. However, if the researcher carefully describes the sample and research methods, the reader can decide whether the results are applicable to their own population.

Critical Points to Address for This Section

Credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability are fundamental elements of qualitative research that allow the reader to assess the value of your research. In this section you must discuss procedures you will use to assure the accuracy of your data and how you will lessen the impact of researcher bias and ensure the research is trustworthy. Address all four points—credibility, transferability, dependability, confirmability—explaining what they mean and then discussing how you will assure they are addressed in your research.

Credibility. How will you make your research more credible? How will you mitigate any biases? How will you ensure the accuracy of your data collection and data analysis?

Transferability. Generally results of qualitative research are not transferable or generalizable to another population. However, if you clearly describe your population and sample, the reader will be able to decide whether the results can transfer to another population.

Dependability. How will you make certain that your results are dependable? Yin suggested that dependability increases when you make certain that procedural approaches remain constant throughout the research. How will you do this?

Confirmability. Confirmability requires use of an audit trail and chain of evidence so that the reader can know that the results are valid and that the research was done with rigor and thoughtfulness. How will you increase the confirmability of your research? What chain of evidence will you have?

Considerations for Alignment

- Must align with research method and design.
- Must align with procedures followed.

Suggested Resources for Enrichment

Bloomberg, L. D., & Volpe, M. (2008). *Completing your qualitative dissertation: A roadmap from beginning to end* [Kindle Edition]. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Harrison, J., MacGibbon, L., Morton, M. (2001). Regimes of trustworthiness in qualitative research: The rigors of reciprocity. *Qualitative Inquiry, 7*, 323–345.

Morrow, S. (2005). Trustworthiness in qualitative research. *Journal of Counseling Psychology, 52*, 250–260.

Williams E. (2009). Achieving trustworthiness in qualitative research: A pan-paradigmatic perspective. *Psychotherapy Research, 19*(4-5), 576–582. doi:10.1080/10503300802702113

Yin, R. (2014). *Case study research: Design and methods* (5th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Write Your Dissertation

In your draft dissertation, write your section on trustworthiness, addressing each of the following points:

- Credibility
- Transferability
- Dependability
- Confirmability
- What procedures will you follow to ensure accuracy of the data and lessen researcher bias (e.g., trustworthiness, member checks, triangulation)?

Remember: Ensure that your writing is cohesive. The ideas should flow logically and with appropriate transitions between sentences.

Self-Check Your Work Against the *Dissertation Handbook*

Trustworthiness

_____ Addresses credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

_____ Shows evidence of quality by discussing how procedures will be/were followed to ensure the accuracy of the data and lessen the impact of researcher bias (e.g., trustworthiness, member checks, triangulation, etc.).

TIPS from the Research Review Board

- Describe threats to the internal and external validity of your study.
- Address researcher bias.
- Address transferability.

Ethical Concerns

(This is the main heading for this section)

Background Reading for This Section

Chapter 13 in the *Field Guide*

Section 11.6 in the *Field Guide*

Section 12.5 in the *Field Guide*

Ethics have always been an important consideration when doing research and are regulated by law and ethical standards. Creswell (2013) suggested that ethical concerns need to be considered throughout the process of doing research. He suggested that prior to conducting the research, it is important to seek approval from the IRB and to gain permission from an external institution to solicit participants. You must select an institution that has no vested interest in the study's outcome so the researcher is not swayed in a particular direction.

When beginning to conduct the research. disclose the purpose of the study clearly and do not pressure participants to sign the informed consent form. Creswell (2013) also noted that it is important to be aware of cultural norms and the needs of any vulnerable populations that may be part of the research.

During the actual data collection, cause as little disruption as possible. Avoid deception and be aware of the power imbalance that is inherent in the positions of the researcher and the participant, and avoid any exploitation.

In the analysis phase maintain objectivity and present all data, not just what will support your view. Respect the privacy of participants and do not divulge any information that might identify participants.

In the reporting phase do not falsify data, analysis, or conclusions. Falsifying data can lead to very unfortunate consequences for both the researcher and the community. Do not disclose information that could hurt others, and do not plagiarize any part of your research or analysis.

Informed consent. Mandel and Parija (2014) pointed out that informed consent is the bond of trust between the researcher and the participants. It is the single most important aspect of any good research because it assures the participants that their well-being will be protected and that they have self-determination in terms of participating in the research. In obtaining informed consent from participants, there are several things to consider. First, the language of the informed consent must be clear and written in a way that the potential participants can understand. If you are working with someone from a different culture or for whom English is a second language, make certain that the person can understand what the informed consent form says. Likewise, if you are working with someone who may be impaired cognitively, be certain that this person has the capacity to understand and sign the informed consent. Weiss Roberts (2002) suggested that the researcher must consider several factors when seeking informed consent: developmental factors, illness related factors, psychological issues and cultural and religious values, and external pressures.

The informed consent form must include specific items. The Common Rule (1991) regulates informed consent. Subpart A, section 46.116 of Protection of Human Subjects (1974/2009) requires communicating the following general informed consent requirements to study subjects as applicable:

- Potential risks.
- Benefits for study participants.
- A statement of the time frame in which the data will remain confidential.
- Contact information.
- A statement that participation is voluntary.
- A statement that refusal to participate will not result in any penalties or adverse effects.
- A statement that study participants may discontinue participation at any time and how they may discontinue participation.

When writing the informed consent section of Chapter 3, address all the issues listed above. Clearly describe how you will obtain informed consent from your subjects, and obtain consent prior to collecting any data.

In addition, explain how you will protect your subjects from any harm. It is important to carefully consider the potential for any harm resulting from the research. Something that might seem quite innocent could, in fact, cause harm. For example, you might be doing a study on obesity in adolescents. In your study you want to find out what factors might contribute to obesity in that group. Although your questions may seem quite innocuous, they could cause undue stress for an adolescent who has fought to lose weight for several years and has been the object of bullying because of weight issues. Remember, it is the researcher's responsibility to protect the participants, so you must carefully consider any potential harm and how you will mitigate it.

Deception and concealment are generally frowned upon in research. However, sometimes deception is necessary. If deception or concealment are used, the researcher must take time to debrief participants and explain the nature of the deception after the data is collected.

Critical Points to Address for This Section

There are three main parts for the section on informed consent. First explain what is in the informed consent form. Also indicate which appendix the informed consent form is in.

Next explain exactly how you will distribute the informed consent form and secure participant signatures. The signature must be secured prior to data collection.

Finally discuss any issues regarding data collection that might prove harmful to your clients and discuss how you have addressed them in the informed consent form.

Considerations for Alignment

- Must align with research method and design.

Suggested Resources for Enrichment

American Psychological Association. (2010). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (6th ed.). Washington, DC: Author.

Creswell, J. (2013). *Qualitative inquiry & research design: Choosing among five approaches* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Lincoln, Y. S. (2009). Ethical practices in qualitative research. In D. M. Mertens & D. E. Ginsberg (Eds), *The handbook of social research ethics* (pp. 150–169). Los Angeles, CA: Sage.

Mandel, J., & Parija, S. C. (2014). Informed consent in research. *Tropical Parasitology, 4*(2), 78–79.

Miller, T., Birch, M., Mauthner, M., & Jessop, J. (2012). *Ethics in qualitative research.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Weiss Roberts, L., (2002). Informed consent and the capacity for voluntarism. *Psychiatry, 159*, 705–712.

Write Your Dissertation

In your dissertation draft, please write the section on informed consent, addressing each of the following points:

- Explain how you will distribute informed consent forms and secure participant signatures.

(Cont.)

Write Your Dissertation (cont.)

- Make certain that all elements of the informed consent are explained and that a copy of the informed consent form is in an appendix:
  - potential risks;
  - benefits for study participants;
  - a statement of the time frame in which the data will remain confidential;
  - contact information;
  - a statement that participation is voluntary;
  - a statement that refusal to participate will not result in any penalties or adverse effects; and
  - a statement that study participants may discontinue participation at any time and how they may discontinue participation.
- Explain how you will protect your participants from any harm.

Remember: Ensure that your writing is cohesive. The ideas should flow logically and with appropriate transitions between sentences.

Address how you intend to maintain confidentiality.

Background Reading for This Section

Section 12.5 in the *Field Guide*

Chapter 13 in the *Field Guide*

Confidentiality. Confidentiality is another important consideration in qualitative research. Never use the name of an organization as the site for your research unless given written consent to do so. Generally, it is better to simply describe the organization rather than actually naming it. Your participants must also be identified but not by name.

Saunders, Kitzinger, and Kitzinger (2014) pointed out how difficult maintaining anonymity is especially when gathering data in a small setting or with a specific group of people. Many researchers use an alphanumeric coding system that can identify the group to which the person belongs but not the actual person. For example, you may use a code in which the first number depicts the number of the interview, the second letter depicts the group the person belongs to, and the third depicts gender. Thus, if you were interviewing managers and employees at a company, your first interview might be 1MF to denote the first interviewee, who was a manager and female. The next would be 2EM, indicating that the second participant was an employee and male. This code would be used for all data collected and would also be given to the participant. If the participant decides to withdraw from the research, the participant would simply give their alphanumeric code to the researcher, who could then access the data associated with this code. Another approach might be to ask the participant to provide a PIN that they devise and record on the informed consent form. All data collected would be identified only by the PIN provided.

The concept of confidentiality goes beyond protecting the names of the participants. It is also important to consider how you will protect your data, both in its written form and on your computer. All written data must be kept in a locked file cabinet that is only accessible to the researcher. Your computer files should be password protected. Anything stored in a cloud database should be encrypted. Your informed consent, which identifies the names of your participants, must be stored separately from your data.

Research material is generally kept for three years after completion of the dissertation. Following this three-year period, the researcher must destroy the data so that it cannot be copied or used by anyone else. Clearly explain how your data will be destroyed.

Critical Points to Address for This Section

In this section you should discuss how you will maintain anonymity for your participants. Issues such as using a PIN or other ways to identify the data should be discussed. You should clearly explain any type of coding you might be using to identify participants on the research data. In addition, how you will maintain anonymity in the research setting if you are conducting interviews at a place of work needs to be discussed.

In addition, you must discuss how you will keep the data confidential. This includes where you will store your data and how it will be destroyed after the dissertation is completed. Your data should only be accessible to you and should be destroyed three years after the dissertation is completed.

Considerations for Alignment

- Ethical issues should be considered in all aspects of the dissertation.

Suggested Resources for Enrichment

Kaiser, K. (2009). Respecting respondent confidentiality in qualitative research. *Qualitative Health Research, 19*(11), 1632–1641.

Petrova, E., Dewing, J. Camilleri, M. (2014). Confidentiality in participatory research: Challenges from one study. *Nursing Ethics,* 1–13. Retrieved from http://nej.sagepub.com.contentproxy.phoenix.edu/content/early/2014/12/29/0969733014564909.full.pdf+html

Saunders, B., Kitzinger, J., Kitzinger, C. (2014). Anonymising interview data: Challenges and compromise in practice. *Qualitative Research*, 1–17. doi:10.1177/1468794114550439

Write Your Dissertation

In your dissertation draft, write your section on confidentiality, addressing each of the following points:

- Method by which you will maintain anonymity of participants.
- How you will store your data.
- How and when data will be destroyed.

Remember: Ensure that your writing is cohesive. The ideas should flow logically and with appropriate transitions between sentences.

Additional issues to consider. Remember that there is an imbalance of power between the researcher and the participant. The notion that the researcher has power over study participants was made very clear in the famous Milgram experiments. In this study the researchers were able to convince participants to administer shocks, ranging from mild to lethal, in a supposed learning experiment. The participants assumed the researchers knew best and did what they were told rather than doing what they felt comfortable doing.

Because you hold more power, it is your responsibility as the researcher to keep your participants safe. This is especially true when working with a protected class who may not be able to give true informed consent, such as prisoners or children. Also be careful that your questions are worded so that they will not hurt or offend anyone. When dealing with sensitive material, consider how you will deal with your participants if they become uncomfortable as a result of your questions.

Write Your Dissertation

Now write your section on ethical concerns by combining the sections above into one coherent whole.

Ethical Concerns

- Informed consent: Explain how you will distribute an informed consent form and secure participant signatures.
- Make certain that all elements of the informed consent form are explained and that a copy is in an appendix:
    - potential risks;
    - benefits for study participants;
    - a statement of the time frame that the data will remain confidential;
    - contact information;
    - a statement that participation is voluntary;
    - a statement that refusal to participate will not result in any penalties or adverse effects;
    - a statement that study participants may discontinue participation at any time and how they may discontinue participation.

(Cont.)

Write Your Dissertation (cont.)

- Explain how you will protect your participants from harm.
- Confidentiality:
  - method by which you will maintain anonymity of participants;
  - how you will store your data;
  - how and when data will be destroyed.

Remember: Ensure that your writing is cohesive. The ideas should flow logically and with appropriate transitions between sentences.

Self-Check Your Work Against the *Dissertation Field Guide*

Ethical Concerns

______ Provides adequate measures for ethical protection of participants.

______ Includes detailed information about the informed consent process and how informed consent will be obtained.

______ Includes informed consent letter in appendix.

______ Includes detailed information about how confidentiality is addressed.

TIPS from the Research Review Board

- Clearly describe all processes and procedures, keeping ethical concerns in mind.

Data Analysis

(This is a main heading)

Background Reading for This Section

Section 12.8 in the *Field Guide*

Data analysis in qualitative research is difficult—generally there is a lot of data that must be analyzed and different units of analysis. In addition, data analysis is not the same from one qualitative design to the next. Moustakas (1994) outlined the modified Van Kaam for phenomenological studies. Yin (2014)provided information on how to analyze case study data.

Creswell (2013) provided some ideas for the various types of data analysis. Generally qualitative researchers complete the first steps of data analysis as they collect the data rather than waiting until all of it is collected. This makes it easier to analyze the data and also helps them to know when data saturation has occurred.

There are several steps to analyzing case study data. First, organize the data into specific units, words, or sentences. You can use computer programs such as NVivo or Dedoose to organize your data.

In the next phase of analysis, read over the transcripts to get a general idea of the major themes or ideas that emerge. As you read, write notes in the margins so that you can go back to see which themes emerge from your reading.

In the next phase of analysis, coding, aggregate the text or visual data into categories of information. In this phase code the main ideas from the various sources of data and then label those that form the aggregate.

In the next phase review the aggregated codes and look for categories or themes. These themes, according to Creswell (2013), are broad units of information that consist of several codes that form a common idea.

Computer programs such as NVivo and Dedoose—there are several others—can help with analysis. If you plan to use one of these programs, download the program ahead of time and to take the tutorials available for them. Generally, the programs provides a trial period to get proficient with it. With most programs, you can upload your transcript and the program will find the words, sentences and sub-sentences or nodes for you.

Critical Points to Address for This Section

In this section detail exactly how you will analyze your data after it is collected. Discuss the steps you will take to aggregate and code your data and how you will derive themes from the results. If you are using a computer program such as NVivo, it is not enough to say that you will use this program. You must give a detailed description of exactly how you will use the program. If there are discrepant cases, you must explain how you will deal with them. Also address how your analysis will be aligned with the research questions.

Considerations for Alignment

- Analysis of the data must be aligned with the research method and design.
- Must align with research questions so they can be answered.

Suggested Resources for Enrichment

Chanail, R. (2012). Conducting qualitative data analysis: Reading line by line but analyzing by meaningful qualitative units. *The Qualitative Report, 17*(1), 266–269.

Creswell, J. (2013). *Qualitative inquiry & research design: Choosing among five approaches* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Elo, S., Kaariainen, M., Kanste, O., Polkki, T., Utriainen, K., & Kyngas, H. (2014). *Qualitative content analysis: A focus on trustworthiness.* doi:10.1177/2158244014522633.

Miles, M., Huberman, M., & Saldana, J. (2014). *Qualitative data analysis: A methods sourcebook.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Yin, R. (2014). *Case study research: Design and methods* (5th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Write Your Dissertation

In your draft dissertation, write your section on data analysis, addressing each of the following points:

- Articulate clearly how and when your data will be analyzed.
- Align the data analysis plan with your research design to answer the research questions.
- Describe how you will deal with discrepant cases.
- If using a software program, clearly describe how it will be used.
- Provide details about how you will code the data and how you will develop your themes or categories.

Remember: Ensure that your writing is cohesive. The ideas should flow logically and with appropriate transitions between sentences.

Self-Check Your Work Against the *Dissertation Field Guide*

Data Analysis

_____ Articulates how and when the data will be or were analyzed.

_____ Aligns the detailed data analysis plan with the specific research design to geneate answers to the research questions.

(Cont.)

Self-Check Your Work Against the *Dissertation Field Guide (cont.)*

_______ Describes procedures for dealing with discrepant cases.

_______ If a software program was used to aid analysis, clearly describes how it was used.

_______ Gives details about the coding procedure and how themes or categories were developed.

TIPS from the Research Review Board

- Make sure your data analysis plan is clear, appropriate, and aligned with your specific research design, research questions, and hypotheses.

Summary

(This is a main heading)

Background Reading for This Section

The summary provides a short, concise summary of what was included in Chapter 3 and introduces the content of Chapter 4. The summary should not include any new information or quotations.

Critical Points to Address for This Section

In the summary, you summarize what is in Chapter 3. Do not add any new information. Your summary should be short and concise. At the end of the summary, add a paragraph indicating what will be in Chapter 4. Remember, Chapter 4 is your results section, so simply indicate that Chapter 4 will include the results of your research.

Considerations for Alignment

- Your summary should align with all the sections of the chapter.

Write Your Dissertation

In your dissertation draft, write your summary, addressing each of the points listed below.

- Summarize main points of chapter.
- Introduce Chapter 4.

Remember: Ensure that your writing is cohesive. The ideas should flow logically and with appropriate transitions between sentences.

Self-Check Your Work Against the *Dissertation Field Guide*

Summary

______ Summarizes key points in the chapter.

______ Bridges to Chapter 4.

______ Conforms to the recommended length of 10 to 25 pages for Chapter 3.

Chapter 3 should be 10 to 25 pages long. Assemble all sections you wrote for this workbook into one coherent whole.