

Article Reading Two: Interpretive Method Essay

This is an article that would be classified as qualitative research. As many authors have noted, qualitative research often makes use of multiple methods and sometimes does make use of “counting stuff” as part of providing a rich description of the issues being studied. Note how the authors make clear their theoretical position and use it as a sensitizing framework to clarify the tensions in the lives of the participants.

First, skim the entire article to get a bigger picture of what the scholar is trying to communicate. Second, read the article with the questions below in mind. Some of the questions focus on your ability to comprehend the article. Other questions address your understanding the methodological choices the author made.

Article Comprehension

1. Historically college has been understood as
 - a. a time of self-indulgence and delay of adulthood.
 - b. a time of separation and independence from old communities.
 - c. a time to find creative ways to maintain connections with “home.”
 - d. all of the above

2. What field do the authors draw from in addition to communication studies when defining identity?
 - a. psychology
 - b. philosophy
 - c. sociology
 - d. education

3. What is the primary approach to making sense of the data that the authors use
 - a. metaphoric
 - b. dramatistic
 - c. theoretical
 - d. none of the above

Method

4. What type of interview structure do the authors claim to use? What is their justification for it?

5. What steps did the authors take to verify their results? How could you do smaller versions of these efforts for RP 1?

6. The authors briefly list three criteria for the data to be included in the analysis: recurrence, repetition, and forcefulness. As you read how they USE the quotations they chose to include which of the criterion above do they seem to most help the reader see?

- a. recurrence across participants
- b. repetition by individual participants
- c. forcefulness of the item being shared
- d. none of the above

7. Our text offers some basic obligations for doing qualitative research. Rate how well you think the author did by circling the number that best reflects you perceptions.

a. Explain when the fieldwork was conducted:

Not well 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very Well

b. Describe the extent and length of his or her involvement in the interaction environment:

Not well 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very Well

c. Provide information about the participants and the communication context and scene:

Not well 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very Well

d. Describe the steps and methods for analyzing the data:

Not well 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very Well

e. Provide evidence that the data were triangulated:

Not well 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very Well

Reflections and Connections

8. The authors raise the question of “whether the negotiation we examined might be unique to college students” (p. 190). What do you think?

9. What follow up study would you want to do based on this study? What is your research question (see top of page 179 for example) and your sample?

10. What question would you ask the authors of this study to help you understand research or probe one better?