

The Essential Big Picture of Interpretive Research

The Four Ps

1. **Paradigm:** what are its basic assumptions?
 - a. Epistemology
 - b. Ontology
 - c. Axiology
 - d. Cosmology
2. **Purpose:** what is it good for? (appropriateness)
3. **Process:** how do you do it?
4. **Products:** what types of findings and reports does it help produce?

Process

- ▶ Each method has a basic process that can be understood in four stages
 1. Preparation
 2. Engagement
 3. Reflection and analysis
 4. Expression

Preparation

1. Topic is refined into basic question
2. Question is refined to identify key issues (variables)
3. Secondary research is done to further understand and refine key question and key variables
4. This research may cycle us back through earlier steps
This research also helps us form specific interview questions: it “sensitizes” us
5. We emerge with an interview guide
6. We also do careful thinking about our sample and how we will contact them

Engagement

1. Earn trust of participant
2. Observe, listen and learn
3. Record our experience and insights in the form of field notes
 - Vocabulary, stories, short quotes, etc.
4. We do our best to confirm our understand with the participant
 - “Do I hear you saying that”

Reflection

1. Refine field notes into complete thoughts
2. Note immediate connections with theory, key variables, and literature
3. Note patterns, themes, insights from data collected
4. Attempt to “essentialize” the encounter—what did we find out that is worth sharing?

Expression

1. Formal distillation and expression of key insights to a reader or other audience
2. Follow constraints of context (class, discipline, company culture, etc.)
3. Make sure it is error free in both form and substance

Use this to guide your group through Probe One!