

Rigorous Missiological Research: Using Qualitative Inquiry

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Broad “streams” of missiological research

- ✦ Humanities Research
 - ✦ Theological Research
 - ✦ Historical Research
- ✦ Social Science Research
 - ✦ Anthropology
 - ✦ Education
 - ✦ Sociology

Three Main Paradigms for People Research




- ✦ Quantitative People Research: findings = numbers
- ✦ Qualitative People Research: findings = words
- ✦ Mixed-methods People Research: findings = words + numbers

Defining Qualitative Inquiry: A subset of “people research”



Seven Elements of Rigor in Qualitative Inquiry

- ✦ A way of seeing: Constructing meaning
- ✦ A way of framing: Utilizing literature “qualitatively”
- ✦ A way of learning: Gathering data personally
- ✦ A way of understanding: Analyzing data inductively
- ✦ A way of persuading: Crafting trustworthy findings
- ✦ A way of presenting: Writing rich & thick descriptions
- ✦ A way of interacting: Re-engaging literature dialogically




Rigorous Qualitative Inquiry: A Way of Seeing

A Way of Seeing: Constructing Meaning

- ✦ As a qualitative researcher, you never set out to prove something. Yours is a journey of constructing meaning with people who share their stories with you.
- ✦ People are messy; their contexts are complicated. Qualitative inquiry allows you explore their messiness with them in their complicated context.
- ✦ When studying people, you need to understand and accept that their perception *is* their reality, and it's *their* reality you want to capture.

A Way of Seeing: Bracketing Bias

- ✦ Qualitative researchers don't pretend to be "objective." They're aware that unbiased research is illusory.
- ✦ Qualitative researchers reveal their bias in a transparent effort to "bracket" that bias, allowing their readers to "keep them honest."



Rigorous Qualitative Inquiry: A Way of Framing

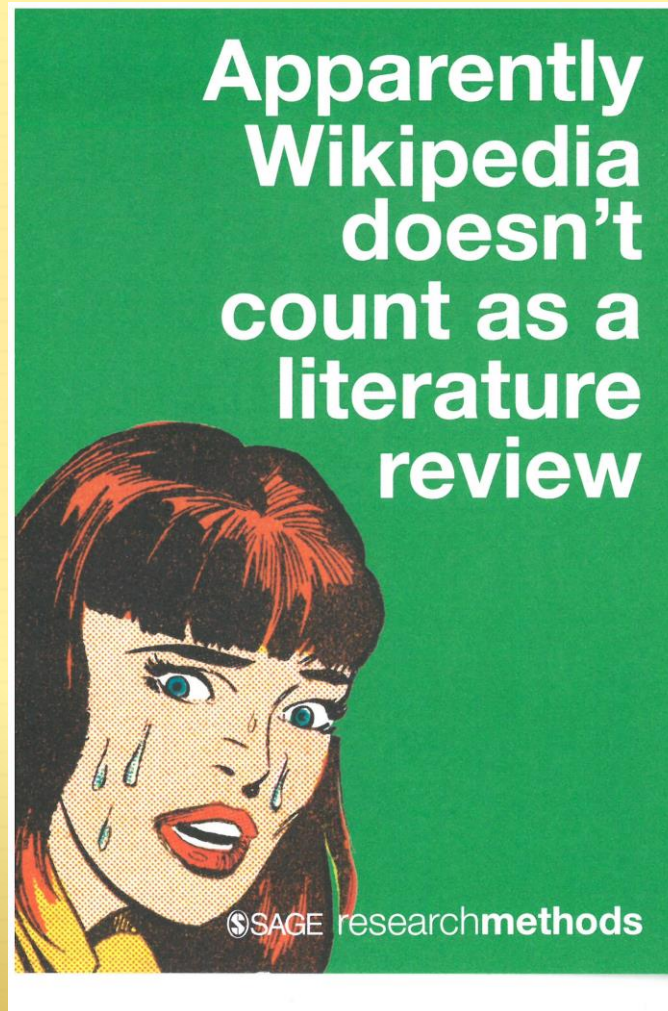
A Way of Framing: Using Literature “Qualitatively”

- ❖ In humanities research, scholarly literature is a primary data source.
- ❖ In quantitative “people research,” scholarly literature identifies variables to be tested.
- ❖ In qualitative “people research,” scholarly literature functions like a picture frame for a portrait; it positions your study within the parameters of a discipline or sub-discipline.

A Way of Framing: Other Functions of Lit in QR

- ✦ Identifying research that supports the need for a particular study
- ✦ Establishing a theoretical framework for your study (not a theory to be tested)
- ✦ Defining key terms
- ✦ Demonstrating expertise on the literature surrounding your study

What counts as scholarly literature?





A Way of Learning: Qualitative Data Sourcing

Three Principal Data Sources in Qualitative Inquiry

- ✦ Observation
- ✦ Interviews
- ✦ Archival documents

Where do researchers go to observe ?



- ❖ Go where the participants are
 - ❖ A city, church, school, club, etc.
- ❖ Closed places: Permission to enter
- ❖ Online Observations
 - ❖ Online communities are often comprised of subcultures of people with similar interests

**NOT SURE IF HE IS CONDUCTING PARTICIPANT
OBSERVATION**



OR JUST STALKING ME

Types of Observations



- ✦ Observer: Little to no interaction
- ✦ Observer as participant: Some interaction
- ✦ Participant as observer: More participation than observation
- ✦ Full participant: Member of the community and the researcher

What are interviews?



“An interview is a process in which a researcher and a participant engage in a conversation focused on questions related to a research study” (p. 54).

- ✦ A guided conversation
- ✦ That mostly stays on topic
- ✦ To construct data for a study

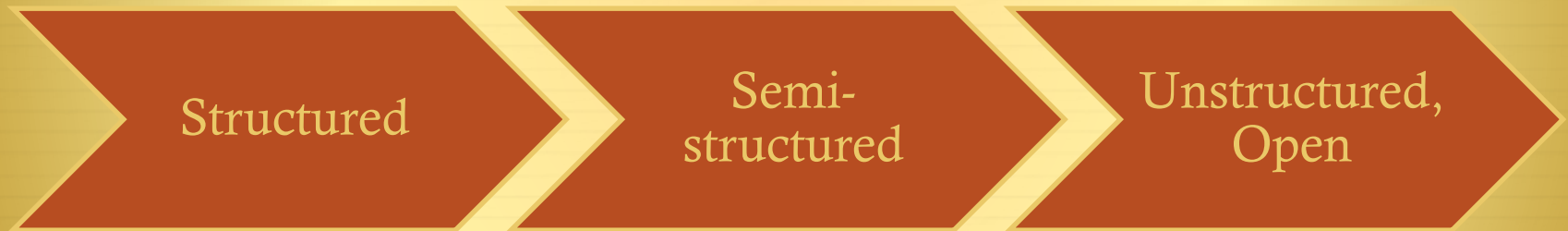
deMarras, K. (2004). Qualitative interview studies: Learning through experience. In K. deMarras & S. Lapan, Eds., *Foundations for research: Methods of inquiry in education and the social sciences*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers.

Why interviews?



- ✦ An in-depth understanding of a phenomenon, of an experience, or of a set of experiences.
- ✦ Multiple participants help construct our understanding of the thing we are researching

What types of interviews?



Selecting Participants



Who do I want to interview?

- ✦ Related to the study purpose
- ✦ Criterion-based selection
 - ✦ Comprehensive—all those who qualify
 - ✦ Typical case—representative of the group
 - ✦ Unique case—exceptional
 - ✦ Network/snowball—by referral
 - ✦ Convenience—who I know that qualifies

“Archival” Documents


- ✦ An archival document is not normally a scholarly source (i.e., a journal article or book). That’s literature!
- ✦ It can be almost anything else that provides useful empirical data:
 - ✦ Church Constitution
 - ✦ Phone directory
 - ✦ Marriage registry
 - ✦ Voter registry
 - ✦ Student Handbook
 - ✦ Online documents (blogs)



Documents are not Neutral



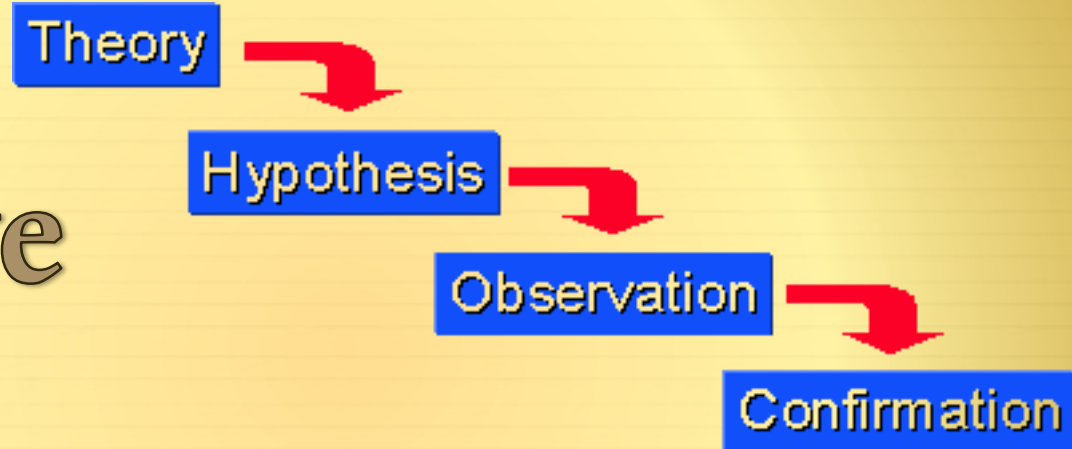
- ✦ Written by someone
- ✦ For a specific audience or readers
- ✦ For a specific purpose
- ✦ Have meaning in a specific context
- ✦ Hence, they shed light on people, contexts, and cultures (the “stuff” of qualitative inquiry).



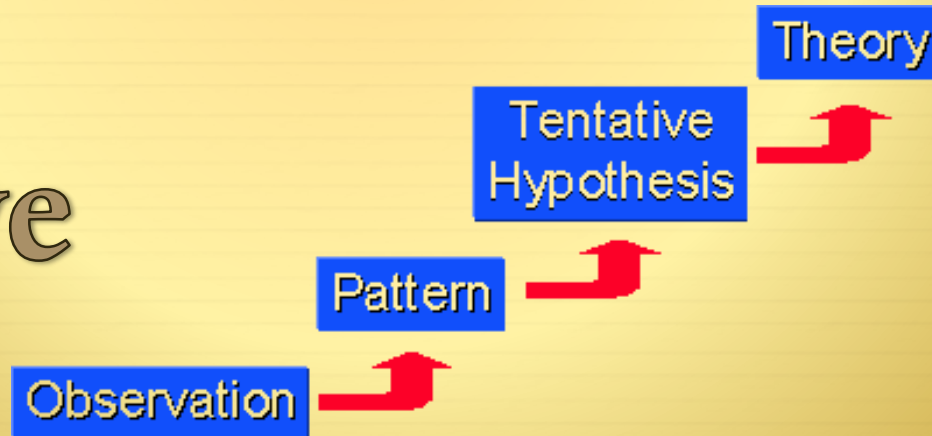
Rigorous Qualitative Inquiry:
A Way of Understanding

A Way of Understanding: Analyzing Data Inductively

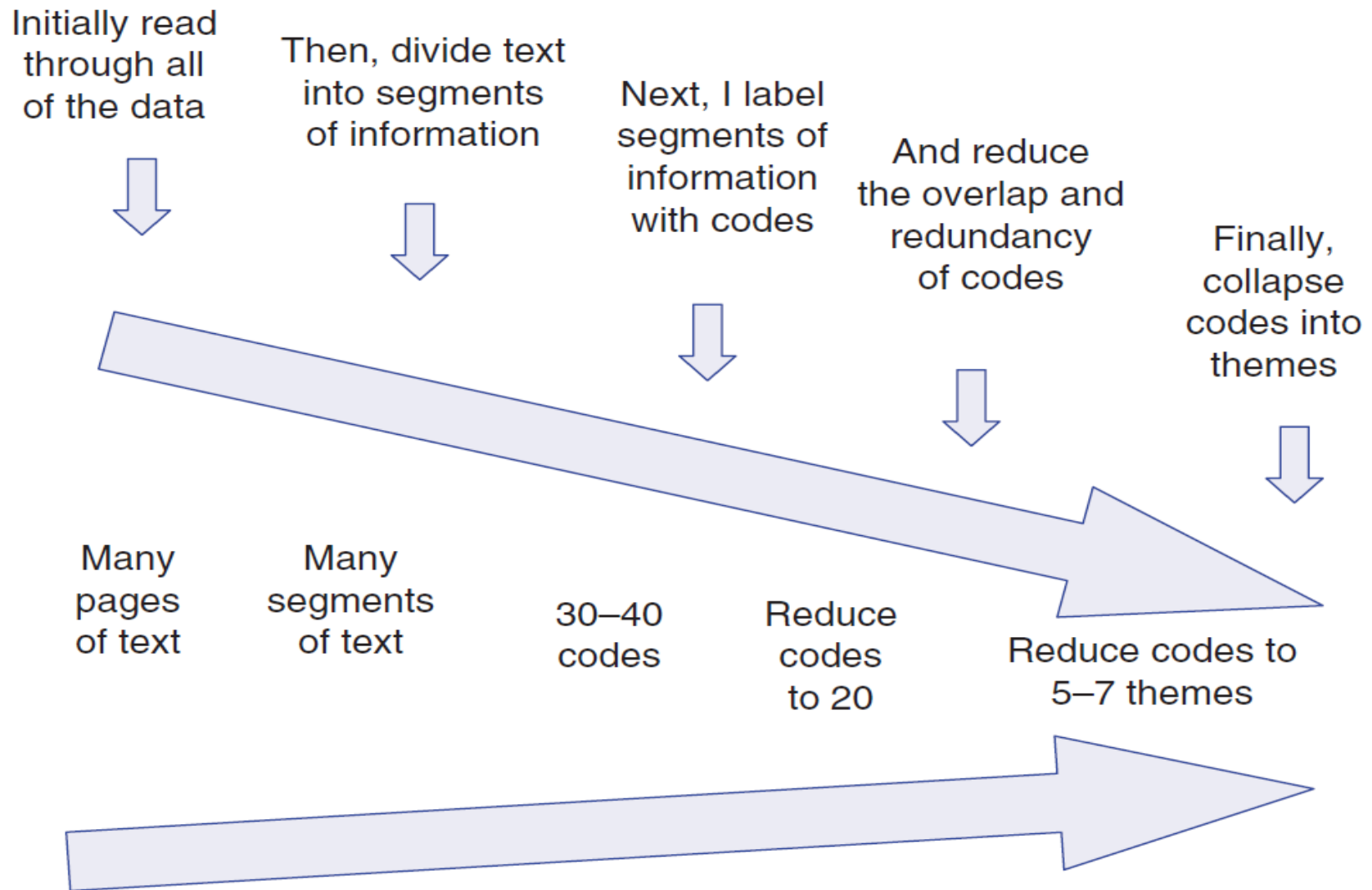
Deductive



Inductive




Analyzing Data Inductively: From Many Pages of Text to Themes



Analyzing Data Inductively: Tips for Rigorous Analysis



- ✦ Transform data into words
 - ✦ Transcribe interviews verbatim
 - ✦ Write and type up field notes (observations)
 - ✦ Scan and code on archival documents (as possible)
- ✦ Code *everything* that's interesting
- ✦ Build themes carefully (abductive reasoning)
- ✦ Compare constantly (the process is not linear)
- ✦ Use qualitative data analysis software (if possible) especially for larger projects



Rigorous Qualitative Inquiry: A Way of Persuading

TRUMP

"Trust Me. That's All You Need to Know."

A Way of Persuading Terminology



✦ Validity Reliability

(Creswell, 2014)

✦ Trustworthiness

(Marshall & Rossman, 2006)


✦ Relevance Confirmability

(Freeman, deMarrais, Preissle, Roulston,, & St. Pierre., 2007)

And many more terms!

A Way of Persuading

Hallmarks



- ✦ In order to know if a study is trustworthy, first we have to know the canons or standards or criteria of good research.
- ✦ Next we decide which of these will become the “hallmarks” of trustworthiness for the current study.
- ✦ The choice depends on the researcher, the topic, and the relationship between them.

A Way of Persuading Strategies


- ✦ Triangulation (multiple methods, data sources, investigators)
- ✦ Member checks
- ✦ Time in the field
- ✦ Discrepant data
- ✦ Researcher reflexivity
- ✦ Peer review
- ✦ Audit trail
- ✦ Thick description



A Way of Persuading

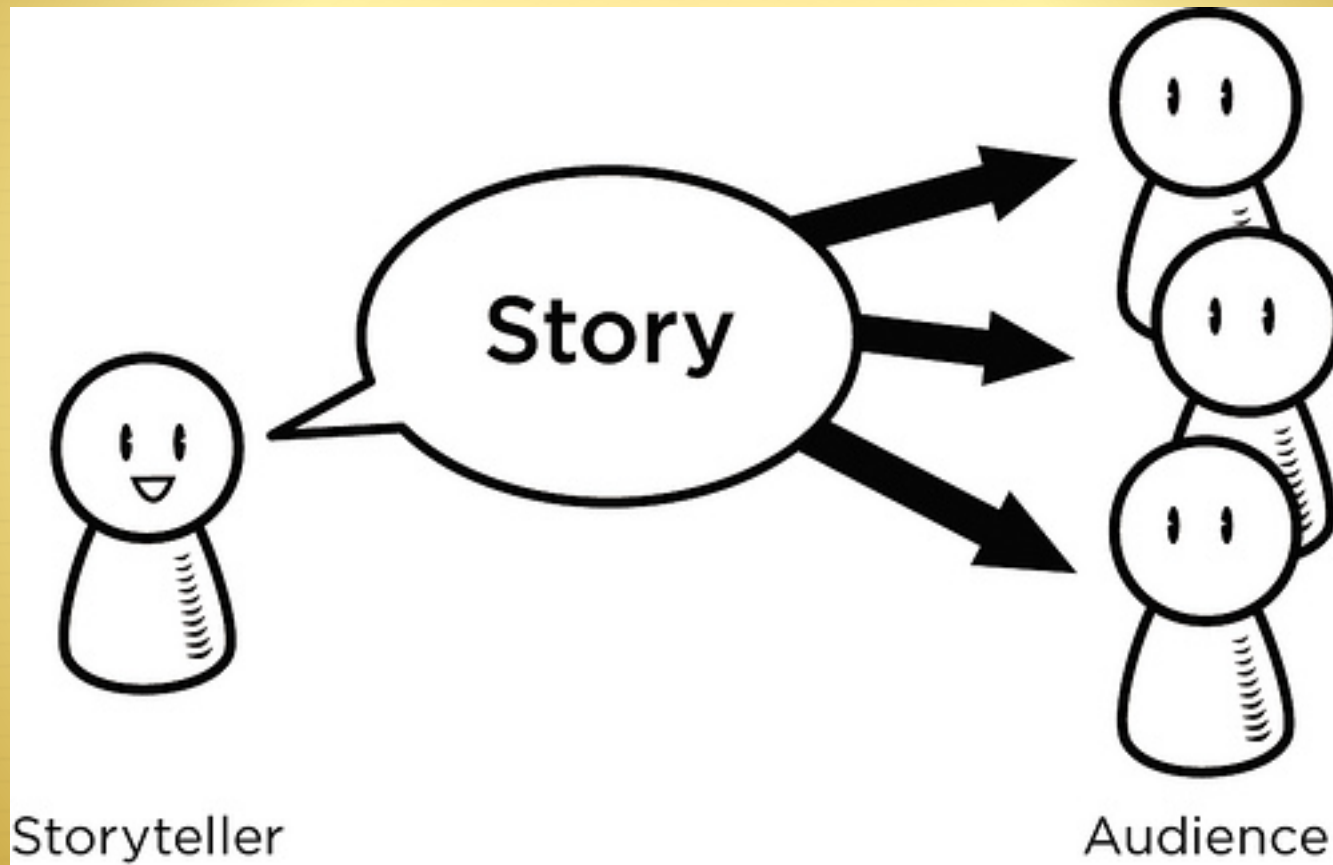
Table 4. *Strategies for achieving trustworthiness*

STRATEGY	Truthfulness	Resonance	Handling Bias
Audit Trail	X		X
Direct Commentary	X	X	
Thick Description	X	X	
Discrepant Data	X	X	X
Member Checks	X	X	X
Subjectivity Statement	X		X
Peer Debriefing	X		X



Rigorous Qualitative Inquiry:
A Way of Presenting

A Way of Presenting Audiences

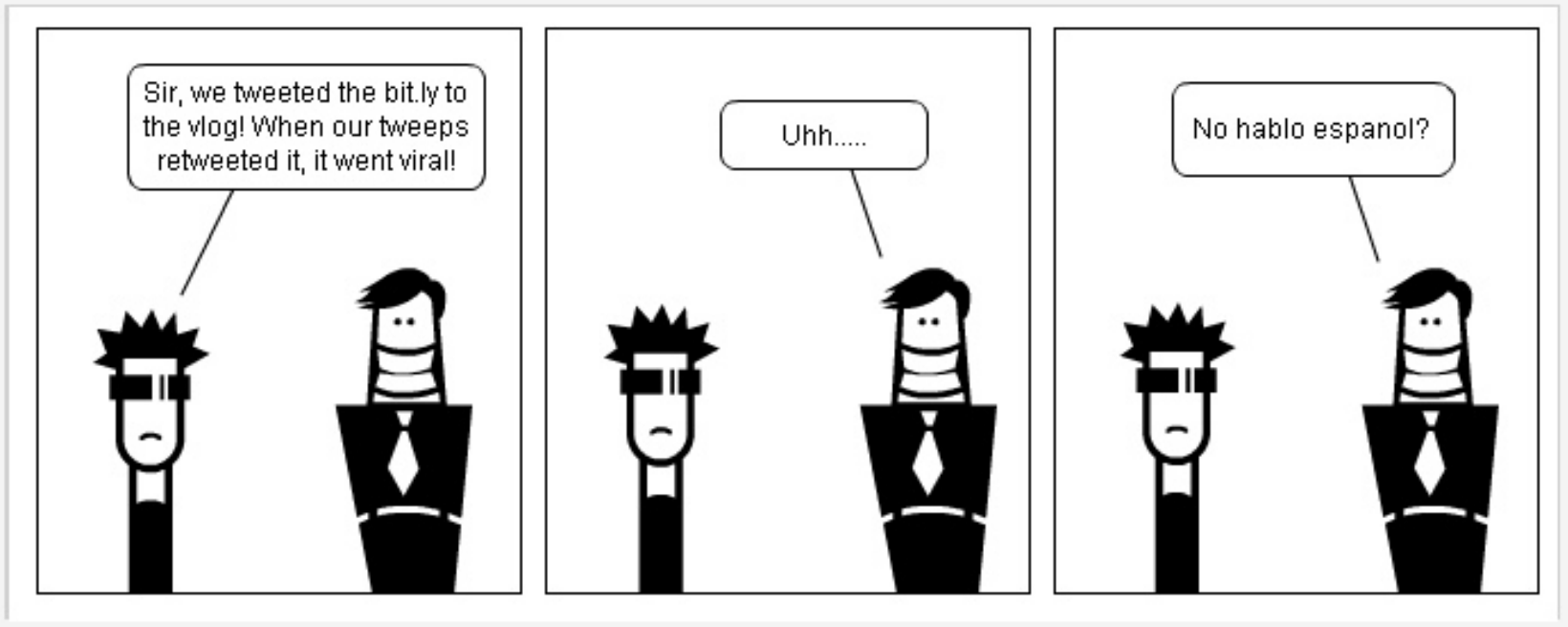


A Way of Presenting Encoding

The Language Of Social Media

seanricholson

View more social media cartoons at
www.socmedsean.com



A Way of Presenting

Show, Don't Tell



A Way of Presenting Thick Description



Postscript


A note on ethics



Key areas of risk

- ✦ Collection of data
- ✦ Researcher relationship to participants
- ✦ Dissemination of findings

Institutional Permissions



Rigorous Qualitative Inquiry:
A Way of Integrating

A Way of Integrating: Re-engaging the Literature

- ✦ As mentioned earlier, the scholarly theoretical literature does not predetermine what you explore empirically (i.e., determine variables to be tested). It “frames.”
- ✦ So, once you’ve presented your findings, you need to compare and contrast *your* findings with those of other scholars doing research on your topic.

Source



Presentation based on:

- ✦ Starcher, R. L., Dzubinski, L. M., & Sanchez, J. (2018). Rigorous missiological research using qualitative inquiry. *Missiology: An International Review*, 46(1), 50-66.
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