

Introduction to Fieldwork and Qualitative Research Methods

What is fieldwork?

Fieldwork is a research method that involves observing and collecting data in a natural setting, like a park or a market, at a university or simply interviewing participants in their office!

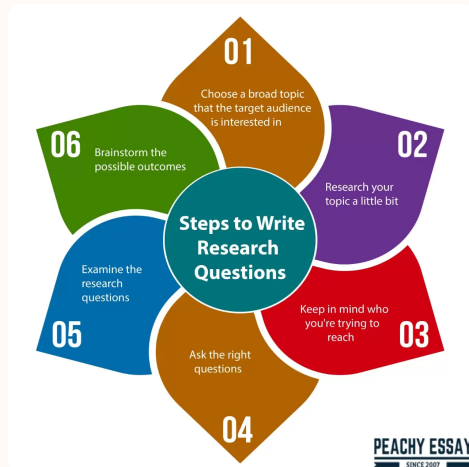
What are qualitative research methods?

Qualitative research methods are those that seek to understand how people perceive the world around them, including their beliefs, values, and experiences.

Why use fieldwork and qualitative methods?

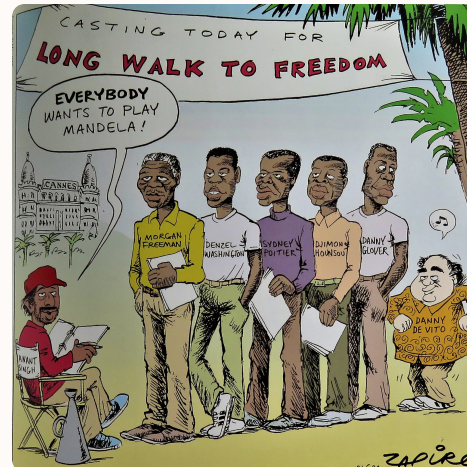
Fieldwork and qualitative methods can provide rich and detailed information that cannot be obtained through other research methods.

Defining Research Questions and Determining Your Sample Population



Research questions

Developing clear research questions is essential for a successful fieldwork study.



Sample population

Choosing the right sample population is important to get accurate and relevant data.

Qualitative Methods

Qualitative methods are used to “understand” more deeply, reach a ‘THICK’ description. Typically result do not seek to generalize widely.

Some of the most frequently used types of qualitative methods in applied linguistics research are:

- Interviews/focus groups
- text or discourse analysis
- (think-aloud) protocol analysis
- observational work, field notes
- Diary entries
- Supporting documents
- Images, videos, etc.



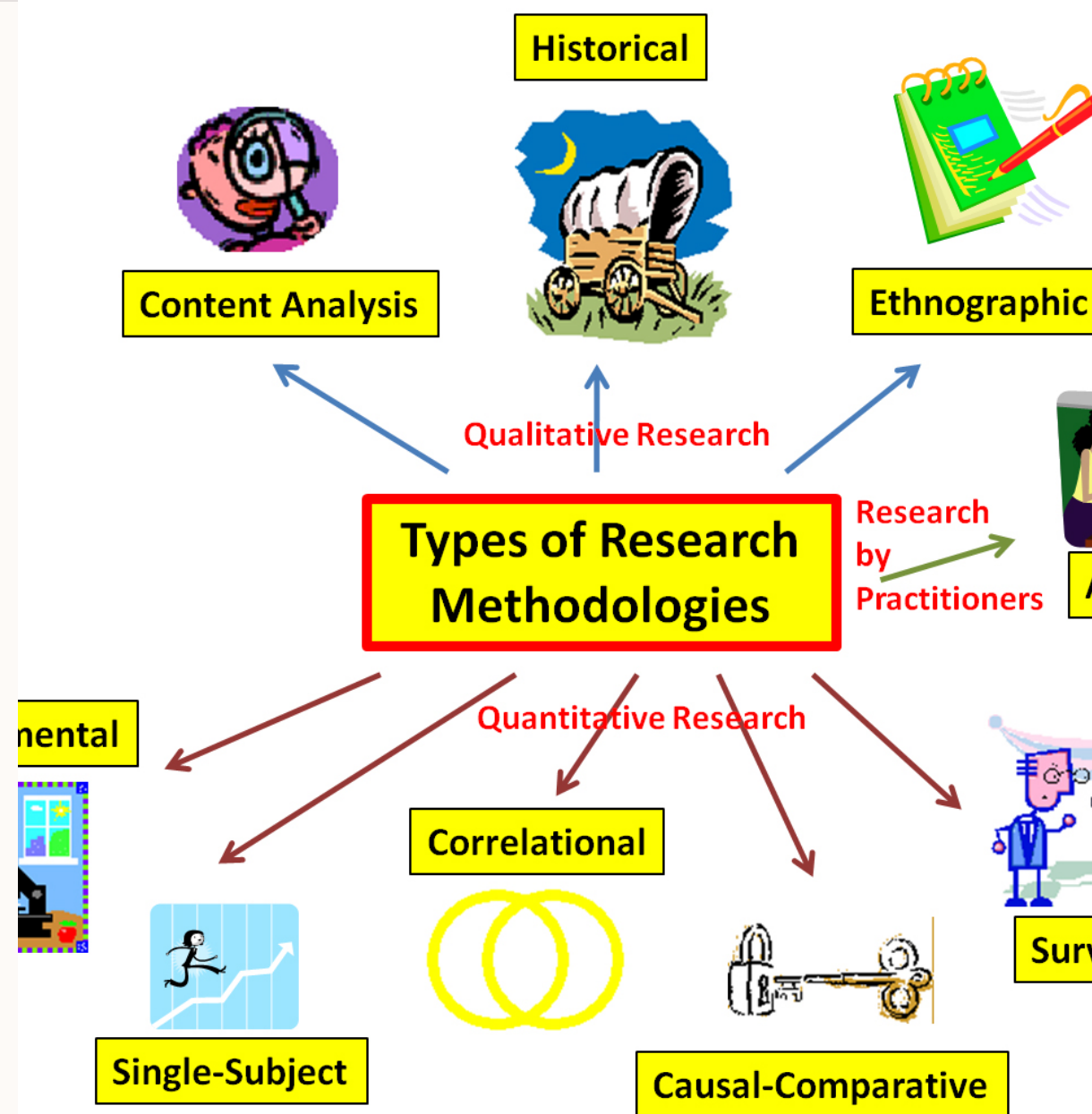
Research methods

Consider using a combination of research methods, such as interviews and focus groups.

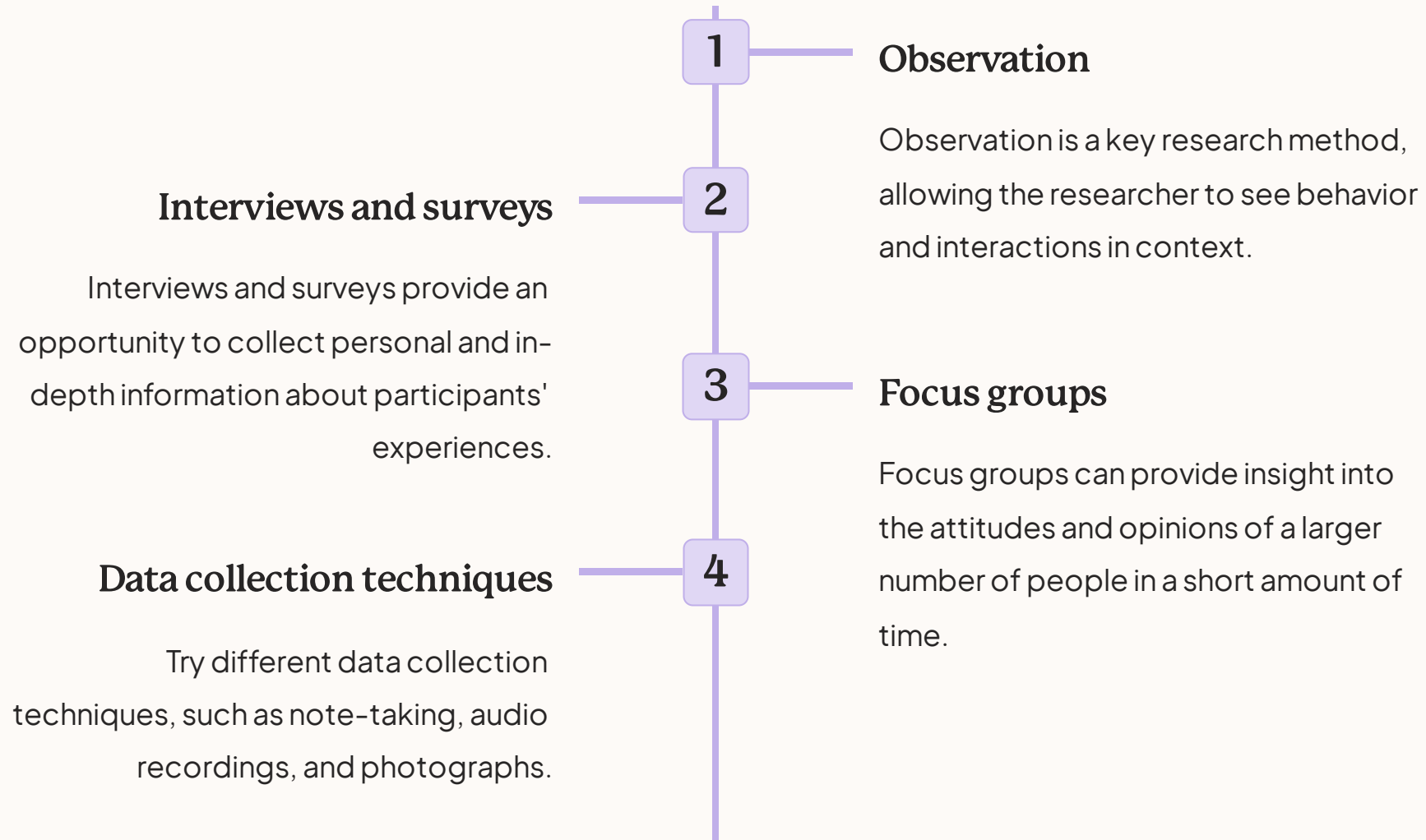
Research Methodologies: Understanding the Difference Between Methods and Methodology

While research methods refer to the specific techniques used to gather data, research methodology refers to the overall approach and framework used to design and conduct a study. Understanding the difference between these two concepts is crucial to building a strong research project.

Types of Research Methodologies



Choosing Your Research Methods



Collecting Data Through Observation, Interviews, and Other Techniques

Observation

Observe participants in their natural setting without interfering with their behavior or interactions.

Interviews

Conduct interviews with participants to get in depth information about their experiences and perspectives.

Other techniques

Try other techniques such as surveys, focus groups, and field notes to gather different types of information.

Analyzing and Interpreting Your Findings

WHAT IS DATA CODING?

"A systematic way in which to condense extensive data sets into smaller analyzable units through the creation of categories and concepts derived from the data."¹

"The process by which verbal data are converted into variables and categories of variables using numbers, so that the data can be entered into computers for analysis."²

Lockyer, Sharon. "Coding Qualitative Data." In The Sage Encyclopedia of Social Science Research Methods, Edited by Michael S. Lewis-Beck, Alan Bryman, and Timothy Futting Liao, v. 1, 137-138. Thousand Oaks, Calif: Sage, 2004.

Bourque, Linda B. "Coding." In The Sage Encyclopedia of Social Science Research Methods, Edited by Michael S. Lewis-Beck, Alan Bryman, and Timothy Futting Liao, v. 1, 132-136. Thousand Oaks, Calif: Sage, 2004.

Data analysis

Data analysis techniques include coding, categorizing, and summarizing your data.



Data interpretation

Data interpretation involves examining your findings in light of your research questions and drawing meaningful conclusions.



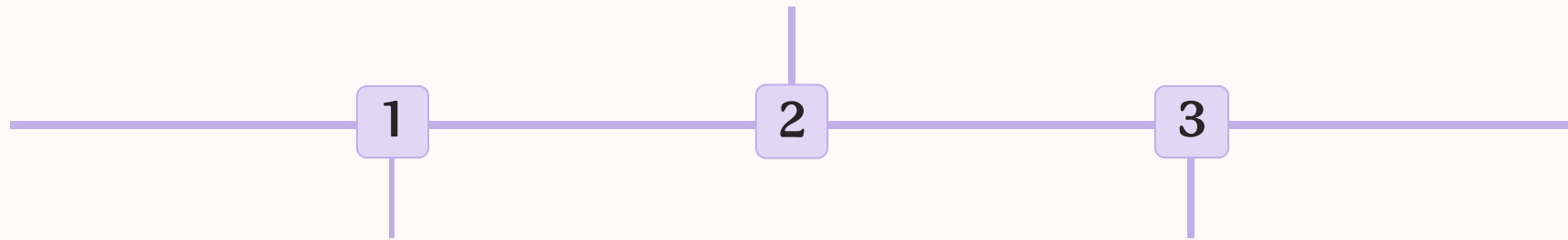
Reporting your results

Report your results through a summary of your findings, including key insights and conclusions.

Reporting Your Results and Conclusions

Findings

Present your findings and results, including tables, charts or other visual aids.



Overview

Introduce your research and provide a brief overview of the methods and findings.

Conclusions

Summarize your key insights and conclusions, and discuss their implications.

Ethical Considerations in Fieldwork Research

Informed consent

Obtain informed consent from participants and make sure they are fully aware of what their participation in the study will entail.

Privacy

Respect the privacy of participants and ensure their personal information is kept confidential.

Integrity

Ensure your research is conducted with integrity and honesty, and that your findings are represented accurately.