

University of Wales Trinity Saint David & Hong Kong Management Association

Day Three

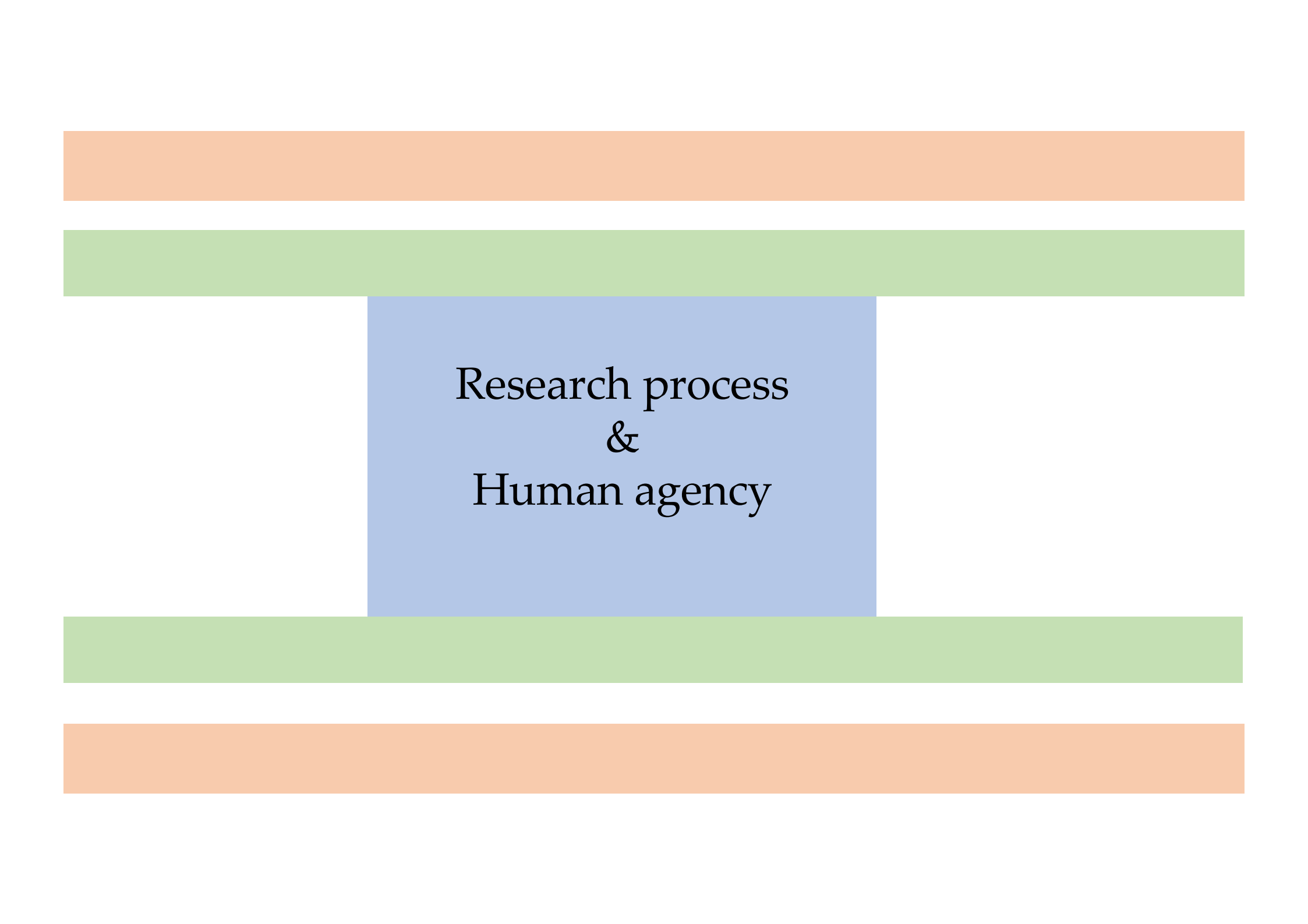
# Qualitative Research Methods

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Qualitative Research  
Processes and  
Human Agency

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Research process  
&  
Human agency



What are  
the characteristics of a  
good qualitative  
researcher?

## Research process and human agency

- Human activities of the researcher (we design a questionnaire or an experiment)
- Human activities of the researched (resist, divert, aim to please, answer back, second guess)
- Social context of research

## Research process and human agency

- Setting research agendas
- Researcher interpretation
- Access to settings or subjects
- Emotions
- Informed Consent
- 'Respondents'
- How social differences ('race', gender and disability) are conceptualised?

- How social differences ('race', gender and disability) affect interaction
- Use of research
- Acceptability of styles of research
- Writing research
- Reading research
- What counts as 'facts'?

## Research process and human agency: Examples

- James Cherry and UCLA vaccines (Dyson, 1995)
- HEA (1994), CHD and British Asians
- DHSS and domestic violence (Hanmer and Leonard, 1984)
- MRC and ESRC refused funding because 'social support in pregnancy' was neither medical nor social (Oakley, 1992)

Task: Watch TED video & Answer a question

*The power of vulnerability by Brené Brown*

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iCvmsMzIF7o&ab\\_channel=TED](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iCvmsMzIF7o&ab_channel=TED)

What do you notice about this kind  
of research?



Reflexive  
Research writing

# Reflexivity

[non-reflexive writers are ]

disembodied omniscient  
narrators, claiming universal  
and atemporal general  
knowledge

Richardson & St. Pierre, 2005, p. 961

[reflexive writers are ]

ethically and politically self-  
aware, make themselves part of  
their own inquiry

Ronald Pelias, 2011, p. 662

\*as cited in Creswell & Poth, 2018

## Task: Brainstorm in small groups

- What do we mean by reflexivity?
- Why is reflexivity important?
- How do we achieve it?
- How are reflexivity and ethics related in research?

# Examples

- Things we “take for granted” need to be challenged and made explicit
- Regularly/ evolving
- Change through time
- Reflect on method
- Is there consent from participants?
- Contradictions between interview and behaviour; also between interview and general talk
- Reliability of the research
- Confidentiality and trust
- Anonymity
- Security of data
- Reporting illegal/ abusive behaviour

# Reflexive questions for research writing

Should I write about what people say or recognize that sometimes they cannot remember or choose not to remember?

How far should I go in theorizing the words of participants?

What are my political reflexivities that need to come into my report?

To what extent has my analysis (and writing) offered an alternative to common sense or the dominant discourse?

Have I considered how my words could be used for progressive, conservative, and repressive social policies?

Have I backed into the passive voice and decoupled my responsibility from my interpretation?

Has my writing connected the voices and stories of individuals back to the set of historic, structural, and economic relations in which they are situated?

# Reflexivity

1. Write reflexive comments as the study progresses (observations, hunches etc.)

2. Use memo function of qualitative research software

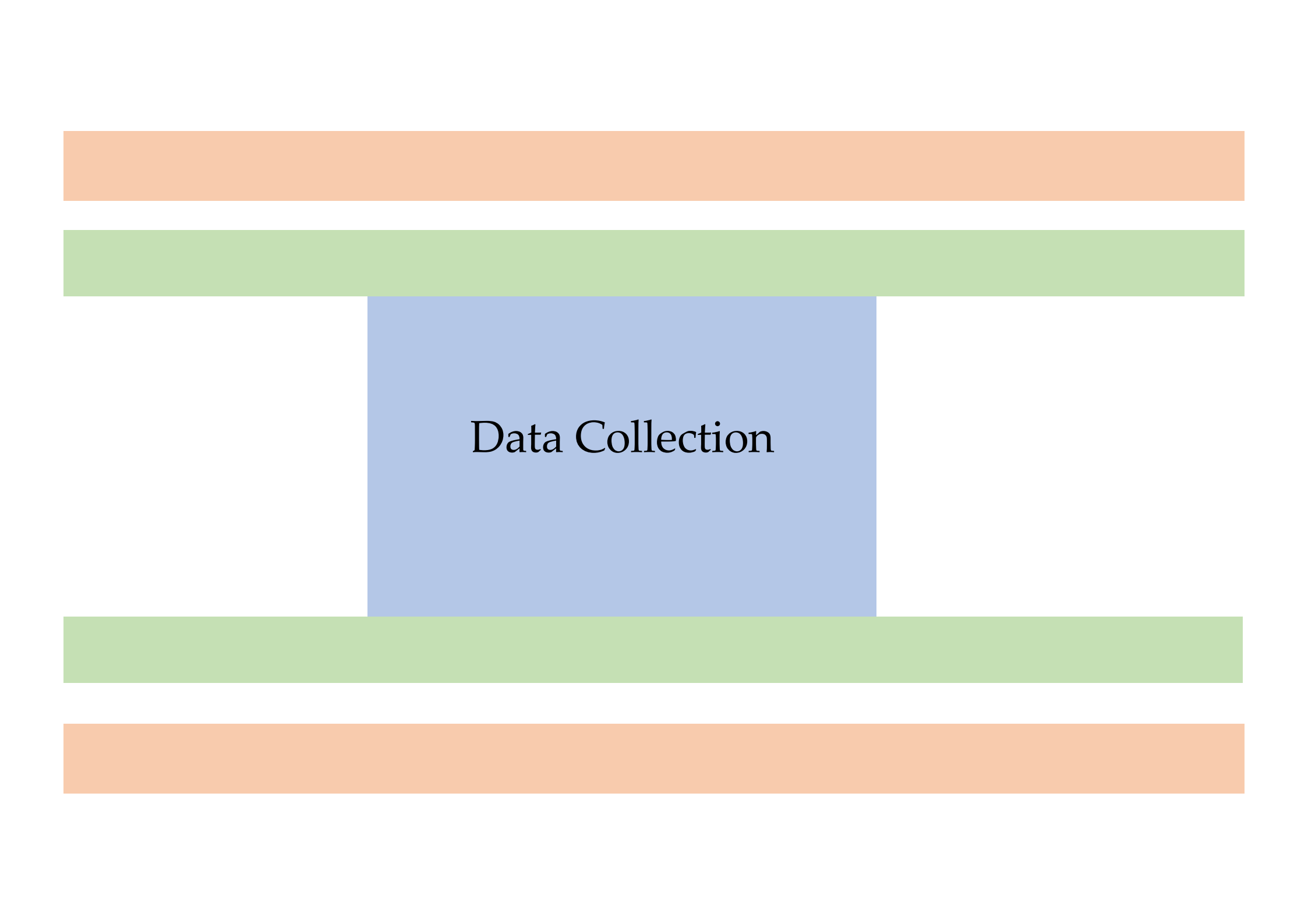
3. Reviewing & discussing how biases, values, and experiences impact emerging understandings

4. How researcher's experiences may potentially have shaped the findings, the conclusions, and the interpretations drawn in a study



Place in a study

( intro, methods,  
findings,  
epilogue )



Data Collection

# Data collection: Considerations

1. Anticipating ethical issues involved in gaining permissions

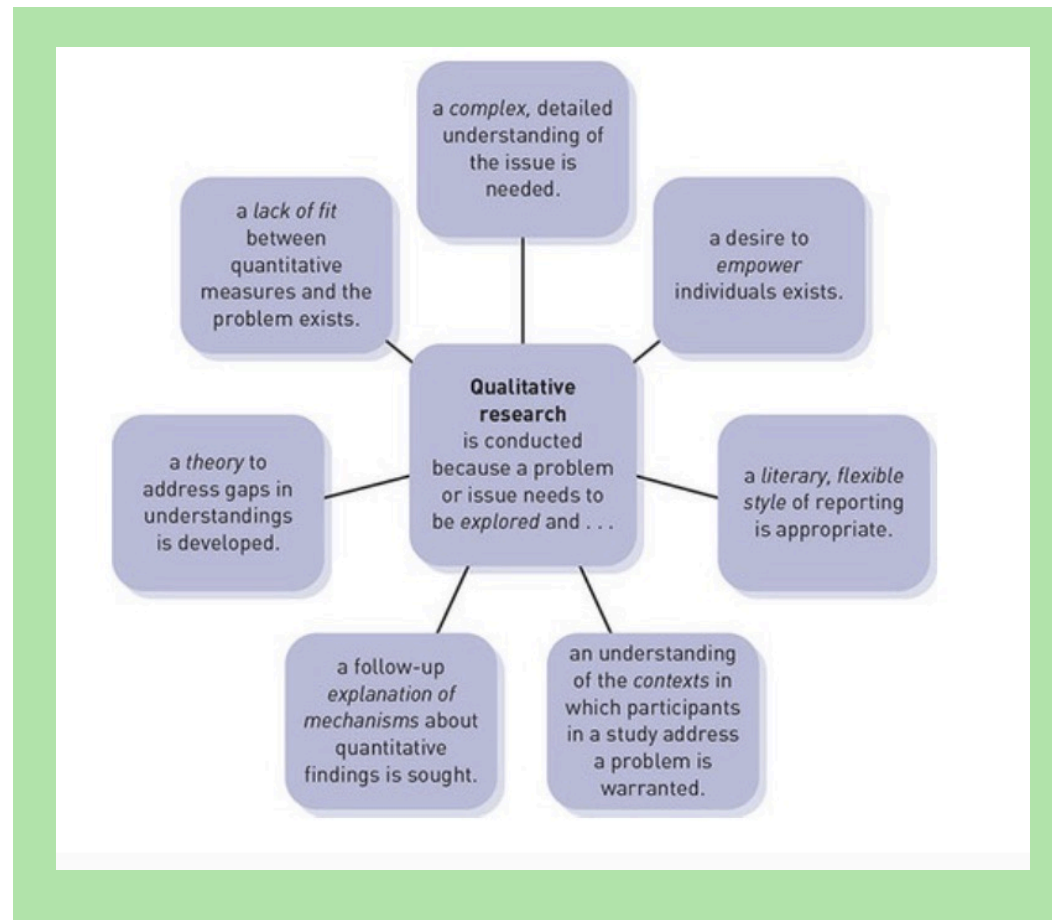
2. Choosing appropriate qualitative sampling strategy

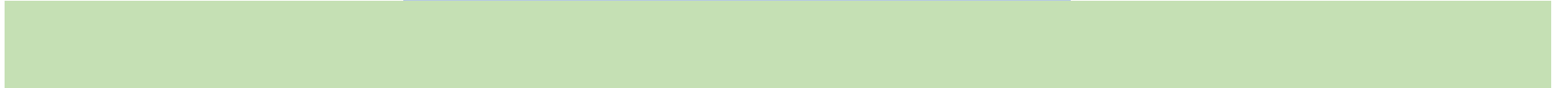
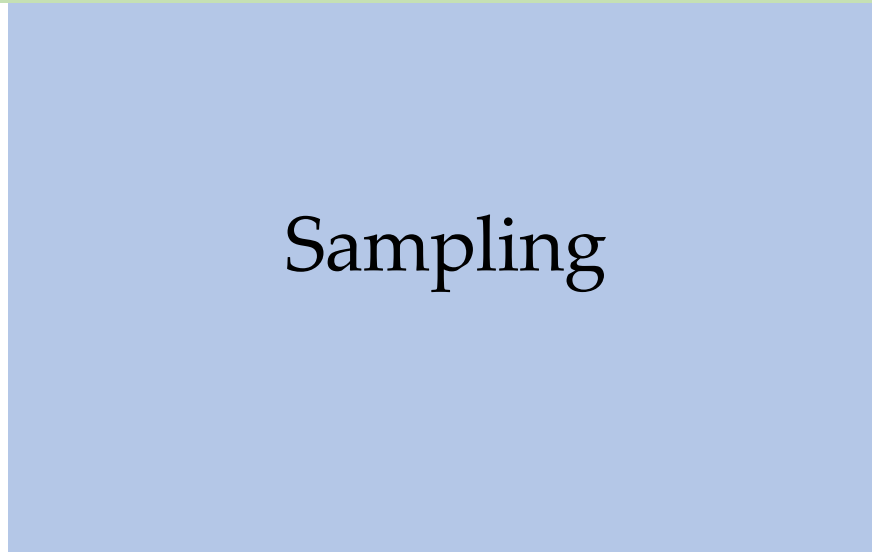
3. Developing means for recording information

4. Responding to issues as they arise in the field

5. Storing the data securely

# Seven data collection activities





# Task: Discuss sampling methods

## 1. Watch the video (first 3 min)

*Family Feud TV Show*

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YmmZuEbXWBg&ab\\_channel=FamilyFeud](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YmmZuEbXWBg&ab_channel=FamilyFeud)

## 2. Discuss questions:

- How does Family Feud get its answers?  
It uses a random number dialer to recruit a sample of 100  
It asks those 100 people a silly question
- Do you find these results to be representative of what everyone would say about the question?
- Why are some answers so difficult to figure out?
- What would happened if they sample 10000 people instead of 100?
- Is it objective?

# Units of analysis vs Units of observation

## Units of analysis

the entity or people we want our study to understand, make meaning of, explore

(Target group)

## Units of observation

the items or people we will be observing

(Sample)

Could be same or different

# Units of analysis and Units of Observation

*We asked 100 married men ...  
name something that makes your wife laugh*

- Unit of observation:  
*Married men*
- Unit of analysis  
*Wives*

# Sampling terminology

**Sample:** anyone or anything that end up in your study

**Recruitment:** Would you please participate in my study?

**Elements:** usually people, but also documents, reports, videos, etc.

**Inclusion/exclusion criteria:** participants must have these characteristics

**Sampling frame/boundary:** everyone who could potentially be in your study, given where and how you plan to gather participants (Can be real or imaginary)

**Population:** everyone in the group you want to talk about



# Units of analysis and Units of Observation

*We asked 100 married men ...  
name something that makes your wife laugh*

- Population:  
*All married men (hetero couples?)*
- Elements  
*The married men themselves*
- Inclusion criteria  
*Had to be a married man*
- Sampling frame/ boundary  
*All married men with listed phones\**
- Sample  
*The 100 married men we talked to*

# Are you trying to generalize or not?



NO



YES

|                    |                  |
|--------------------|------------------|
| Availability       | Simple random    |
| Quota              | Systematic       |
| Purposeful         | Stratified       |
|                    | Clustered        |
| Unknown likelihood | Equal likelihood |

Non-probability sampling  
approaches

Probability sampling  
approaches



# Are you trying to generalize or not?



NO

## Strengths

- In-depth understanding
- May be easier or more convenient
- Hard-to-reach populations
- Gather different perspectives
- Theory-building

## Limitations

- Not generalizable. May not be representative
- Risk of bias and error in sampling
- May be difficult to recruit from groups from diverse populations

Qualitative sampling  
approaches



YES

## Strengths

- Generalizability
- Reduces error and bias. Improves accuracy.
- Larger sample sizes have greater explanatory power

## Limitations

- May be costly or inconvenient.
- May be impractical for hard-to-reach populations
- Problems with small minority groups
- Requires a *real* sampling frame, not hypothetical (need a list)
- Sacrifices depth for breadth

Quantitative sampling  
approaches



# Concept of a purposeful sampling



Inquirer selects individuals and sites for study because they can purposefully inform an understanding of the research problem and central phenomenon in the study

Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 224



# Typology of sampling strategies ( + Handout )

Maximum variation

Homogeneous

Critical case

Theory based

Confirming and  
disconfirming cases

Snowball or chain

Extreme or deviant case

Typical case

Intensity

Combination or  
mixed

Stratified purposeful

Convenience

Random purposeful

Criterion

Politically important

Opportunistic

# Purposeful sampling to expand variations

1. **Quota** – A range or certain number of respondents with certain characteristics that may influence responses/outcomes to facilitate comparison
2. **Maximum variation** – Broadest range possible to identify common patterns that cut across variations and emerge out of heterogeneity
3. **Extreme/Deviant** – Sample outliers so can learn from an unusual manifestations of phenomena of interest
4. **Intensity sampling**-- Sample those who manifest the phenomenon intensely, but not extremely as the extremes may be too unusual
5. **Confirming and disconfirming** – include people with expected and exceptional outcomes to test variations and emerging trends in the data – done in later stages of data collection

## Purposeful sampling to narrow variations and explore similarities

1. **Criterion-** Those who meet specific criteria of importance
2. **Critical case** – Decisive cases to allow generalization to other cases as if it is true of this case it is likely to be true of others
3. **Typical case** – An average person with no unusual characteristics to highlight what is typical, normal or average
4. **Homogeneous** – respondents have similar background and experiences to describe a sub group in depth

# Sampling approaches

## 1. **Standard criteria:**

“Good” and information rich informant: Articulate, reflective, and willing to share

## 2. **Choices:**

*Convenience.* Select easily accessible subject

*Theoretical sampling.* Analyse as you go along and adjust sampling based on the findings, sampling controlled by emerging theory

*Purposive.* Select based on researchers judgement of who will be information rich/useful

**Do not focus too much on names and definitions think about what each type of sampling gives you and how this would help you answer your questions**

# Sample size

## **1. Should be based on the concept of saturation:**

*Theoretical.* no new data, or themes/codes and the ability to replicate

*Practical.* diminishing returns' from further data-collection i.e. sufficient conceptual depth

## **2. Very little written about sample size and no empirical reasons given when sizes are given**

# Sample size

## 1. Rule of thumb

- *Range* from 20-50 interviews and 2-5 FGDs per category
- Some say that for interviews 15 is the smallest acceptable and that >50 is too many

2. **Generally sample size** depends on the level of homogeneity of the sample, the complexity of the research and the quality of the interviews s

3. **Too large a sample** is as harmful as too small as it reduces the quality of the analysis

## Task: How would you sample ?

### 1. Research question:

*How do pandemic frontline workers understand their role in their community's recovery?*

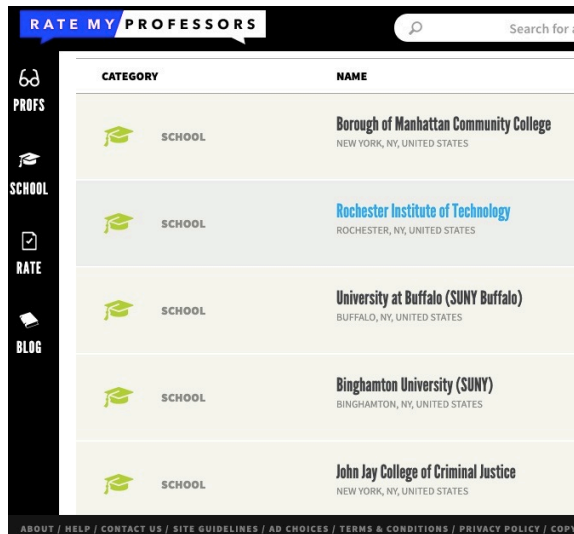
### 2. Discuss & describe:

- Describe the sampling technique and criteria that you will use
- Describe how you would identify and approach the participants
- How would you determine sample size for planning purposes?
- What would be your inclusion criteria?
- How will you know when saturation is reached?
- What are some strengths and limitations of your approach?

# Task: What type of sampling we might use?

1. Rate My Professor (.) com  
[www.ratemyprofessor.com](http://www.ratemyprofessor.com)

2. I ask people who follow me on social network a question?



The screenshot shows the Rate My Professors website. The header includes the site name and a search bar. A sidebar on the left contains navigation links: PROFS, SCHOOL, RATE, and BLOG. The main content area is a table with two columns: CATEGORY and NAME. The table lists five schools, each with a green graduation cap icon in the category column.

| CATEGORY | NAME                                                                  |
|----------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| SCHOOL   | Borough of Manhattan Community College<br>NEW YORK, NY, UNITED STATES |
| SCHOOL   | Rochester Institute of Technology<br>ROCHESTER, NY, UNITED STATES     |
| SCHOOL   | University at Buffalo (SUNY Buffalo)<br>BUFFALO, NY, UNITED STATES    |
| SCHOOL   | Binghamton University (SUNY)<br>BINGHAMTON, NY, UNITED STATES         |
| SCHOOL   | John Jay College of Criminal Justice<br>NEW YORK, NY, UNITED STATES   |

At the bottom of the page, there is a footer with links: ABOUT / HELP / CONTACT US / SITE GUIDELINES / AD CHOICES / TERMS & CONDITIONS / PRIVACY POLICY / COPY



## Task: Think through sampling steps in your own study

**1. Write down your research question**

**2. Provide details on your sampling structure and processes:**

- Identify your potential participants and provide some of the boundaries . Whom you will sample and why? Where?
- What is the most suitable sampling approach?
- Walk through each step in the sampling process. How you will sample?
- Justify your choice of sampling approach. What are the strengths and limitations of your sampling approach?



Qualitative research is a mindset,  
and here we are making it grow



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cite this lecture:

Savelyeva, T 2022, *Lecture 3: Qualitative research processes and human agency*, lecture notes, Qualitative Research Methods HKBM7003, University of Wales Trinity Saint David-Hong Kong Management Association, delivered 24 September 2022

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