Qualitative Research Methods

- data collected is not numeric; instead, it is text or other non-numeric media (images, audio, videos, etc.)

 TYPES

1. Fieldwork (Participant Observation)
   - observe phenomena first-hand
   - researcher becomes a part of the community being observed

   almost always used to induce hypotheses

PROs: rich description
   can be used to study things otherwise difficult to study

CONS: hard to generalize,
   hard to reproduce,
   researcher biases results
(②) Interviews
  2 special types
  - Contextual Inquiry Interview
  - Cognitive Task Analysis Interview

(③) Non-participant Observation Fieldwork
  - study something non-numeric but you’re not actually physically present

QUALITATIVE OR QUANTITATIVE

① Surveys  ② Interviews

QUALITATIVE DATA, QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS

① Enumeration / Content Analysis
  - count events
  - analyze event order
Observational Field Research

- subjective
- person-oriented
  or community-oriented

Goal: thorough, systematic collection, classification, and reporting of events and relationships between events. You may induce hypotheses about people, organizations, communities, and cultures.

Output possibilities

1. Ethnography - rich, qualitative description of events and quotes made by people involved

2. Enumeration of events

3. Using coded data to answer questions

Almost always: induced hypotheses
Doing Fieldwork

1. Who to observe, when, and why?
   - “hunches” – “biases”

2. Duration?
   - traditional anthropology
     ethnographies written after years of fieldwork
   - “rapid ethnography” 
     “mini ethnography”
     popular among HCI researchers

3. Researcher’s Role?
   - complete observer
   - participant observer
   - How do participants view you?
   - How does your presence affect people?
**Tips**

1. Do not take on the role of expert or advisor.

2. Wait to absorb environment before involving yourself actively too much or asking too many questions.

3. Write accurate, detailed field notes:
   - describe the setting
   - describe the individuals
   - quotes
     - conversations you have
     - conversations you overhear
   - record events
   - record anything confusing.
INDUCTIVE NOTES

1. your personal feelings
2. your hunches, hypotheses
3. guesses on people's motivations, feelings
4. start to write down ideas for a theme, organizational structure, explanatory theory

THEORETICAL MEMO

- portion of data
- inferred explanations

formalized inductive note with data

Refine, Refute Memos as you Go.

Seek out information that supports or contradicts your inferences as your observation continues.
If data makes you think of a theory learned in class, make a note of it.

**METHOD MEMO**

- record your fieldwork approach
- successes
- failures
- planned changes/improvements
How to Take Notes

1. Take as detailed notes as possible as events occur. \rightarrow \text{RAW NOTES}

BEFORE YOUR NEXT OBSERVATION SESSION, AND WITHIN 12 HOURS OF THE LAST SESSION:

2. Revise/extend raw notes. Good idea to create soft copy at this time \rightarrow \text{FIELD NOTES}

3. Write all inferences that come to mind, expand on inferences in raw notes \rightarrow \text{INDUCTIVE NOTES, THEORETICAL MEMOS}

4. Update method memos as needed.

5. Plan targets of interest for next observation.
When to Stop

① Saturation
- when new information does not surprise you