

# Designing the Qualitative Research Study

Qualitative Methods: Interviews

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# Session Overview

- Components of a research proposal
- Identifying knowledge gap and purpose of project
- Developing study objectives
- Components of a Research Question
- Activity #2 – Developing Research Questions



# Research Proposal

- Persuasive argument for why the study is needed
- Identifies specific objectives
- Provides a logical plan for how objectives will be met
- Demonstrates the value and rigor of your proposed research
- Shows relationship between the research problem and data sources, collection, and analysis methods



# Research Proposal

Common elements of a research proposal:

1. Background and rationale
2. Study objectives
3. Data sources
4. Data collection methods
5. Data analysis methods
6. Dissemination
7. Research ethics
8. Other considerations: timelines, budgets, etc.



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# Background and Rationale: Literature review

- A literature review is an evaluation of significant publications on a particular topic
- Review of the “body of knowledge”
- More than an annotated bibliography
- There are two main steps:
  - Identification of relevant publications
  - Summarizing main concepts using your own words

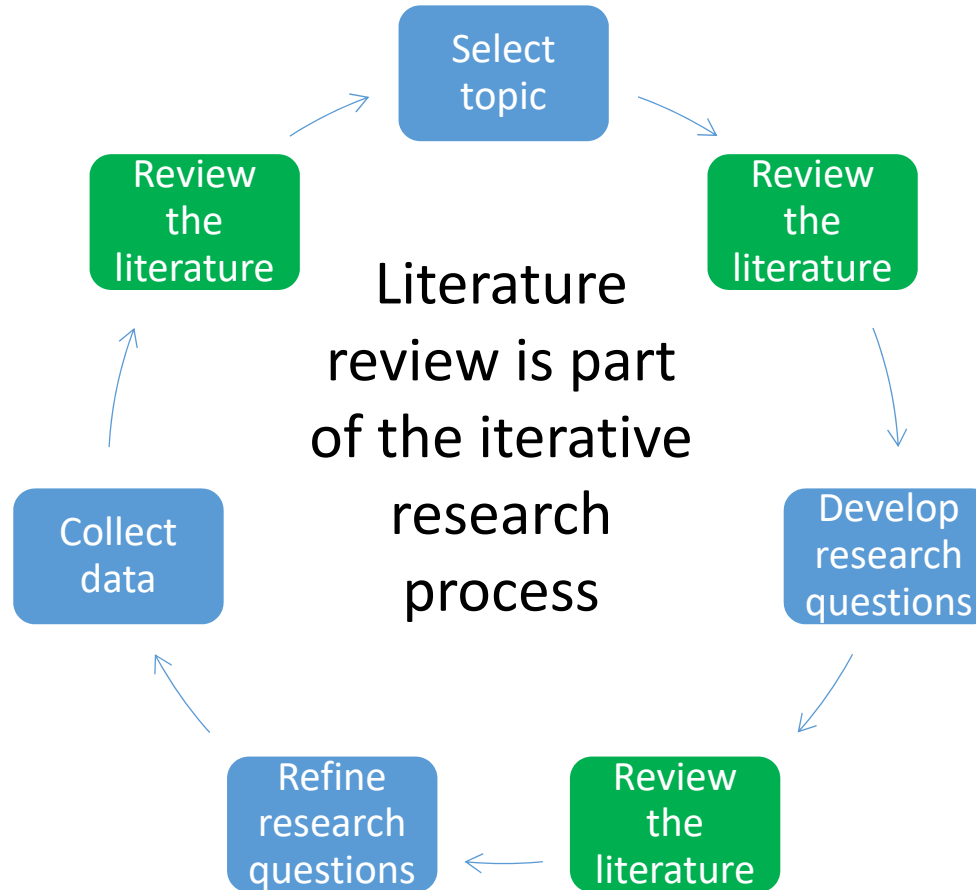


# Background and Rationale: Literature review

- Important to make sure research doesn't replicate previous research
- Helps the researcher become more knowledgeable about the subject
- May spark research questions and help focus research
- Literature may need to be reviewed before, during, and/or after data collection



# Background and Rationale: Literature review





# Background and Rationale: Literature review

A nice tutorial to introduce you to literature reviews and help develop basic skills is available from the University of Southern Maine:

[http://library.usm.maine.edu/tutorials/esp/how\\_to\\_tutorial.htm](http://library.usm.maine.edu/tutorials/esp/how_to_tutorial.htm)



# Background and Rationale

- Orients the reviewer to the problem
- Presents a case that the study will benefit society
- Demonstrates that the proposed research will provide insight into the problem
- Provides a documented review of what is already known
- Identifies specific gaps in knowledge that proposed research will address



# Stating the Research Problem

- What is the **purpose** of data collection?

Examples:

- To explore a topic that is little understood
- To describe in detail a health behavior or its context
- To engage community members in examining a problem or health concern



# Study objectives

- Map the overall purpose of your study
- Tend to begin with action words like *explore*, *describe*, *examine*
- Focus attention on the meaning, process, or social contexts underlying your research



# Study objectives

Example objectives:

- 1. Explore how physical activity changes from childhood to young adulthood among young adults in the workforce.*
- 2. Examine facilitators and barriers to physical activity among young adults in the work force.*



# Research Questions

- Should flow from study objectives
- Should be broad enough to guide exploration yet concrete enough to support the rationale for the research



# Research Questions

Example research questions:

*How does physical activity change from childhood to young adulthood among young adults in the workforce?*

*What are facilitators and barriers to physical activity among young adults in the workforce?*



Questions?





# Activity 2: Developing Research Questions

1. As a group, develop a qualitative research question(s) around the topic provided at your table. Be sure the question is open-ended, includes information on the target population, and is specific or focused.
2. Write research question(s) on display size paper and be prepared to present to the larger group.
3. Once all groups have finished we will restructure groups and topics and repeat the process.

