Research Design: Insights and Challenges as an Emerging Scholar
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Recruitment and Participant Criteria

• When you design a research study, you will have a very specific plan. Try to remain as flexible as possible and understand the practicality of your plan; it will most likely change!

• I had very clear participant criteria – with experiences comes knowledge; refined the criteria throughout recruitment

• Be ready for setbacks and challenges! You are committed to your work and have the expectation that others will feel the same; Be prepared for a potential lack of responses, delays, participants declining

• In your research, you may have to use pseudonyms depending on the participant pool or area of study (e.g., vulnerable participants; children, etc.)

• Insider/Outsider Researcher– I had to navigate between being a grad student and also a colleague (teacher) throughout the data collection

Methodology and Research Design

• Descriptive qualitative research design based on elements of multiple case study (Chenail, 2011; Stake, 2005)

• Descriptive qualitative research uses “‘generic’ qualitative methods (e.g., interviewing, open coding, constant comparison) to produce conceptual categories and themes” (Chenail, 2011, p. 1180).

• Case study research could explore the following:

• [A] real-life, contemporary bounded system (a case) or multiple bounded systems (cases) over time, through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information (e.g., observations, interviews, audiovisual material, and documents and reports), and reports a case description and case themes. (Creswell, 2013, p. 97)

• This research presents elements of multiple or collective case study, which is defined as “a number of cases studied jointly in order to investigate a phenomenon, population, or general condition” (Stake, 2005, p. 445), where the “inquirer purposefully selects multiple cases to show different perspectives on the issue” (Creswell, 2013, p. 99).

• Triangulation – It is typical with case study research design to include observations, interviews, and artifacts to increase the validity and strength of the research
• A challenge to choose the appropriate research design – decide based on the methodology that will best answer your research questions; **research design emerges from the questions**

• Semi-structured interview protocol; multiple data sources: my personal reflective notes, historical violin pedagogical resources, YouTube videos, websites, blogs, and studio handbooks

• Utilizing my own transcriptions, I analyzed the data simultaneously with the data collection through a constant comparative approach; coding; single case analysis; cross-case analysis

• Results represent the beliefs, attitudes, and perspectives of the participants; Discussion and conclusions describe how the results connect to the literature

• If conducting interviews in your research, it is important to have follow-up questions ready; member checking

**Limitations and Further Insights**

• Limitations are a result of the methodology used, the researcher’s abilities, characteristics, trustworthiness of the participants, experience/pedagogical abilities of the participants, etc. **Remember that a perfect study does not exist!**

• The researcher’s knowledge of the research design and interview abilities also affect the limitations of the study – e.g., the ability to ask appropriate follow-up questions, flow of each individualized semi-structured interview conversation

• Choose a topic that you are passionate about and that you believe is valuable in your given field of study – **why waste your time researching something that you do not care about?**

• Always remember that you are not going to change the world – your research is simply a small “slice” of something; the study should not be overwhelming

• For future research studies, have a research plan that you would like to carry out over the next few years (beyond your degree) and then work “backwards” (narrow the focus)

**References**

