

## **Participant as Ally - Essentialist Portraiture**

### **Methodology/philosophy or research approach**

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### **ORIGINAL PARADIGM**

**Individual interviews -**

**Purpose of the study -**

**With researcher commitment, heart**

**Participant as ally - participant with heart**

**Participant brings in what she (participant) considers relevant**

**Focus on passages where participant speaks from heart  
(illustrate with a sample passage)**

**Seeing something (becoming aware of thrust, nuances, structuring**

- In a particular passage -**
  - articulating what is seen at different levels of mind**
  - examples using passage**
  - what is seen depends on researcher commitment**
  - same passage different seeing**
  - the articulation may be welcomed as new insight/corrected by participant**

**Seeing a larger thing in a group of passages**  
**Unfolding of a strand in time**  
**(many other possibilities)**

**Making a portrait**

**What is the basic picture in regard to the purpose of the study**

**Organizing what has been seen and the objective information into a unified piece**

**Depth of seeing/length of portrait**

**Cross-portrait etc. discussion**

**I objective tone**

**A sample passage**  
**(a primary teacher who has been teaching 11 years**  
**near beginning of first interview)**

**Q1: Can you tell me a little bit about the *experience* you've had *over the 11-years that you have taught?***

**A: *My teaching experience.* I have always had the kids that were (pause) *challenging, whether academically or behavior ways.* A lot of people think that I am strong and *I won't give up on them, which I will not.* I just believe that *wherever the kids are, there is some potential they're learning,* so I try to move them from where they are and try to give them at least a year's growth. *The kids know I care about them, and I tell them.* Even though I am strict, I think they feel it, because they still come back every year to see me and say hello, and tell me how they are doing in school 'cause *I always ask them.* And some of them even - you know that they are not doing well (pause). They want to impress me enough to say that they are doing well. *So they know that I am always checking on them,* and I let them know that I am checking on you so if I see you somewhere I am going to ask you how you are doing in school. So, they know I care.**

**Q2 (the next question): How different do you feel from lets say year 5 of teaching and year 10 of teaching?**

**A: Ah, I feel I know more now. I have gone to a lot of workshops and professional development. I know more, I get comfortable with what I am doing. The work load is a lot more. The students are coming in less prepared and I find that some of the parents, they didn't like learning so therefore the kids have that same feeling about not liking school. So I try to make it fun, but let them know that we are here to learn. And I think the respect level has changed from year 1 to even right know.**

## **What do we see in teachers response to Q1?**

**It is from the heart, at a fundamental level, “giving an account of herself”**

**Tremendous concern for, focus on welfare of, the kids, and their learning, unified into a single “caring about them”**

**This unified with awareness of her manner of treating them (Strict, constantly checking up, etc )**

**This further unified with her goals  
(knows this promotes their welfare, makes them respect learning)  
(makes those who do learn feel good, because ...)**

***focus on challenging kids,  
I wont give up on them – unexplained***

***Many think I am strong –*  
**Maybe: feels united with other teachers and school toward similar goals****

**(her way of treating them in part inspired by “I love learning”, “had good teachers” in high school)  
(learning in the context of larger welfare is her goal with them  
but their welfare is higher goal, (Q2))**

**Regardless of purpose of the Research, this is probably relevant to any purpose of the study topic:**

**I (researcher) know from experience that such a way of being develops and is stable over many years in her life and can be traced to precursors, feelings experiences in high school and childhood  
So this that I see is something specific to her as a whole person**

**Confirmed by response to Q2 -  
The only differences she talks about (responds to) is herself becoming more able  
Though professional dev, the basic attitudes etc all unchanged**

**If researcher is very interested in topic of the research, then first impressions might be completely different,  
But to understand these topics in the case of this participant,  
need understanding of each aspect as part of the whole of the teacher**

**If purpose (topic) of the research was “teachers benefitting or not from professional development” – what would you see**

**If purpose (topic) of the research was “how teachers are oppressed/helped by NCLB” – what would you see**

**If purpose (topic) of the research was “whether/how teachers respond to demand to increase scores” – what would you see**

**If purpose (topic) of the research was to describe how she subjectively relates to community or society - what would you see**

**If purpose (topic) of the research was to understand how a person understands herself, or how her consciousness was structured (“Research in the nature of the human being”) - what would you see**

## **MORE GENERAL FORMULATION OF PARADIGM**

### **[[1]] Context of Research and Motivation, commitment of researcher**

**(1) Research in the West is one of society's way to be aware of conditions in itself, to develop new understanding, judge existing and develop new policies**

**Research is recognized, respected as such, society has faith in it**

**it is a universal ingredient in modern society, did not exist 500 years ago (it is a legacy of the "success" of Physical and Natural Sciences)**

**Hence to do research is a privilege  
a service to society (for the larger welfare of society)  
as such carries responsibilities**

**(2) "Why do I want to do this research" – personal concern,  
commitment of researcher**

**to help society become aware of, address problem  
(not: to understand my own experience,  
condition)**

**to get fundamental knowledge about the nature of  
human being, mankind  
("truth seeking", "the proper study of mankind is  
the nature of man" – Alexander Pope)**

## **[[2]] The Methodology as a Type of Research**

**(1) It is an example of qualitative research  
it focuses on *realities of living, experience, being* of people  
(last two imply *consciousness* of individuals) and tries to  
get data insights at this level**

**(2) It involves data that are in principle accessible to other  
researchers**

**“interviewing” (natural conversations),  
“observations” (being with the person and noting,  
observing)  
audio or video records of,  
serve as data  
impressions, experiences the researcher has, later  
written down or talked into a tape recorder, likewise  
serve as data**

**(3) “Purpose of the study”  
is an issue, problem, phenomenon, type of situation or any  
aspect in personal experience or contemporary society  
which the research wants to explore, understand, shed  
light on, illumine, illumine, or even just articulate more  
clearly**

**(4) Entities that are being studied are the things that are being studied that embody the phenomenon or problem or type of situation which the research is studying**

**This entity may be several possibilities (correspond to different areas the Methodology may be applied)**

**(a) may be the individual as a full person with personal history (how she became the person, teacher she is today) - this is the original paradigm**

**(b) it may be natural social object, a social context in which individuals function (institution, organization, classroom, office with secretaries) - (must decide which is of more interest, social object/context, individual or both equal)**

**social object has some identity and history of its own, has its own feeling - must decide  
(Ex: Robert Stake: the “quality of a program” to be evaluated)**

**(c) it may be a context, or being in a certain kind of condition, in which activities, experience, being occur**

**(Ex: Kaiser Family Foundation study:  
“average student spends 7 ½ hours a day engaging in, listening to, and being tuned to digital information”  
(direct internet, music listening, cell-phone) - this envisages “being in a digital environment” having similar status social object)**

**(5) “Grounded Theory” type research**

**The things the researcher sees that are relevant to the purpose of the study arise from data**

## **[[3]] “Participant as Ally”**

**[[3]] Principle that Participant should be to some extent ally (not a vessel of answers) - to some extent this makes possible a free look at phenomenon etc. studied “as it is”, makes grounded theory approach fruitful**

**(1) Participant (part of the entity being studied) should understand and to some extent share researcher’s commitment to do research for larger good of society sharing**

**(2) the individual etc being studied must realize she has freedom to be herself;  
this should be based on shared commitment in (1)**

**in individual interviews must feel free to express what she feels is relevant to the purpose of the study**

**in observations of his behavior must understand the nature of what is being observed**

**in organizational contexts and “being in medium of”, contexts must be comfortable to have natural normal processes she is engaged in being recorded**

**(3) The researcher must discipline herself with higher qualities of empathy, compassion, caring, non-judging, seeing the good in a person (based on (1) )**

## **[[4]] Seeing aspects in the data**

**[[4]] Aim of research is to see something significant related to purpose of the research – and aspect, which may be anything as long as it is clearly significant (what is seen depends on researchers deeper inspiration, commitment, cf. the example Part I above)**

**(1) seeing more or less *deeply*, in terms of a larger whole**

**seeing, sensing it intuitively and then feeling it (still intuitively) more and more clearly  
not categorizing; at first there is merely “seeing an aspect”, then ask “what kind of thing is it?”**

**(2) seeing the aspects seen as part of the [intrinsic nature of the] whole (object being studied)**

**in individual case studies  
seeing an aspect in the person as part of larger wholes**

**in studies of social settings, seeing a behavior, attitude atmosphere as part of a larger whole  
intrinsic to the social setting**

**in studies of immersion in medium ???  
(have not been done)**

**(3) seeing the aspect that is seen in proper proportion  
- not over- or under-emphasizing it, seeing how it is  
related to person and to issue, problem studied**

**in proper proportion in the individual as a whole, or  
in the object being studied ([[4]] (2) above)  
in proper proportion from the point of view of the  
purpose of the research  
(including “how common is this sort of thing” etc.  
how common is it in this particular context)**

**[[5]] and [[6]]  
Making a portrait, vignette or creating an experimental  
form  
to communicate the understanding obtained**

**[[5]] preliminary efforts to articulate larger aspects,  
conceptions in terms of aspects already seen to get an  
overall understanding of the individual case  
=- seeing several aspects seen in individual passages  
naturally form a  
larger whole**

**(1) Example: articulating a strand  
“Susan’s “understanding of language” in Witz 2006**

**(2) always using original data (of realities of  
experience, being etc) in order to kindle proper  
understanding in the reader**

**[[6]] communicating what is seen and holistic  
understanding of individual case (= entity or context  
studied, [[2]] (4)) to audience, readers**

**in different forms  
(portrait, vignette, experimental “post modern” forms)**

**always using original data (of realities of experience, being  
etc) used in order to evoke proper understanding in the  
reader**

**[[[7]] Discussion of what emerged  
(in an objective voice)**

**relate in detail to existing literature (conceptions, issues)**

**End of slides**