Qualitative Research


Conceptual Issues in Qualitative Inquiry

Psyclometricians try to measure it.
Experimentalists try to control it.
Interviewers ask questions about it.
Observers watch it.
Participants observe it.
Statisticians count it.
Evaluators value it.
Qualitative inquirers find meaning in it.

When in doubt, observe and ask questions.
When certain, observe at length and ask more questions.

Gigo’s law of deduction: Garbage in, garbage out.
Halcom’s law of induction: No new experience, no new insight.

Qualitative inquiry cultivates the most useful of all human capacities: The capacity to learn.

And the children said unto Halcom, “We want to understand the world. Tell us, O Sage, what we must do to know the world.”
“Have you read the works of our great thinkers?”
“Yes, Master, every one of them as we were instructed.”
“And have you practiced diligently your meditations so as to become One with the infinity of the universe?”
“We have, Master, with devotion and discipline.”
“Have you studied the experiments, the surveys, and the mathematical models of the Sciences?”
“Beyond even the examinations, Master, we have studied in the innermost chambers where the experiments and the surveys are analyzed, and where the mathematical models are developed and tested.”
“Still, you are not satisfied? You would know more?”
“Yes, Master. We want to understand the world.”
“The, my children, you must go out into the world. Live among the peoples of the world as they live. Learn their language. Participate in their rituals and routines. Taste of the world. Smell it. Watch and listen. Touch and be touched. Write down what you see and hear, how they think, and how you feel.
“Enter into the world. Observe and wonder. Experience and reflect. To understand a world you must become part of that world while at the same time remaining separate, a part of and apart from.
“Go then, and return to tell me what you see and hear, what you learn, and what you come to understand.”

—From Halcolm’s Methodological Chronicle