RAPID QUALITATIVE INQUIRY:
APPLIED TEAM-BASED QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

FOUR-HOUR PARTICIPATORY WORKSHOP

GOAL OF INCREASING UNDERSTANDING

RIGOROUS, NOT RIGID

RAPID, NOT RUSHED

BASED ON PARTICIPANTS’ STORIES

NOT ANSWERS TO RESEARCHERS’ QUESTIONS

Practitioners who need timely results for program and policy planning and students who need a guide for realistic and rigorous qualitative research projects will find solutions in Rapid Qualitative Inquiry (RQI). RQI is a team-based, applied research method designed to quickly develop, usually in less than several weeks, an insider’s perspective on and a preliminary understanding of a situation. RQI substitutes team work for long-term field work; combines data from multiple sources; and uses cycles of data collection, data analysis, and additional data collection. RQI is based on techniques and concepts from ethnography and case study research. RQI is a type of Rapid Assessment Process (RAP) and the terms Rapid Qualitative Inquiry and Rapid Assessment Process can usually be interchanged. Rapid does not mean rushed. Rigorous RQI depends upon flexibility rather than an arbitrary list of techniques.

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Optional Book: Beebe 2014. Rapid Qualitative Inquiry: A Field Guide to Team-Based Assessment, Second Edition. Lanham MD: Rowman & Littefield. 258 pp. Includes: key points for chapters, resources and references, examples of two reports, identification of more than 200 reports based on the methodology, Available at the Portland State University bookstore and will be available at the workshop.

Home Page (with required reading materials): http://rapidqualitativeinquiry.com
Syllabus

Rapid Qualitative Inquiry (RQI) is a team-based, applied research method designed to quickly develop an insider's perspective on a situation. RQI substitutes teamwork for long-term fieldwork; combines data from multiple sources, is based on cycles of data collection, data analysis, and additional data collection and analysis; and uses techniques from ethnography and case study research. The objective of RQI is to develop understanding as opposed to finding a single truth.

1. Rapid Qualitative Inquiry (RQI): Field Guide to Team-Based Assessment James Beebe Portland State University and the Center for Rapid Qualitative Inquiry

2. RQI, RAP, Mini-RAP, Related Approaches (1) RQI-Newest generation rapid qualitative research methodology (2) RAP-Rapid Assessment Process, qualitative research methodology, direct antecedent of RQI, (see Beebe 2001) but with significant differences (3) Mini-RAP- Educational activity for learning RQI and qualitative research. NOT a research methodology. (4) Other related research methodologies and approaches, sharing many, but not all, of the characteristics of RQI. Rapid Assessment Procedures, Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA), Rural Appraisal, Rapid Rural Appraisal, Rapid Appraisal, Rapid Ethnography, and others.

3. SECOND EDITION published October 2014. Can be ordered from Rowman and Littlefield or from Amazon.com. The Rowman and Littlefield web site includes prepublication reviews and other updates. Link to the Rowman and Littlefield website http://rapidqualitativeinquiry.com

4. Rapid Qualitative Inquiry Definition. A way to investigate complicated situations: (1) where issues are not yet well defined (2) where there is not sufficient time or other resources for long-term, traditional qualitative research.

5. Rapid Qualitative Inquiry Is Qualitative Research. Shares many of the characteristics of case study and ethnography.

6. Differs from traditional qualitative research INSTEAD OF LONG-TERM FIELDWORK (1) Uses intensive, team interaction. (2) Explicitly divides time between data collection and data review/analysis before additional data collection.

7. RQI is a team-based, applied research method that (a) focuses on getting the insider's or emic perspective, (b) uses multiple sources and triangulation, and (c) uses iterative data analysis and additional data collection to quickly, usually in less than several weeks, develop a preliminary understanding of a situation.

8. RQI cannot be done by one person.

9. The objective of RQI is to develop understanding as opposed to finding a single truth.

10. Qualitative Research including RQI should not be used for estimating numbers or percents. Quantitative research is the appropriate research methodology when numbers or percents are needed.

11. Results can be produced in (1) as few as about five days, (2) but usually requires several weeks. (3) Longer time in the field usually produces better results.

12. Stories not answers to questions formulated in advance. The goal is to get the insiders to tell their stories and NOT answer the questions of the outsiders.
13. Purposeful sampling requires the team to seek out: the poorer, less articulate, more upset, and those least like the members of the RQI team.

14. Intensive teamwork for both the data collection and analysis is an alternative to prolonged fieldwork.

15. RQI uses group discussion involving the entire team and the local participants (team interviewing), NOT sequential interviewing by individual members of the team.

16. Relaxed, semi-structured interviewing that provides respondents with time to think is often effective in eliciting stories.

17. Technology to improve quality and seed of RQI includes (1) Social media (2) Transcribing software (3) Analysis software (4) File collaboration (5) Document capture (6) Video (7) SMART PHONES

18. To be successful RQI Team members need to recognize: (1) They don’t know enough to ask questions formulated in advance, (2) They don’t know enough to provide the answers, but (3) They do know enough to want to empower others to solve their own problems.

19. RQI uses iterative analysis and additional data collection. Time is divided between (1) blocks used for collecting information and (2) blocks when the team does data analysis and considers changes in the next round of data collection.

20. Analysis begins with the first round of data collection. Analysis involves: (1) Coding the data, (2) Displaying relationships in the data, and (3) Drawing conclusions.

21. A Mini-RAP is NOT a research methodology. It is a way to learn to do Qualitative Research and RQI. Mini-RAP uses groups of 4 or 5 persons to practice skills related in RQI.

22. Mini-RAP vs RQI (1) RQI is the research approach and Mini-RAP is a way to learn qualitative research or RQI. (2) RQI requires multiple interviews over many days while a Mini-RAP is based on two interviews. (3) RQI implemented with rigor can make significant contributions to understand an issues while a Mini-RAP is unlikely to contribute much beyond definitions.

23. A major ethical issue for RQI is bogus empowerment. Bogus empowerment encourages people to falsely believe that their input will be acted upon. (1) The RQI team needs to keep their promises and make promises that they can keep. (2) The RQI team needs to avoid the temptation of engaging in hyperbole about the democratic nature of the situation.

24. The major challenge of RQI is confusing rapid with rushed.

25. RQI should not be oversold and only should be implemented rigorously.

26. Additional Information (1) Visit the web site: http://rapidqualitativeinquiry.com (2) Contact James Beebe: beebe@gonzaga.edu