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# Collect Data

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*My first exposure to any form of qualitative research was in my senior year of college when I went to a village with a group of students to conduct interviews with some farmers to understand their ways of using rice production methods in their farms. It was an assignment on research to practice. The whole experience turned into a methodological shock and a revelation! Shock because I had no idea that “the other side” of the fence existed and revelation because it was a research data technique!*

—Kavita Mittapalli (2006), *Research Analyst*

## CHAPTER DESCRIPTION

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The chapter includes techniques for collecting data through cataloguing, examination, observation, and interviewing. Included in this chapter are descriptions of data and examples of the alternative forms of data collection that self-study researchers have used. Guidelines are included for collecting different forms of data. This chapter also highlights the importance of a transparent and systematic research process in terms of documenting the data collected.

◆ Reading this chapter will provide an opportunity for you to learn multiple ways of collecting data and guides specific to each technique.

We had collected gargantuan volumes of data to study our work in the first self-study research methods course taught at our university (Samaras et al., 2007). To make the large data set manageable, Dawn Renee created a table to help us sort out and see our primary and secondary data sources with a column for each class assignment. The rows of the table included the following headings: (a) each class assignment and description, (b) the context, (c) the impact of each class project in learning about and meeting the self-study methodological components, (d) how the student approached each project, (e) the role of peers in the learning process, (f) what the project added to their current field of study, and (g) notes and reflections. The columns included each coresearcher’s name so we could each insert our comments. After that, as coresearchers, we were easily on our way to analyzing.