12. Collecting Qualitative Data

This chapter deals with qualitative data. While everyone is familiar with the idea of interviewing and observing, actually collecting qualitative data is not as easy as it might first appear to be. In fact, when doing qualitative work, it is easy to become overwhelmed by the amount of information collected. However, with some purposeful planning, piloting, and practice, the student can avoid some of the pitfalls associated with qualitative data collection. Focusing on qualitative interviews and participant observation, the chapter introduces some of the common issues that arise when gathering qualitative data and offers useful advice concerning the planning and practice of collecting data ‘in the field’.

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