Quala Lab

Open Qualitative Methods Book README

Hey there! You've found the Open Qualitative Methods textbook which is being created by [Quala Lab](#) members and their friends. We are writing an open access book on qualitative methods aimed at undergraduate students and people who are new to qualitative methods. The goal of the book is to provide a comprehensive overview of various qualitative epistemologies, methodologies, and methods, and to highlight how open scholarship practices can be integrated into qualitative research, where appropriate.

Presumably, you're on this page because you're interested in learning more or getting involved! Let's dig in.

Table of Contents

This is cool! Why are you doing it?

Great question. The long and short of it is that we're a group of people who think that people should have access to free, high quality educational resources for learning how to do research. The longer answer, from our [introduction](#), is:

> We have written this book because many of us in our roles as educators have struggled to find free, high quality, and updated educational materials on qualitative methods in the social sciences. We believe education is an essential first step towards improving the lives of living things. As such, we agree with the African Union (1981), UNESCO (n.d.) and the United Nations (1948), who all label education as a human right. If you would like to learn more about the importance of open educational resources, we highly recommend our friends at SPARC (n.d.) and the Open Education Network (n.d.).

Sounds awesome! How can I help?

Great question! There are a couple ways you can help out:

- Help us come up with/decide on a title!
- Add to the book
- Add classroom activities

What if I don't have time to write?

That's totally fine! You can encourage other people to help by having them reach out to Crystal.

If you would like to support the development of this book and initiatives like it, please consider engaging in any of these activities:
- Join and/or donate to the Society for the Improvement of Psychological Science (SIPS), whose mission is to bring together scholars working to improve methods and practices in psychological science. SIPS offers grants-in-aid to reduce barriers to improving psychological science, PsyArXiv, and travel funds for early career and underrepresented scholars, among other initiatives.
- Donate to the Center for Open Science (COS), whose mission is to increase openness, integrity, and reproducibility of research. COS is responsible for OSF Preprints and the Open Science Framework, among other initiatives.
- Join and/or donate to the Framework for Open and Reproducible Research Training (FORRT), which provides a pedagogical infrastructure and open educational resources designed to support the teaching and mentoring of open and reproducible science.

Lastly, we could really use content experts to volunteer to review the chapters as they near completion. If you think that could be you, please reach out to Crystal.

Is there a timeline for this book?

Kind… of? We'd love to have a classroom-ready version of the book by the end of the year, but that's a rather ambitious goal for a bunch of people who aren't being paid to do this work. So that's a tentative goal, with the acknowledgment that it's probably going to change. We also hope to do a hackathon on a chapter or two for the online portion of SIPS 2024, which is in mid-June.

We highly encourage academic folks to check in with their university library, department chair/dean, center for teaching and learning, and/or any professional organizations to see if there's a way your time can be compensated for the work you're doing on this book, should you choose to help with it. If there's a way we can help with that, please reach out to Crystal. This is a labor of love, but that doesn't mean we can't try to help find you to get financial support for that labor!

Do I need any kind of special qualifications?

Not really. You should have experience doing qualitative research of some kind, but we don't need you to have a Masters or a PhD or anything like that. Some of us are professors, but many of us aren't. It's fine if your experience is outside of academia, and we don't really care what field you're in. The researchers in this group come primarily from psychology, evaluation, education, anthropology, and sociology, but that's mostly by chance. It's totally fine if you're in a different field, as long as you can speak to qualitative research methods. If you don't see your specific method in the book outline, feel free to leave a comment on the page to see where it could fit in! All it means is we hadn't thought to include it yet - and again, the outline itself is a draft as well. We also welcome authors from a range of demographic backgrounds and life experiences. In fact, the book will be a lot better with your insight!

Adding to the book

Here's the Google Drive link to the book.

First things first, it may be helpful to read the introduction. This will give you a general sense of the purpose of the book and who we're writing for (and why). Feel free to make suggestions on it, by the way! Like other chapters, it's a draft. There's also a section at the bottom to include an author profile. Please feel free to add yourself at the bottom of the list - we'll organize as we go.

You'll also want to review the book outline. Feel free to make suggestions here, too! It's also a draft, and we expect it to change as we move through the different phases of writing.

All chapters for the book are in the Chapters folder. If you're logged into Google Drive, you can make an edit to any of the chapters in suggestion mode. If you can only view the file, you are either not logged into Google Drive or your email doesn't have editing access. If it's the latter, email Crystal (see below). We have this set up this way so we can track people's contributions and so we can see what's going on if something wonky happens.

Each chapter file is a plain-text file in the Markdown format. Here's a quick Markdown cheatsheet, if you need one. Feel free to suggest whatever you want, and make comments as desired! We will have a script that will scrape each Google Doc and add it to a Codeberg project. We'll have a website for it eventually, but right now we want to focus on drafting the content.

Note: Crystal hasn't had a chance to fix up the glossary or references yet, so please just edit references like you would a typical APA formatted paper. For glossary entries, please use this code in the text:

`r glossary("your glossary word")`

Example: Under this paradigm, there's a heavy emphasis on hypothesis generation and testing, and a lot of value is placed in `` `r glossary("a priori hypothesizing")` `` - that is, outlining what you think is going to happen in an experiment before you conduct it.

At the bottom of the page, there should be a section called "Glossary for this chapter" - Just add your glossary term (alphabetical order, please) and proposed definition. Eventually, Crystal will have time to do what she needs to do with this and edit this README accordingly.

Adding activities

Want to add a fun activity? Great! Check out the [activities folder](#), select the appropriate chapter, and add a new document. Please also use Markdown for new documents.

How can I get credit for my work?

At the bottom of each page, there's a fragment of code that looks like this:

```
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chapter:
  title: xxxxx
  author: YOUR NAME HERE
  description: xxxxxx
---
```

Once you've contributed to a chapter or activity, add your name in the author line. (If you're adding a new activity, you'll need to add this to the bottom of the page first, then edit.) Please make sure you do not erase anyone else's name!

If you review a chapter, we'll be sure to include your contribution in the introduction chapter as well.

Can we schedule a writing session?

Sure! Ask to [join the Google Group](#) to find time to write together with other authors. You can also start discussions about how to talk about a particular topic, ask clarifying questions, and so on.

Who do I contact if I have questions?

Crystal is leading this charge - feel free to reach out to her. If you don't already have her Gmail address, you can use the [Quala Lab contact page](#). It'll send her an email. You can also leave a comment on this document.