

# Northumbria Research Link

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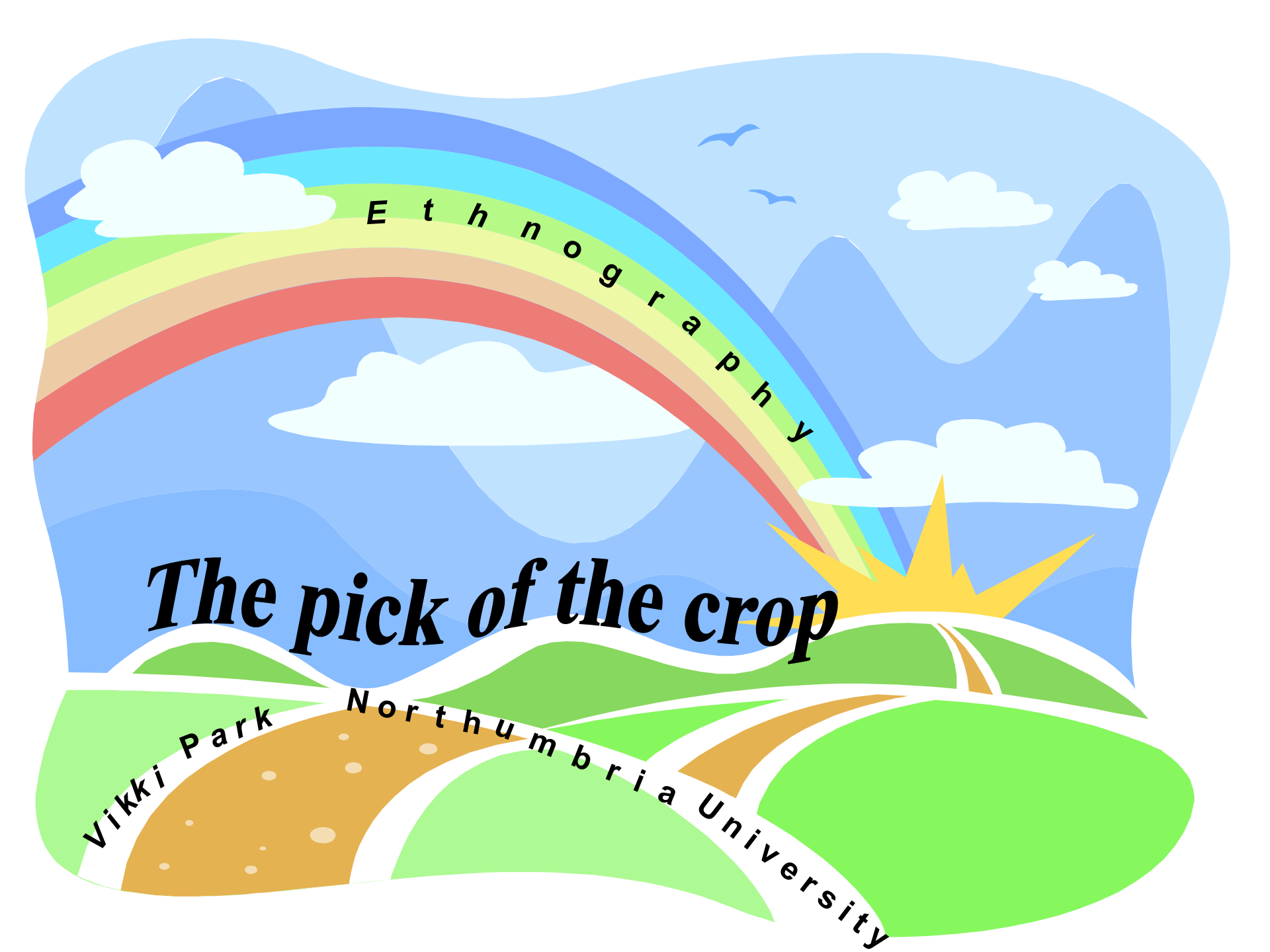
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E t h n o g r a p h y

# *The pick of the crop*

Vikki Park

Northumbria University

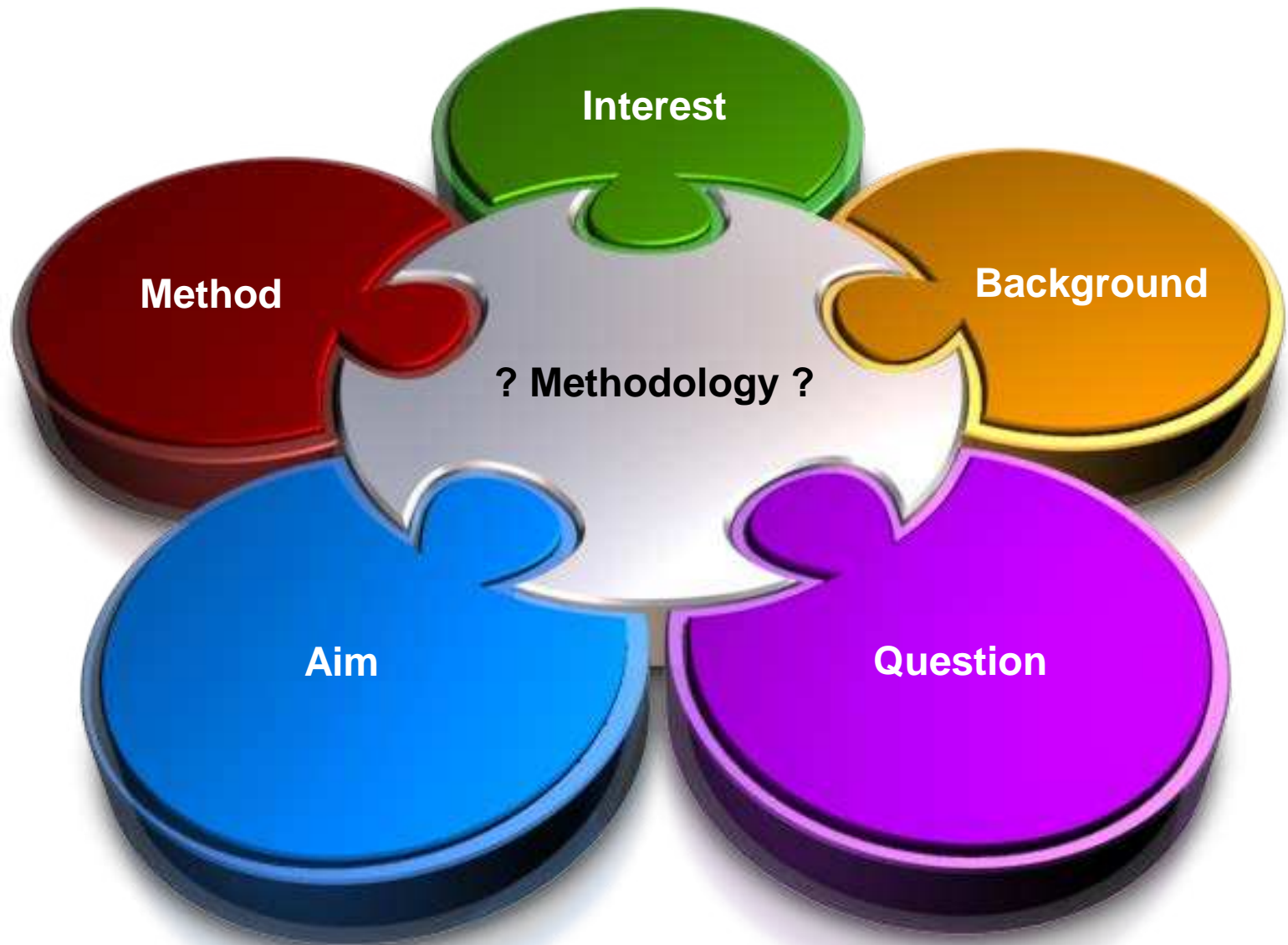
# **Abstract for the session**

Ethnography as a research approach has evolved over time.

It has developed from its historical roots within the field of anthropology and is now used widely in a range of different contexts.

This first session of the Teesside Qualitative Researcher's Forum will begin by considering the vast number of approaches which can now be used within ethnography. The session will then focus more specifically upon a few common approaches adopted in research, such as focused and critical ethnography, among others.

# Choosing a methodology



**Definitions which agree  
with each other 😊**



## ***Ethnography is...***

observation

culture

'going native'

“A research **method** in which the researcher immerses him- or herself in a social setting for an extended period of time, observing behaviour, listening to what is said ... and asking questions.”

*Bryman (2012)*

“Observation and participation ... remain the characteristic features of the ethnographic approach”

*Atkinson et al. (2001)*

“ethnography is both a process and a product”

Tedlock (2003 p.165)

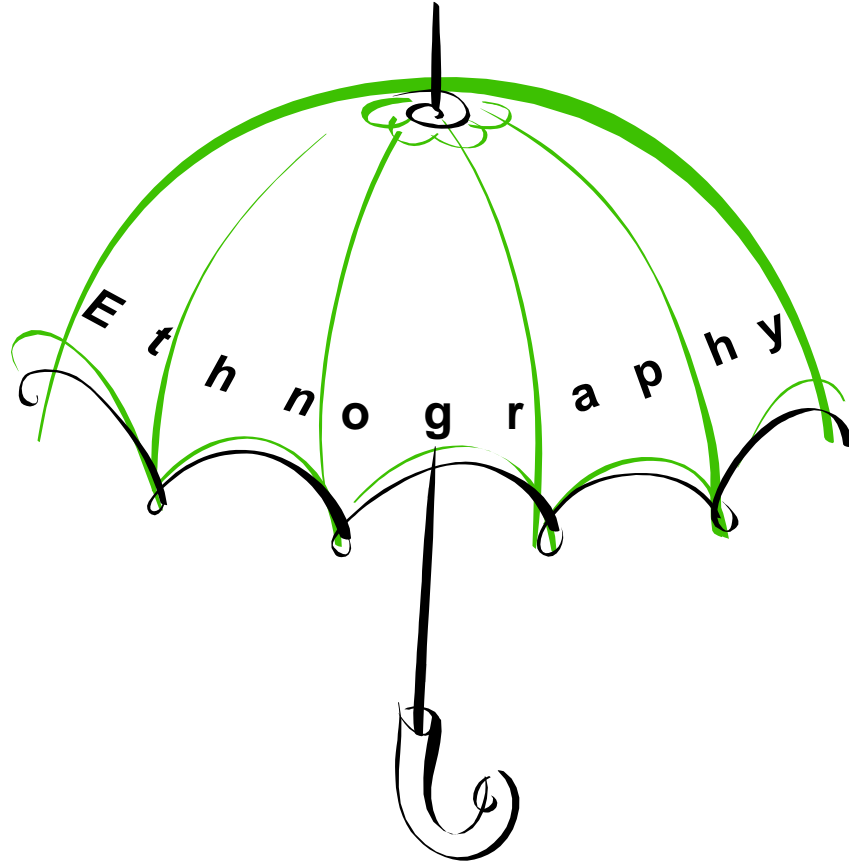
“A research **method** in which the researcher immerses him- or herself in a social setting for an extended period of time, observing behaviour, listening to what is said ... and asking questions.”

*Bryman (2012)*

“If ‘methods’ are technical rules that define proper procedures, ‘methodology’ is the broad theoretical and philosophical framework into which these procedural rules fit”

Brewer (2000 p.2)

As it transpires ethnography is not as linear in approach as it would appear. It seemed to me to be more of an umbrella term which covers a wide range of approaches.



“Ethnography is not one particular method of data collection but a **style** of research that is distinguished by its objectives, which are to understand the social meanings and activities of people in a given ‘field’ or setting, and an approach, which involves close association with, and often participation in, this setting.” (Brewer, 2000 p.189)

By engaging with the literature I found over 30 different 'types' of ethnography

# E t h n o g r a p h y

Participatory	Feminist	Narrative	Humanistic	Visual
Institutional	Descriptive	Performance	Case Study	Digital
Ergonomic	Commercial	Hypermedia	Sensory	Global
Focused	Performance	Constitutive	Reflexive	Virtual
Ethnomethodology	Structural	Multi-modal	Realist	Online
Interpretative	Organisational	Autoethnography	Adaptive	Critical
Mobile	Multi-sited	Team	Scientific	Native



# How to choose the type?

- Back to the starting point of the research



# Process of elimination

## Narrative =

- Narrative enquiry
- Stories

## Institutional =

Explore social relations that structure every day lives. Maps translocal relations that coordinate peoples activities in particular local sites.

## Team =

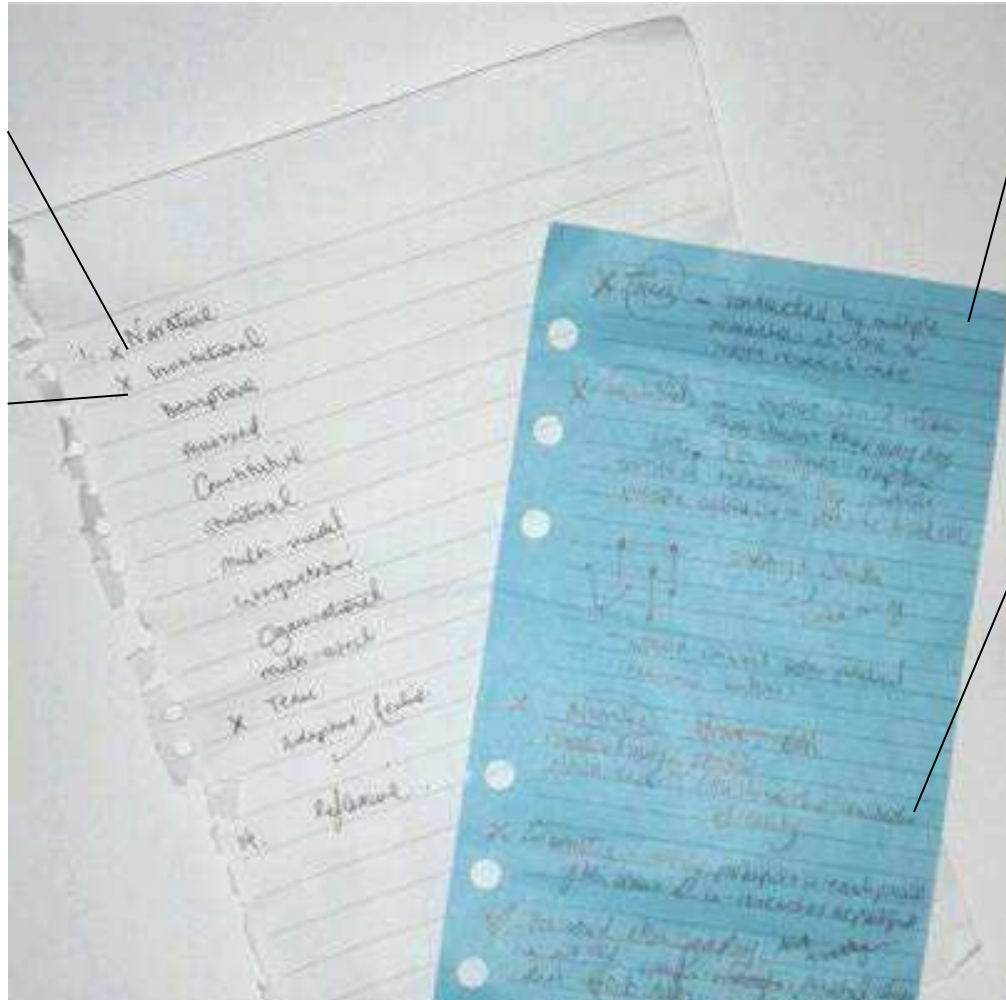
Conducted by *multiple* researchers at one or more research sites

## Collaborative =

*Involving participants* in the research process. Participants are often in teams & are co-researchers.

## Focused ethnography = (AKA Micro-ethnography)

- Understanding specific societal issues that affect different facets of practice.
- Enables researchers to understand the interrelationship between people and their environments.



# **Focused ethnography**

My research choice will use focused ethnography, also known as micro-ethnography, to focus particularly upon one distinct issue within a culture (IPL) in specific settings (Adult Critical Care).

“Focused ethnography has emerged as a promising method for applying ethnography to a distinct issue or shared experience in cultures or sub-cultures and in specific settings, rather than throughout entire communities.” p.36

“Focused ethnography has emerged as a useful tool in gaining a better understanding of the experiences of specific aspects of people’s ways of life and being.” p.38

Cruz and Higginbottom (2013)

# Focused Ethnography Examples



The role of nursing unit culture in shaping utilization behaviors

**Scott and Pollock (2008)**



The inner door:  
toward an understanding of suicidal patients

**Tzeng et al. 2010**



The significance of social engagement in relocated older adults

**Dupuis-Blanchard et al. (2009)**

# **My focused ethnography**

An ethnographic study of the Inter-Professional Learning culture of NHS staff within the adult critical care clinical setting.



**IPL in Adult Critical Care**

# Critical Ethnography

“Critical ethnography draws on cultural studies, neo-Marxist and feminist theories and research on critical pedagogies.

The aim is to theorize social structural constraints and human agency, as well as the interrelationship between structure and agency in order to consider paths towards empowerment of the researched.”

*Gordon et al. (2001)*

“ Critical ethnography is an approach that is overtly political and critical, exposing inequalities in an effort to effect change.”

*O'Reilly( 2009 p. 51)*

# Critical Ethnography Examples



Children's experiences as hospital in-patients: Voice, competence and work. Messages for nursing from a critical ethnographic study  
**Long & Lively (2013)**



Enhancing choice and improving outcomes through the deviation of childbirth risk discourses within a midwifery model of care.  
**Dove (2013)**

Nursing, sexual health and youth with disabilities: a critical ethnography  
**McCabe and Holmes (2014)**



# Auto-ethnography

Autoethnography is *“a form of self-narrative that places the self within a social context”*.  
Reed-Danahay (1997)

“The auto-ethnography brings the author firmly into the text with a heightened self-consciousness [reflexivity] of the textual production.”

Plummer (2001) p.398

“At its most basic this refers to self-centred ethnographic writing, in which the central narrative threads are the selves of researchers and/or researched....

[Autoethnography] involves more personal attention being paid to a) why a research topic is chosen in the first place, b) how it gains and takes shape through the research process and c) how researchers, and researched and readers can all become involved in the process of interpreting its findings.”

Crang and Crook (2007)



# Auto-Ethnography Examples



Birth Injury, Disabling Families and Enabling Human Factors

**Benson, D.V. (2014)**  
*Unpublished Thesis*



Autoethnography: a method of research and teaching for transformative education.

**Belbase, Luitel, and Taylor(2008)**

Selling your soul to the devil: an autoethnography of pain, pleasure and the quest for a child.

**Neville-Jan (2004)**



# Participatory Ethnography

Participatory Research =

“Rather than passive ‘informants’ or ‘subjects’, research participants are now often encouraged to take an active part in the research process, empowered where possible to contribute, direct, redirect, and guide the research in ways that ensure their own perspective is given due weight.”  
O’Reilly (2009 p.59)

In participant ethnography “researcher and participants jointly define certain aspects of the research design, discuss the findings, and sometimes write the final report together.”  
Gobo (2008 p.146)

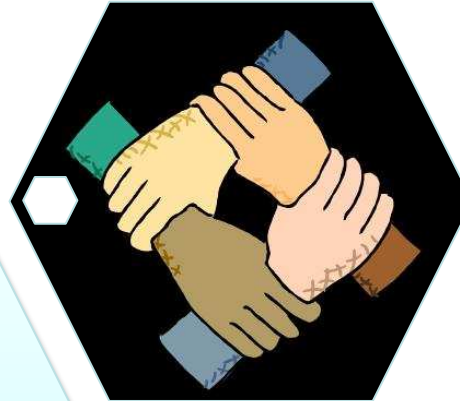
In its simplest terms, participatory ethnography involves participants in the research process.

# Participatory Ethnography Examples



Participatory  
Research in Health:  
setting the context  
**de Koning, K. and  
Martin, M. (1996)**

What is Participatory  
Research ? **Cornwall  
and Jewkes (1995)**



! Using participatory  
observation to  
understand older  
people's experiences:  
lessons from the field  
**Tetley (2013)**



**! Language &  
choice of terms is  
very important !  
This article was  
actually about  
participant  
observation NOT  
participatory.**

# Summary O'Reilly (2009 p.3)

- Ethnography is a methodology – a theory, or set of ideas – about research that rests on a number of fundamental criteria. Ethnography is iterative-inductive research; that is to say it evolves in design through the study.
- Ethnography draws on a family of methods, involving direct and sustained contact with human agents, within the context of their daily lives (and cultures), watching what happens, listening to what is said, and asking questions.
- It results in richly written accounts that respect the irreducibility of human experience, acknowledges the role of theory, as well as the researcher's own role, and view humans as part object/ part subject.

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