

WELFARE

Open Educational Resource

Module 3 : Design Thinking – Empathize & Define
“Research plan”





1. Theory

Qualitative research is used to gain a deeper understanding of underlying reasons, opinions, motivations, experiences, processes ... It provides insight into your challenge and helps you to develop concepts and ideas. The focus on understanding makes qualitative research primarily **exploratory** in nature and therefore particularly relevant in the research phase of the Design Thinking Model.

Three dimensions of qualitative methods can be distinguished:

- ✓ Understanding **context** or how economic, political, social, cultural, environmental and organizational factors influence your challenge. People do not live in a vacuum and are shaped by the contexts in which they live.
- ✓ Understanding **people** or how people think, how they make sense of their experiences, why they behave the way they do ...
- ✓ Understanding **interaction** or how the people involved interact with each other and their environment.

Qualitative research is characterized by:

- ✓ **Research questions and the goal of your research**
 - ✓ Research questions focus on complex themes or social processes
 - ✓ Daily reality of the people involved (e.g., social context, objects, activities) is central to your research
- ✓ **The research design is ...**
 - ✓ Flexible
 - ✓ Focused on studying natural environments
 - ✓ A holistic approach on understanding the context
- ✓ **Data collection**
 - ✓ A lot of different research methods available
 - ✓ Most often multiple research methods are used
 - ✓ Data collection requires intense contact in the field
- ✓ **Data analysis**
 - ✓ Analysis primarily focuses on text rather than numbers



Co-funded by
the European Union



3

- ✓ Focus in the analysis is on deep understanding rather than representative research
- ✓ Focus in the analysis is on processes

Types of qualitative data:

- ✓ Structured text (writings, stories, survey comments, news articles ...)
- ✓ Unstructured text (transcription, interviews, focus groups, conversation ...)
- ✓ Observation
- ✓ Audio recordings
- ✓ Video recordings (graphics, art, pictures, visuals)
- ✓ ...

2. Instruction

Complete the research plan below. Specific instructions are integrated in each separate step of the template.





Co-funded by
the European Union



4

3. Tool

Research plan

<p>Research challenge Describe your challenge in a few sentences so an outsider understands what you will be working on.</p>		
<p>Research questions What is the focus of your research? List the questions you want to answer and the assumptions you want to test.</p>		
What do you know?	What do you think you know?	What do you not know?





Stakeholders		
Which stakeholders do you want to involve?	Which stakeholders will you get in touch with?	How?

Methodology	
Which research methods will you use? Distinguish between desk research and field research. Remember that different questions and assumptions may ask for different methods.	Make it specific: with whom, what, where, when ...



Insights

Which information will you gather? How will you translate your results into insights?

4. References

- ✓ Steinke, I., Flick, U., & Von Kardorff, E. (2004). A companion to qualitative research. Londen: Sage.

Commented [1]: English references regarding qualitative research are very welcome!

Commented [2]: Reference from Stefania (retrieved from the curriculum). Please check if this is ok as a source – I'm not familiar with the book ... (my resources in terms of qualitative research are mainly in Dutch)



Co-funded by
the European Union



website

<https://www.welfareproject.eu/>

