

The Evolving World of Qualitative Methodology

as a Tool for Nursing Knowledge Development



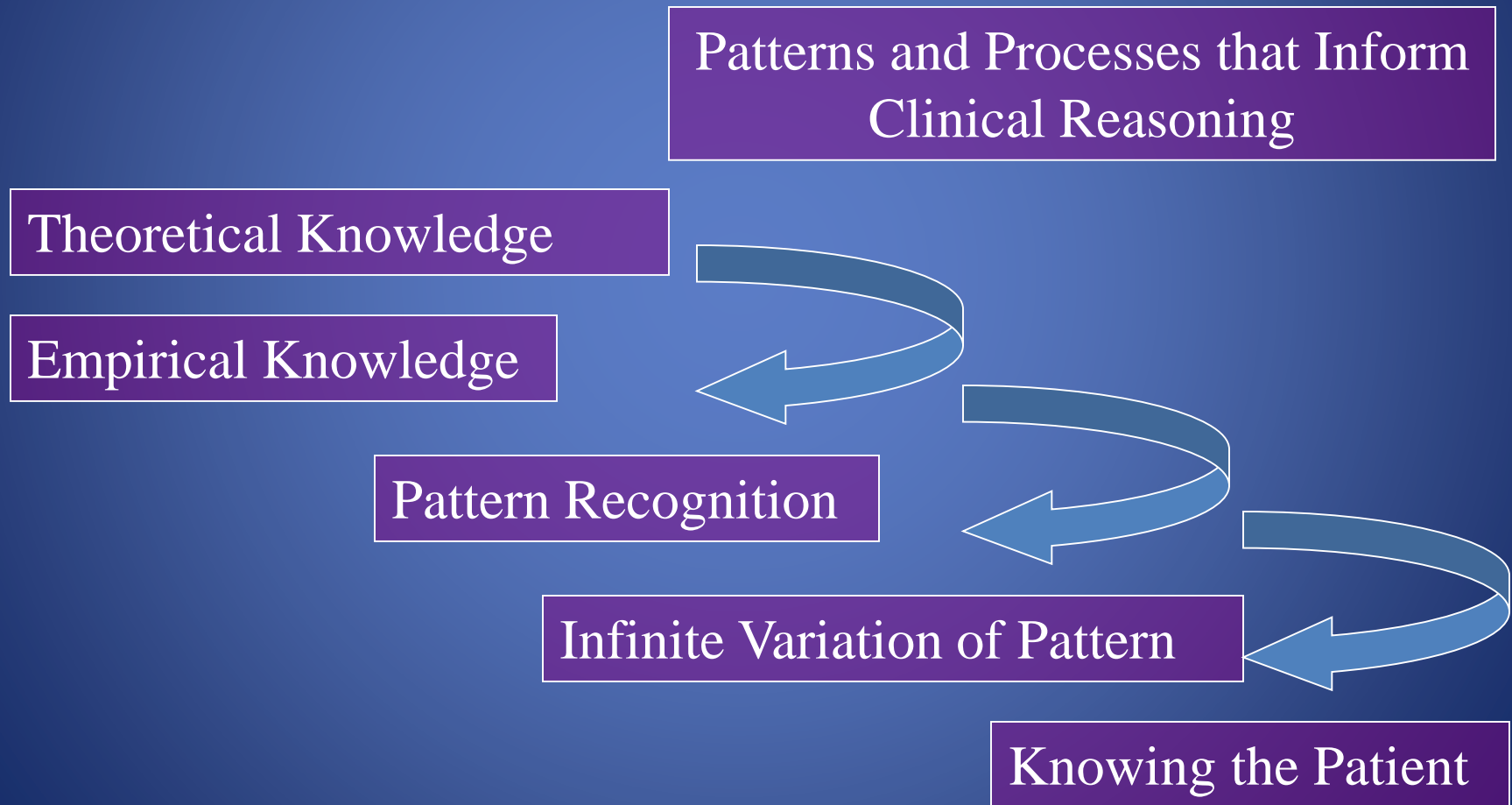
Special Session,
28th International Nursing Research Congress
Sigma Theta Tau International Honor Society of Nursing
Dublin, July 29, 2017



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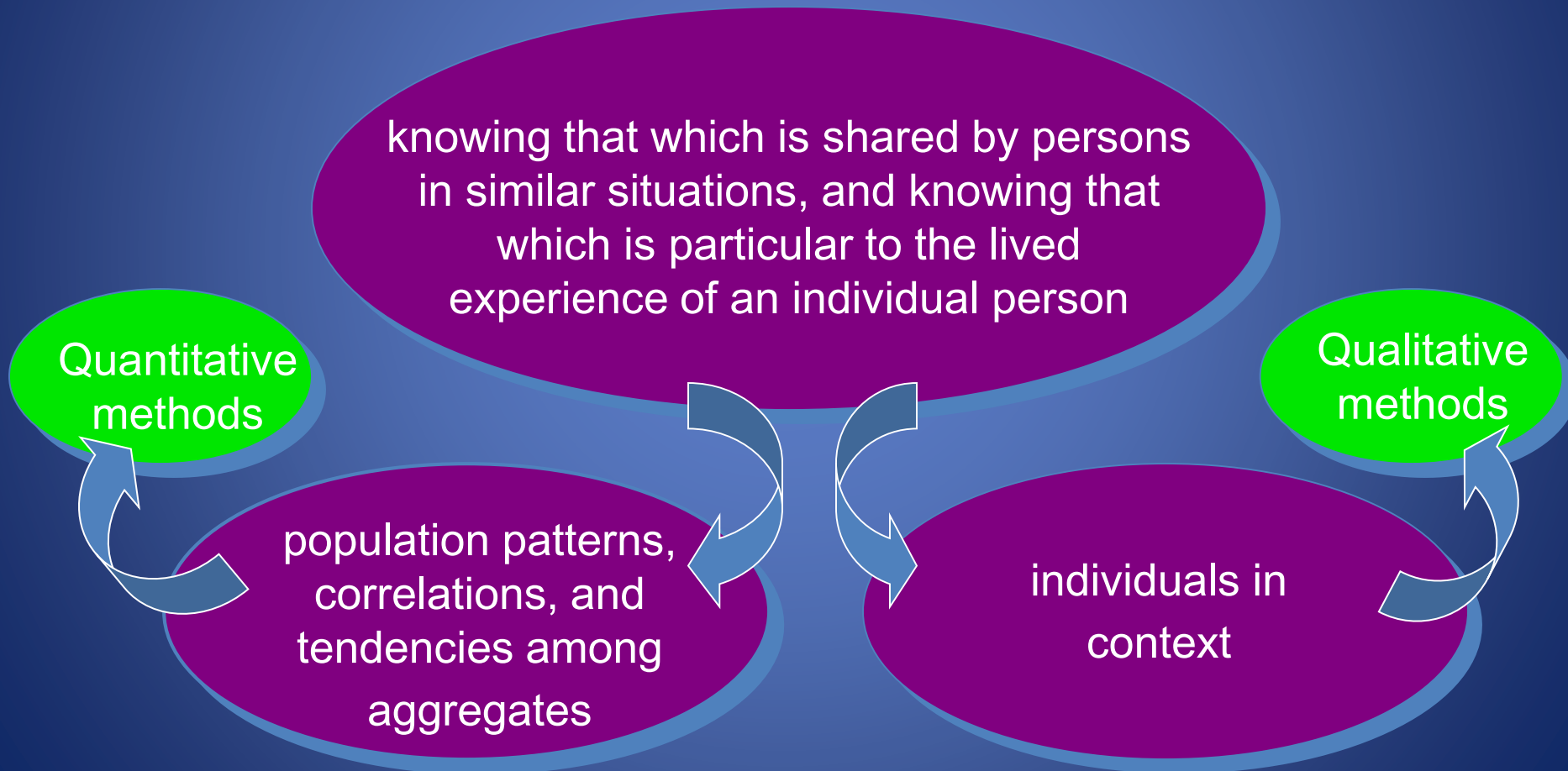
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The Nature of Clinical Knowledge

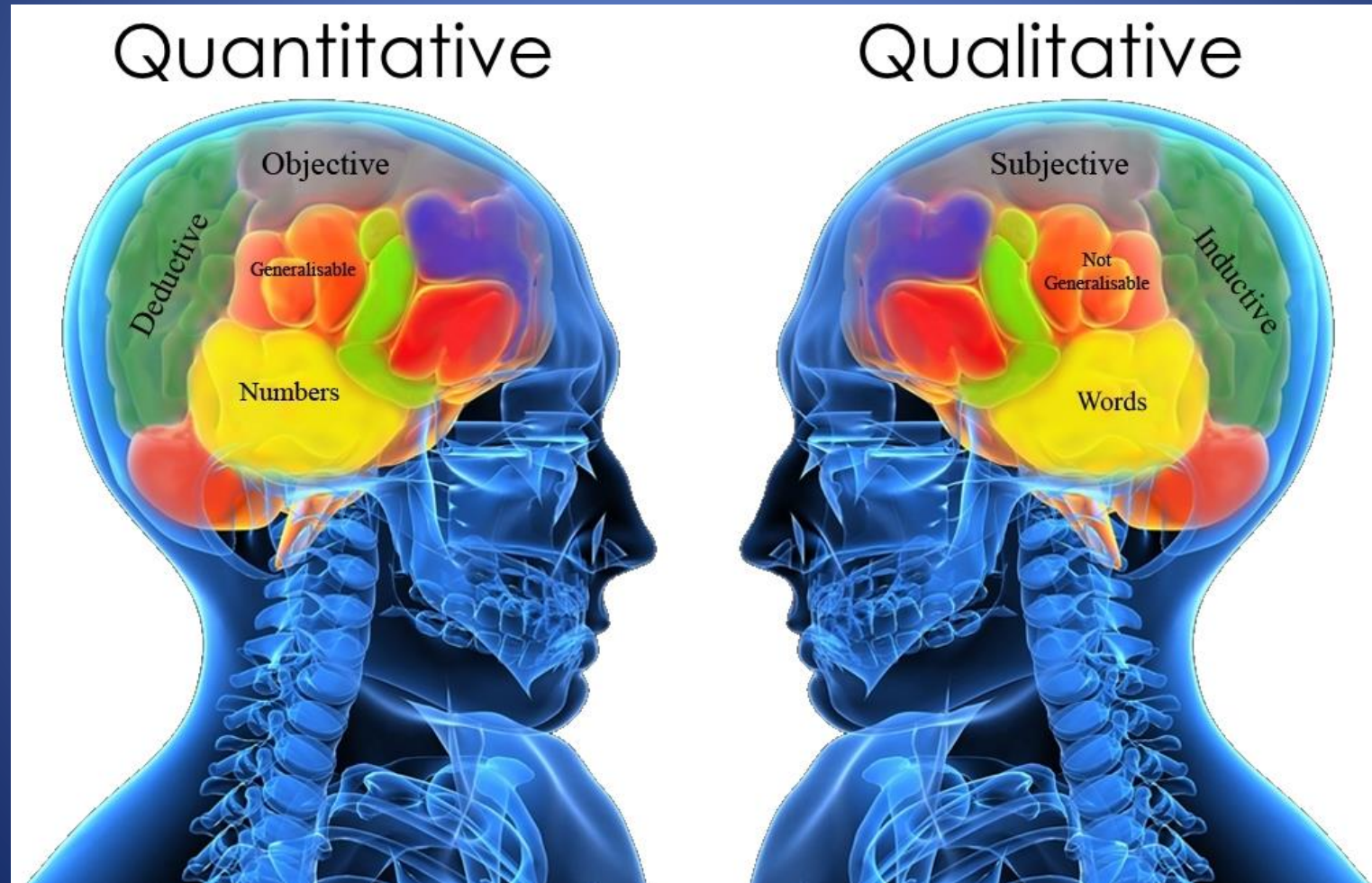


The Nature of the Knowledge that Nursing Requires

Two equally compelling dimensions:



Paradigmatic Distinction from Science as Nursing Knew It



Early Explorers of Qualitative Methods in Nursing



Methodological Roots of Qualitative Methods

Natural philosophy



Natural science



Science



Social science

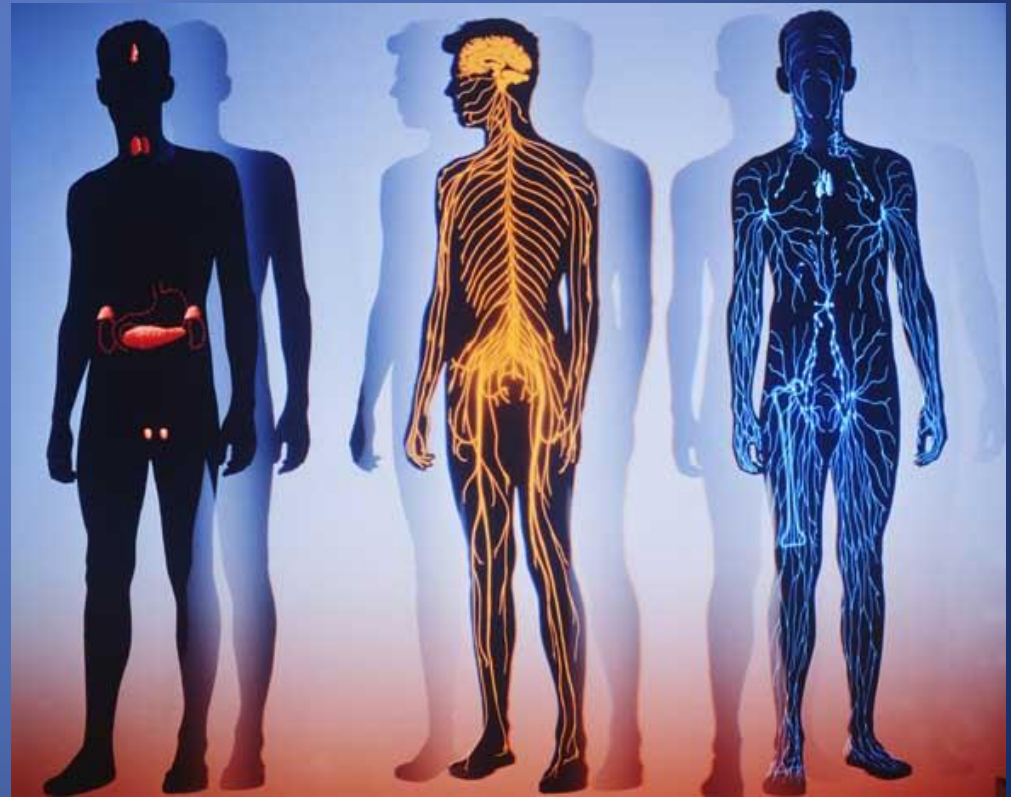
Anthropology	Sociology	Psychology
Ethnography	Grounded Theory	Phenomenology

Nursing's Epistemological Hardwiring



Wholes and Parts

- Context for the conceptual understanding of a system in which all parts interact and are meaningful to one another.



Commonalities and Differences

- Context for understanding the nature of scientific claims about human health status, health experience and health care delivery



Experience and Ideas

- Context for coming to know what we know and the basis upon which we know it within an applied practice profession.



Nursing Knowledge

Never static, fixed truths, but rather:

- Processual
- Systematic
- Flexible
- Infinitely Adaptive

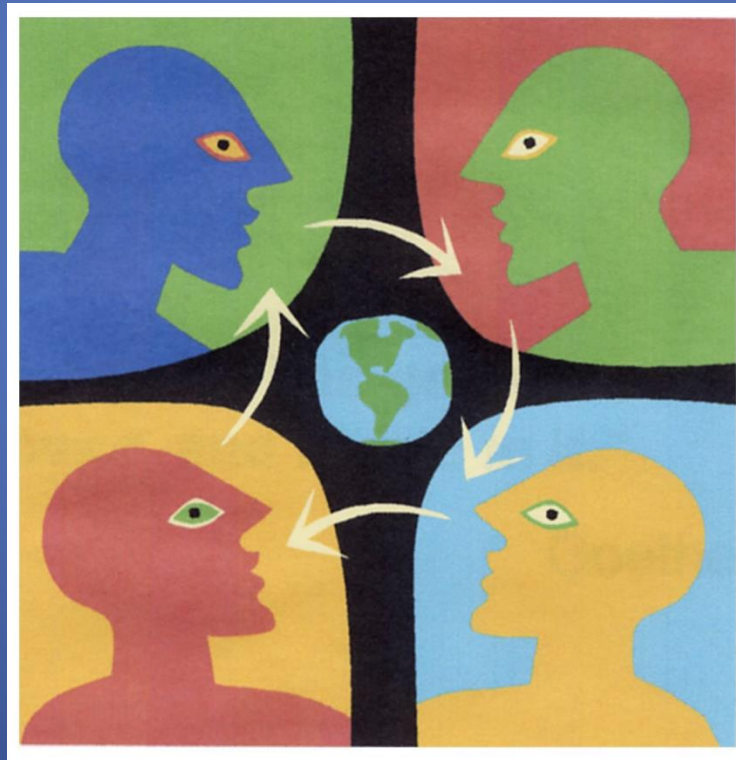


The Standardizing Tone of an Evidence Agenda

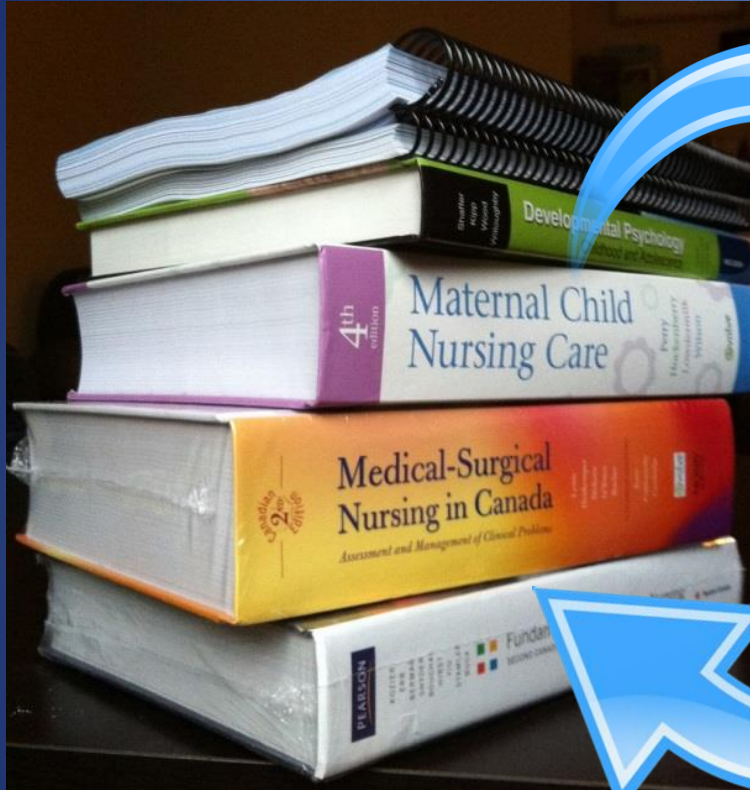


The Moral Implications of a Justice Mandate

- Research as participation , action, intervention



The Relationship Between General & Particular



General knowledge

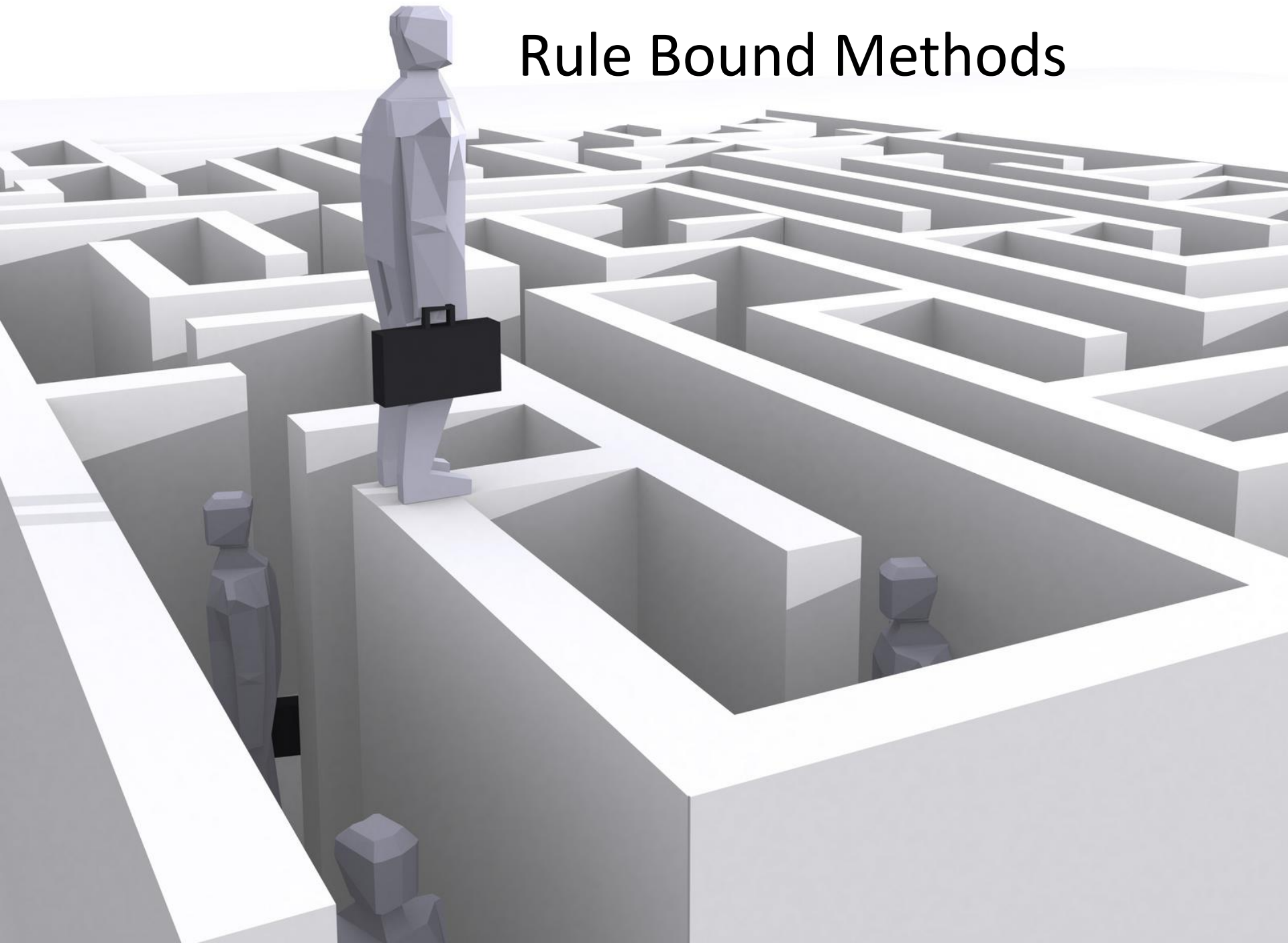
Particular case

History of Confronting Resistance for early qualitative researchers

- Health science community
- Social scientist colleagues
- Grant reviewers/journal editors
- Paradigmatic thinking



Rule Bound Methods



Methodological Rigidity

The problem of rigor in qualitative research

There are few explicit discussions in nursing literature of how qualitative research can be made as rigorous as it is relevant to the perspective and goals of nursing. Four factors complicate the debate about the scientific merits of qualitative research: the varieties of qualitative methods, the lack of clear boundaries between quantitative and qualitative research, the tendency to evaluate qualitative research against conventional scientific criteria of rigor, and the artistic features of qualitative inquiry. A framework for understanding the similarities and differences in research approaches and a summary of strategies to achieve rigor in qualitative research are presented.

1986: *Advances in Nursing Science*, 8(3): 27-37.

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QUALITATIVE methods of inquiry have increasingly been accepted as relevant to and congruent with the perspective and goals of nursing, but they continue to be criticized for failing to pass tests of methodological rigor. Although there are fine examples of qualitative research and descriptions of what it is and how it can be done, there are few explicit discussions in nursing literature of how qualitative research can be made rigorous without sacrificing its relevance.



Rigor or rigor mortis: The problem of rigor in qualitative research revisited

1993: *Advances in Nursing Science*, 16(2): 1-8.

Issues are raised by the persistent concern with achieving rigor in qualitative research, including the rigidity that often characterizes the search for validity in qualitative work and the threat to validity that the search for reliability may pose. Member validation is highlighted as a technique that exemplifies not only the practical, but also the profoundly theoretical, representational, and even moral problems raised by all procedures aimed at ensuring the trustworthiness of qualitative work. Key words: qualitative research, reliability, rigor, validity

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THE PROBLEM OF rigor in qualitative research continues to arouse, beguile, and misdirect. As researchers, we have a much clearer understanding of the challenges involved in producing good qualitative work and of techniques that can be used to ensure its trustworthiness. Yet we also remain in danger of succumbing to the "illusion of technique"^{1,2}; of making a fetish of it at the expense of perfecting a craft and of

Methodological Orthodoxy in Qualitative Nursing Research: Analysis of the Issues

Sally E. Thorne

In this analysis, the applicability of orthodox qualitative research traditions to the questions of nursing science is considered from a critical perspective. The theoretical traditions of ethnography, phenomenology, and grounded theory are examined in light of their relationship to the larger projects of anthropology, philosophy, and sociology. From that perspective, the questions inherent to nursing science are distinguished, revealing major departures from the process, product, and even purpose of the original inquiries. This analysis provides a platform on which the possibilities for a uniquely nursing approach to qualitative inquiry can be envisioned. In this spirit, ideas about what that methodological perspective might entail are proposed.

The divergent theoretical underpinnings of qualitative (naturalistic) and quantitative (positivistic) research paradigms demand incompatible approaches to the conduct of all phases of

Author's Note: The author wishes to acknowledge the contributions of Juliene Lipson, Marci Catanzaro, and Barbara Dobbie to the formulation of the ideas expressed in this article. Correspondence or requests for reprints should be addressed to Sally E. Thorne, School of Nursing, University of British Columbia, 2211 Wesbrook Mall, T-206, Vancouver, BC V6T 2B5, Canada.

QUALITATIVE HEALTH RESEARCH, Vol. 1 No. 2, May 1991 178-199
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178

Research in Nursing & Health, 1997, 20, 169-177

Focus on Qualitative Methods

Interpretive Description: A Noncategorical Qualitative Alternative for Developing Nursing Knowledge

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Received 23 January 1996; accepted 28 August 1996

Abstract: Despite nursing's enthusiastic endorsement of the applicability of qualitative research approaches to answering relevant clinical questions, many nurse researchers have been hesitant to depart from traditional qualitative research methods. While various derivations of phenomenology, grounded theory, and ethnography have been popularized within qualitative nursing research, the methodological principles upon which these approaches are based reflect the foundations and objectives of disciplines whose aims are sometimes quite distinct from nursing's domain of inquiry. Thus, as many nurse researchers have discovered, nursing's unique knowledge mandate may not always be well served by strict adherence to traditional methods as the "gold standard" for qualitative nursing research. The authors present the point of view that a non-categorical description, drawing on principles grounded in nursing's epistemological mandate, may be an appropriate methodological alternative for credible research toward the development of nursing science. They propose a coherent set of strategies for conceptual orientation, sampling, data construction, analysis, and reporting by which nurses can use an interpretive descriptive approach to develop knowledge about human health and illness experience phenomena without sacrificing the theoretical or methodological integrity that the traditional qualitative approaches provide. © 1997 John Wiley & Sons, Inc. Res Nurs Health 20: 169-177, 1997

Keywords: research method; qualitative research; interpretive description

The history and tradition within qualitative nursing research originates in the methodologies of several different disciplinary traditions. Just as quantitative scientific approaches proved insufficient for answering all of nursing's theoretical and practical questions, the qualitative approaches derived from other disciplines have not always met

the unique demands of nurse researchers. We examine some of the reasons that nurse researchers have felt compelled to depart from traditional methods, despite a concurrent concern for retaining methodological integrity in their work. We take the position that it may be an appropriate time in our history to consider noncategorical qualita-

Phenomenology

Nursing

Bracketing
Preconceptions

Building on Disciplinary
Knowledge

Essential Nature of
Lived Phenomena

Human & Contextual
Variation

Pure Description

Interpretation &
Explanation

Grounded Theory

Nursing

Symbolic
Interaction

Assumptions not
Predicated on
Interactional Material

Basic Social
Processes

No Presumption of
Underlying Mechanisms

Individual Account as
Access to Fundamental
Explanation for Social
Behavior

Individual Account as
Window into
Possibilities in Shared
Aspects

Ethnography

Nursing

Cultural
Immersion

Seeing Familiar Culture
in New Ways

Interconnectedness of
Whole Cultures

No Preconception of
Shared Cultural
Understandings

Challenge Subjective
Understandings with
Behavioral Observation

Invite Interpretation
& Explanation

Further Influences

- Funding body requirements (eg predetermined sample and design; assumptions of relevance)
- Social science norms (eg theoretical frameworks; saturation)
- Journal manuscript length (depth & richness)



Resultant Body of Qualitative Material

- Too many small studies
- Confusion over role of theory
- Essentializing claims
- Abdication of generalization
- Overuse of metaphoric representations



Not answering NURSING's questions

Phenomenological Question

- What is **the lived experience** of pain?

Grounded Theory Question

- What are **the stages** of adaptation to diagnosis of a terminal condition?

Nursing Question

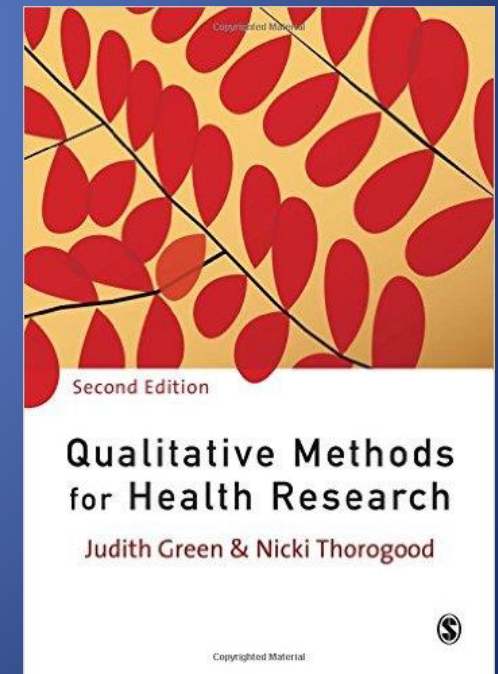
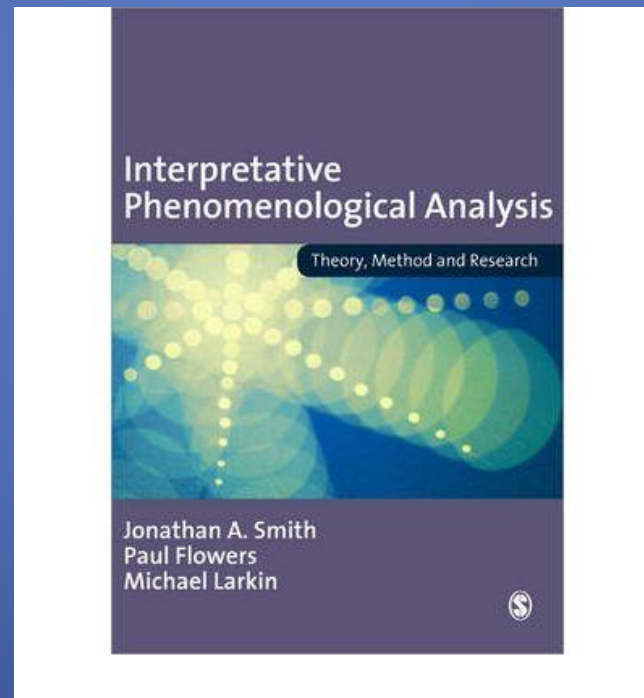
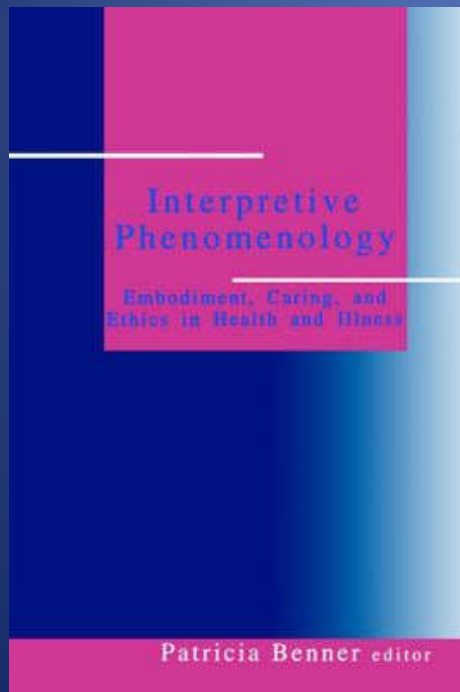
- How will I recognize and interpret my patients' diverse pain expressions?

Nursing Question

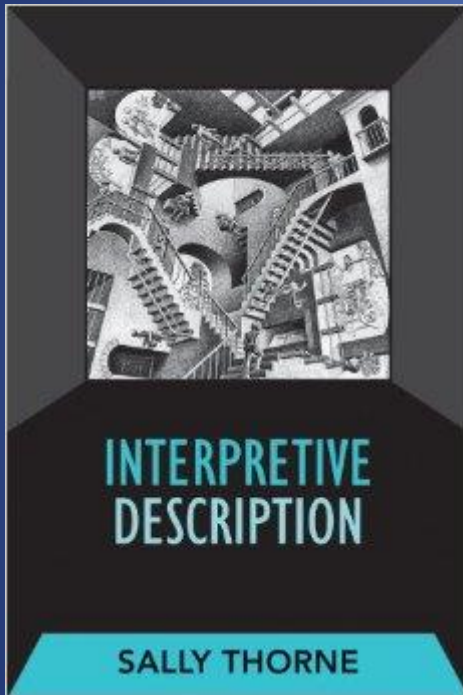
- What can be learned about providing support from patient perspectives on the experience of being diagnosed with a terminal condition?

Applied Qualitative Methodology

The Next Generation



Interpretive Description



- Logic model derived from disciplinary epistemology
- Borrows the best of technique without the theoretical baggage
- Allows for focused reflective studies oriented to the knowledge needs of the discipline

What it adds to the available methodological options

- Freedom to depart from methodological rules invented for the intellectual projects of other disciplines



- Drawing on nursing epistemology rather than borrowed theory



The core structure of nursing thought as philosophical underpinning

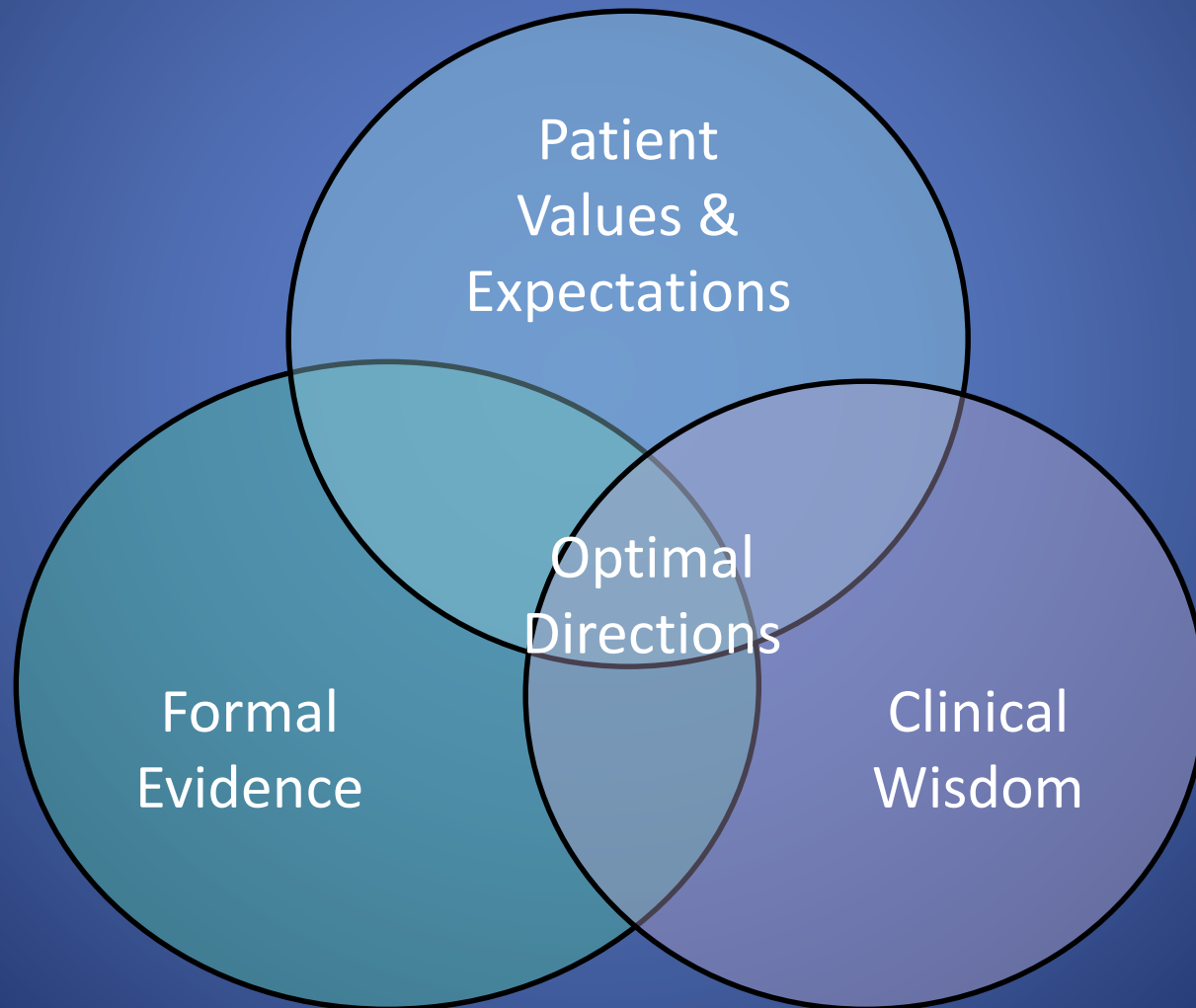
- Creativity in the use of data sources and inquiry approaches



- Knowledge translation built into the initial design



- Orientation toward a body of more relevant and useable qualitatively derived knowledge



Putting Qualitative Research to Better Use

- Challenging current assumptions & ideologies
- Explaining exceptions & variance
- Illuminating complexity
- Inspiring empathy
- Filling the gaps where population research (& other quantitative findings) cannot go



Qualitative research as a corrective to big science



Explicitly emphasizes both commonalities and diversities



Allows us to appreciate variance



Invites the researcher to articulate:

- Nature of disciplinary foreststructure
- Justification for this particular study at this point in time
- Implications of data collection and analytic approach choices
- Influence of context on conclusions
- Implications of findings on practice insight (including new questions)



Credibility Criteria that Ring True for Nurses

- Epistemological Integrity
- Representative Credibility
- Analytic Logic
- Interpretive Authority



And the work continues...

