

Choosing Your Research Method in a Nutshell
 By James Rice and Marilyn K. Simon

Research Method	Brief	Type
Action research	Participatory - problem identification, solution, solution review	III
Appreciative inquiry	Helps groups identify solutions	III, IV
Case Study research	Group observation to determine how and why a situation exists	III
Causal-comparative research	Identify causal relationship among variable that can't be controlled	IV
Content analysis	Analyze text and make inferences	IV
Correlational research	Collect data and determine level of correlation between variables	I
Critical Incident technique	Identification of determining incident of a critical event	III
Delphi research	Analysis of expert knowledge to forecast future events	I, IV
Descriptive research	Study of "as is" phenomena	I
Design based research/ decision analysis	Identify meaningful change in practices	II
Ethnographic	Cultural observation of a group	
Evaluation research	Study the effectiveness of an intervention or program	IV
Experimental research	Study the effect of manipulating a variable or variables	II
Factor analysis	Statistically assess the relationship between large numbers of variables	I
Grounded Theory	Produce a theory that explains a process based on observation	III, IV
Hermeneutic research	Study the meaning of subjects/texts (exegetics is text only) by concentrating on the historical meaning of the experience and its developmental and cumulative effects on the individual and society	III
Historical research	historical data collection and analysis of person or organization	IV
Meta-analysis research	Seek patterns in data collected by other studies and formulate principals	
Narrative research	Study of a single person's experiences	
Needs assessment	Systematic process of determine the needs of a defined demographic population	
Phenomenography	Answer questions about thinking and learning	
Phenomenology	Make sense of lived experiences of participants regarding a specified phenomenon.	III, IV
Quasi-experimental	Manipulation of variables in populations without benefit of random assignment or control group.	II

Q-method	A mixed-method approach to study subjectivity - patterns of thought	I
Regression-discontinuity design (RD)	Cut-off score assignment of participants to group (non-random) used to study effectiveness of an intervention	II
Repertory grid analysis	Interview process to determine how a person interprets the meaning of an experience	I
Retrospective record review	Study of historic data collected about a prior intervention (both effected and control group)	II
Semiology	Studies the meaning of symbols	II, III
Situational analysis	Post-modernist approach to grounded theory (holistic view rather than isolated variables) by studying lived experiences around a phenomenon	
Trend Analysis research	Formulate a forecast based on regression analysis of data	II
True Experimental research	Structured research with isolated variables and controls	

Type of Researcher		Brief
I	Conceptual Theorist	Holistic and imaginative - believes in TOE.
II	Analytical Scientist	Preference for exactness, precision, and unambiguous situations
III	Particular Humanist	Humans are too complex to study as a whole
IV	Conceptual Humanist	Knowledge exists to better humanity