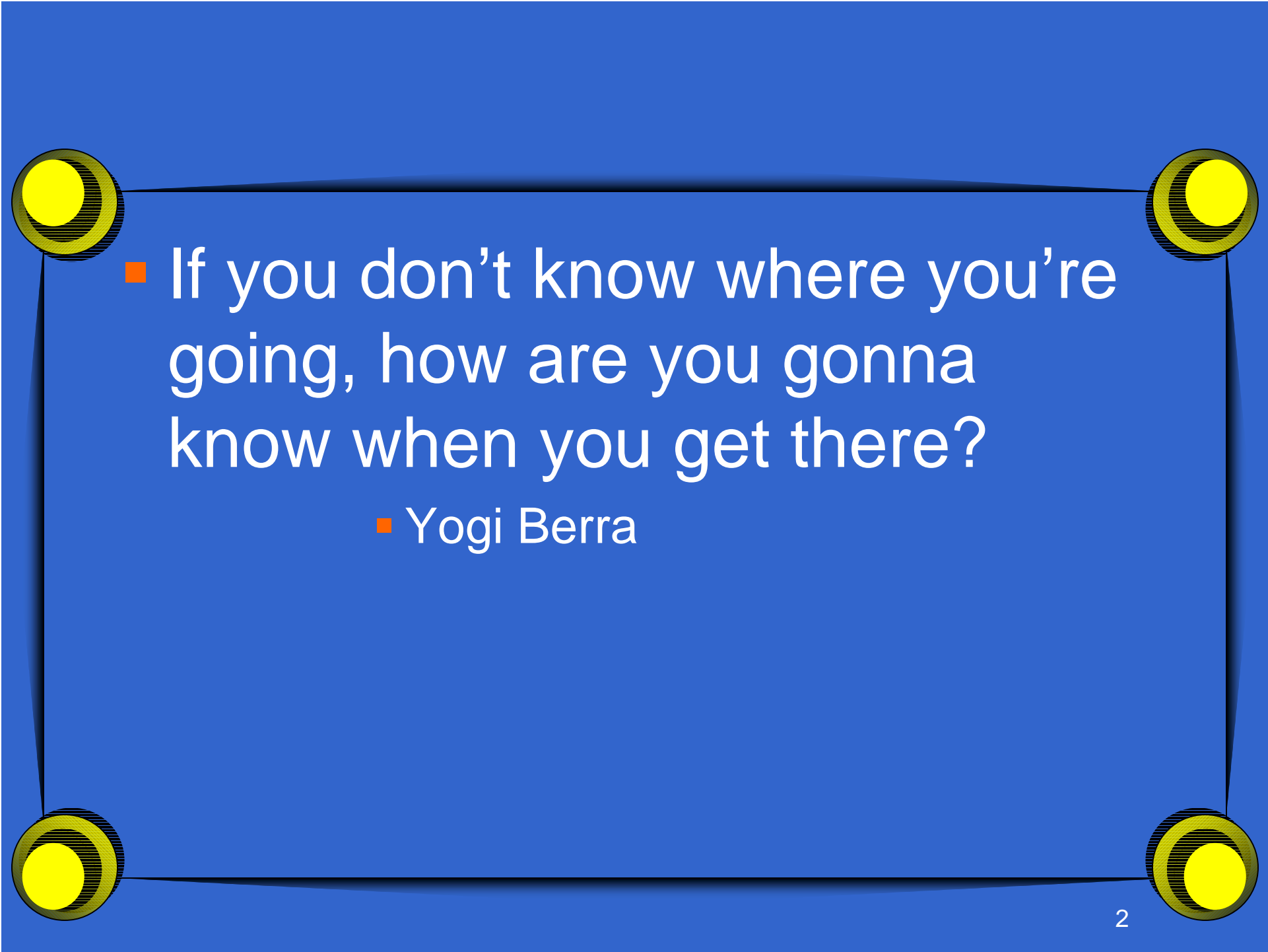




Qualitative Evaluation for Educational Research

Beth Graue

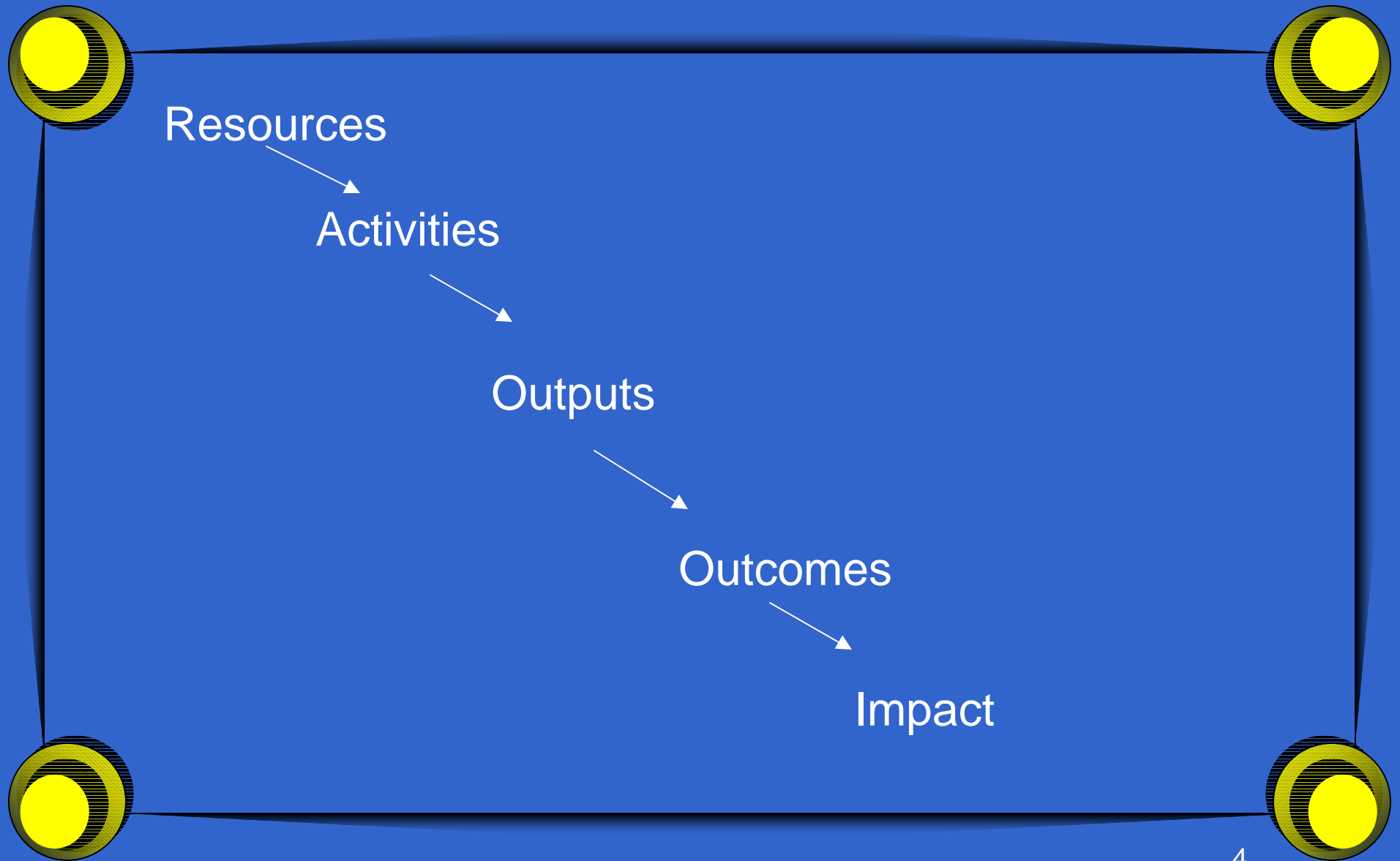
UW-Madison School of Education

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- If you don't know where you're going, how are you gonna know when you get there?
 - Yogi Berra

Logic Models

- The program logic model is defined as *a picture of how a program does its work* – the theory and assumptions underlying the program. A program logic model links outcomes (both short- and long-term) with program activities/processes and the theoretical assumptions/principles of the program.

Logic model elements



PROGRAM EVALUATION QUESTIONS AND INDICATORS:

- Focus area
- Audience
- Questions
- Information use
- Indicators
- Technical assistance

Types of Qualitative Evaluation Applications

- Evaluate individual outcomes
- Document program's processes
- Conduct an implementation evaluation
- Evaluate program quality
- Document development over time
- Investigate system & context changes
- Look for unanticipated outcomes

Sampling

- Person
- Incident
- Process
- Site
- Temporal

Purposeful Sampling

- Extreme/deviant case
- Intensity
- Maximum variation
- Homogeneous
- Typical case
- Critical case
- Snowball or chain

Purposeful Sampling -2-

- Theory-based/operational construct
- Stratified purposeful
- Opportunistic/emergent
- Random purposeful
- Politically important cases
- Combination/mixed purposeful

Design fieldwork to be clear regarding:

- Participation by observer
- Emic vs etic perspective
- Degree of collaboration/participation
- Duration of fieldwork
- Focus of observations
- Use of of predetermined sensitizing concepts

Anticipate analysis

- Design evaluation to meet deadlines
- Stay focused on primary evaluation questions & issues
- Know criteria used by primary intended users to judge quality
- Prepare for creativity, ambiguity, & challenges of analysis
- Protect the data

Issues in analysis

- Purpose guides analysis
- Purpose guides reporting
 - Summative evaluation
 - Formative evaluation

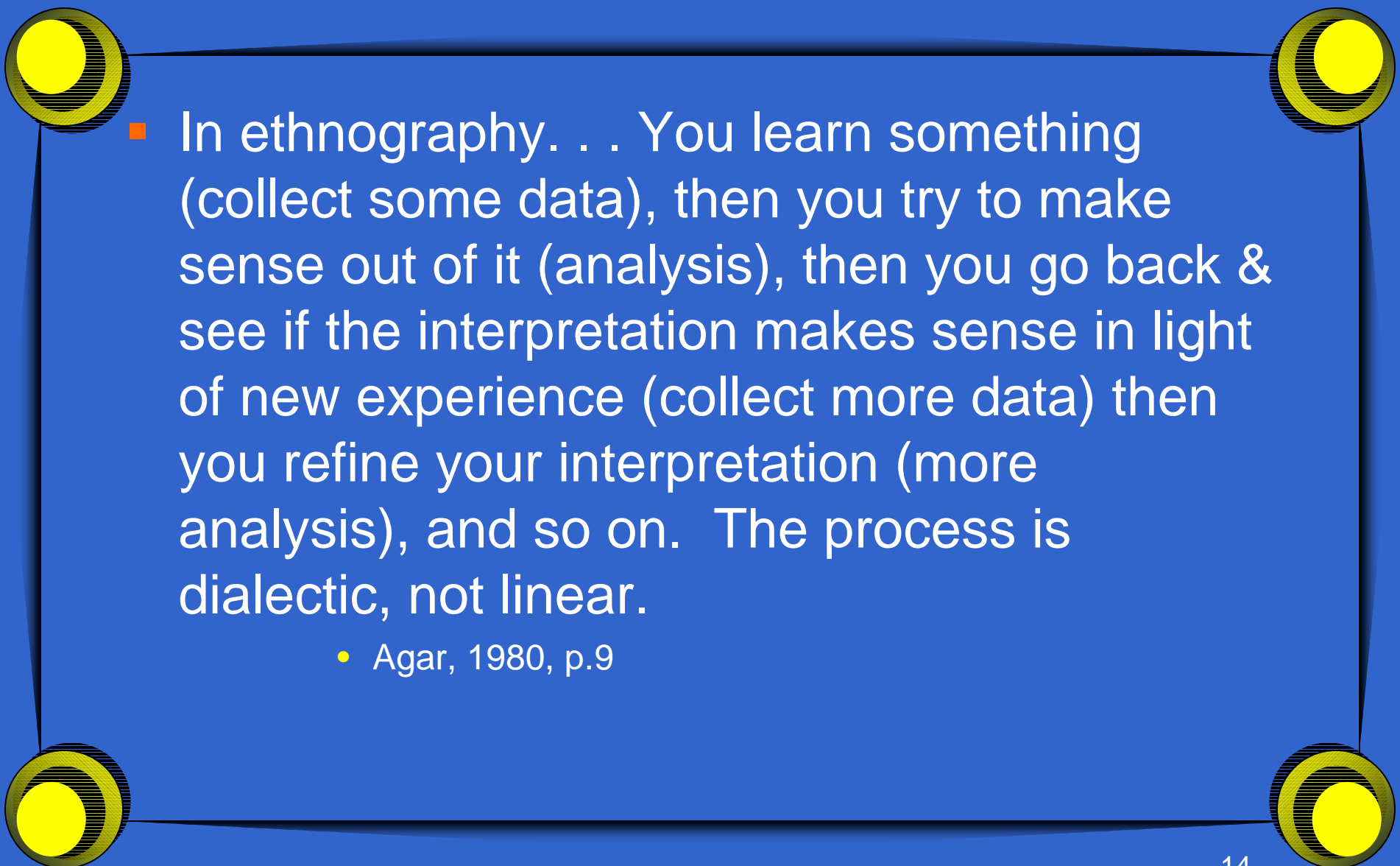
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graph TD; A[Confirmatory Stage] <--> B[Generative & emergent Stage]; A <--> C[Systematic analysis Following fieldwork]; B <--> C;
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Confirmatory Stage

Generative
& emergent
Stage

Systematic analysis
Following fieldwork

Stages & Sequence of Analysis

- 
- In ethnography. . . You learn something (collect some data), then you try to make sense out of it (analysis), then you go back & see if the interpretation makes sense in light of new experience (collect more data) then you refine your interpretation (more analysis), and so on. The process is dialectic, not linear.

- Agar, 1980, p.9

Data Inventory

- Are fieldnotes complete?
- Are there parts you could fill in now?
- Can additional data be generated?
- Are all data properly labeled with a notation system that makes retrieval manageable?
- Are transcriptions complete?
- Have quality checks been done?
- Have you backed up your data?

Selecting software for analysis

- PC/Mac
- How entering data?
- Storage differences
- Coding variations
 - Ease of (re)organizing codes
- Data linking mechanisms
- Ease of navigating/browsing
- Ease, speed/process of search/retrieval
- Display variations
- Tracking details



Analysis

Evaluation

Description

Description vs. analysis vs. evaluation

- Aim for thickness at all levels
- Direct quotes used
- Locate quotes in context
- Base assertions in data
- Make evaluations explicit

Distinguish case studies from cross-case analysis

- Make cases complete
- Make cases holistic & context sensitive
- Ground cross-case analysis in individual cases
- Identify cross-case patterns & themes with citations/illustrations from cases

Inductive vs. deductive analysis

- Inductive analysis-*discovering* patterns, themes, categories in the data.
- Deductive analysis - analyzing data through an existing framework
- Build on the strengths of BOTH kinds of analysis

Convergence

- Begin with convergence
 - Recurring regularities through internal homogeneity and external heterogeneity
 - Prioritize categories by utility, salience, credibility, uniqueness, heuristic value, feasibility
 - Test category system for completeness & coherence, then try out on an outsider to project

Divergence

- Divergence is the mirror of convergence
 - By the processes of extension, bridging, surfacing
 - Bring closure when sources of info are exhausted, when categories are saturated, & clear regularities have emerged

Relating process & outcome

- Construct a process-outcome matrix
 - Distinguish process descriptions from outcome documentation
 - Show linkages between processes & outcomes

Integrate Quantitative & Qualitative Elements

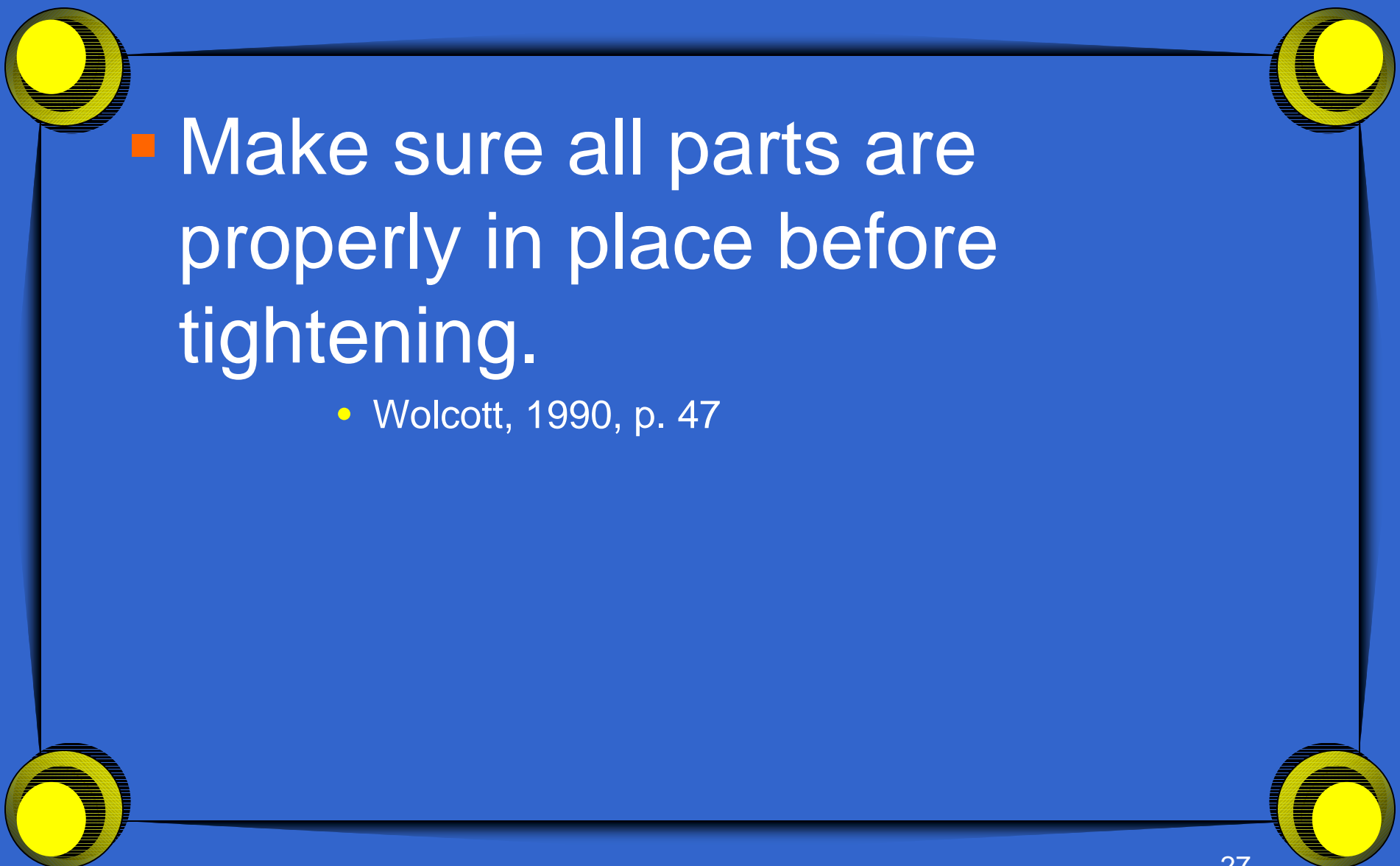
- Note where findings from different perspectives/methods reinforce each other
- Note & explain differences
- 100% convergence doesn't indicate a great design -- might be an indicator of a limited imagination!

Enhancing the rigor & credibility of analysis

- Consider & discuss alternative interpretations of findings
- Consider & discuss cases & data that don't fit patterns and themes
- Triangulation - it's all about inferences
 - Methodological
 - Data sources
 - Analyst
 - Theory/perspective

Ways to organize/present description

- Chronological order
- Researcher or narrator order
- Progressive focusing
- Day in the life
- Critical or key event
- Plot and characters
- Groups in interaction
- Follow an analytic framework

- 
- Make sure all parts are properly in place before tightening.

- Wolcott, 1990, p. 47

Analysis

systematic procedures followed in order to identify essential features & relationships

- Highlight & display your findings
- Follow & report “systematic” fieldwork procedures
- Flesh out whatever analytical framework guided the data collection
- Identify patterned regularities in the data
- Compare cases
- Evaluate to a standard
- Contextualize to a broader analytical framework
- Critique the research process

Evaluation

- Extend the analysis
- Mark then make the leap
- When you come to the end, STOP!
- Do as directed/suggested
- Turn to theory
- Connect with personal experience
- Analyze the evaluation process
- Explore alternative formats

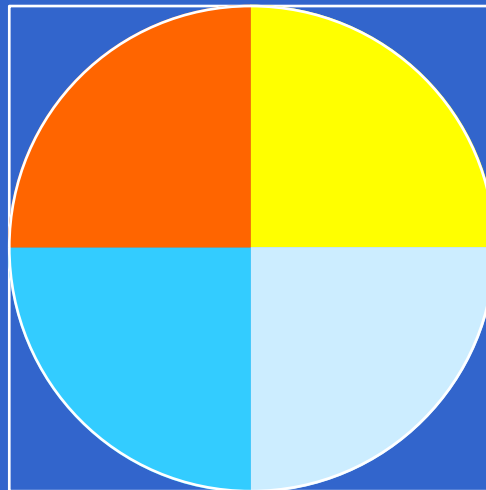
Substantive Significance

- Analyst argues for substantive significance through findings & conclusions but the READERS/USERS make their own value judgment
 - How solid, coherent, consistent is evidence in support of findings?
 - How consistent are findings with other knowledge?
 - To what extent are findings useful for evaluation's purpose?

Validities

- Technical
- Interpretive
- Narrative
- Praxis - oriented

Qualitative Evaluation Paradigms



- Post Positivism
- Utilitarian Pragmatism
- Intepretivism/constructivism
- Critical Social Sciences

Audits

- Audits or meta-evaluation helpful if stakes are high & credibility of findings would be enhanced
 - Quality audit
 - Dependability judgment
 - Confirmability judgment
 - Related to purpose & intended use of evaluation

Evaluation reports

- What is essential -- *make that the focus*
- Review evaluation findings
- Determine criteria by which report will be judged