

## Doing Naturalistic Inquiry: Some highlights from Erlandson

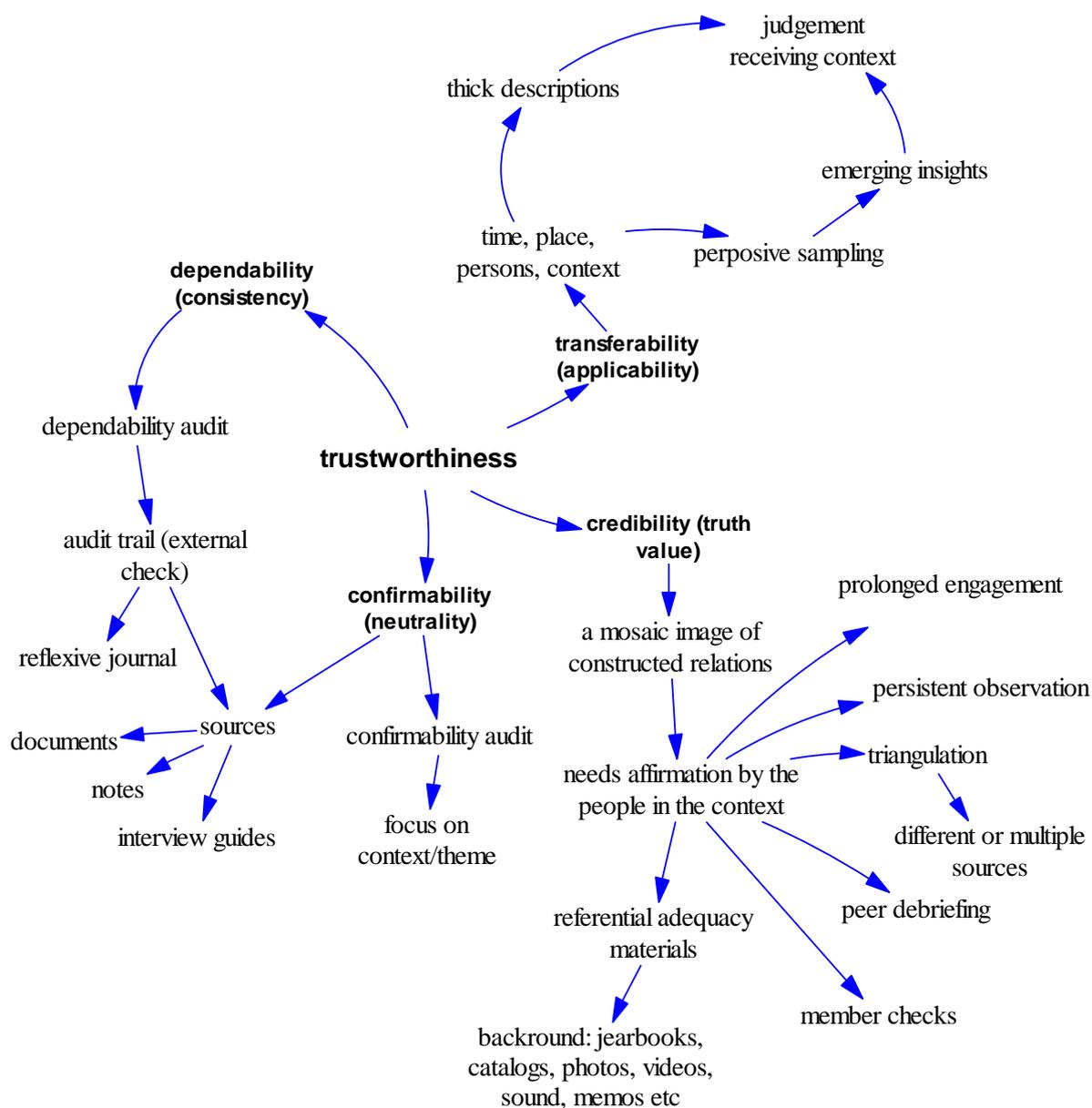
*Tonnie van der Zouwen, 27 april 2004*

### 1.1 Characteristics

- Naturalistic findings are created, not discovered, in a joint effort of the emergent constructions
- Successful in terms of the commitment it fosters and the action it stimulates
- Commitment is measured in the extent it is shared by most stakeholders (bought into)
- The formal inquirer is but the primus inter pares, a first among equals
- Collect critical incidents
- Exploring interviews
- Dynamic character: each factor can be cause as well as effect
- Results in a grounded, emergent theory
- Tacit knowledge (including intuitions, apprehensions, feelings) is treated on equal basis with propositional knowledge
- The researcher is the primary research instrument
- Consists of case study build on data derived from the key human sources enriched with data from documents and records (interviews, documents, observations, artifacts of interest)
- Language shapes experience: The language we speak determines what we experience and in turn is driven by the categories we construct to make sense out of the world we experience
- What we “want to know” and what we “need to know” determines the classification system we use to determine our language and this determines the construction of the reality we live in; different abstraction levels of words (see also the different levels in formality of language in HEYLIGEN et al)
- Communication depends on shared constructions → make thick descriptions
- Shared constructions shape relationships
- Goal: to honor and empower, not finding the (one) truth; truth is negotiated; negotiation is about:
  1. how “truth” will be determined
  2. how it will be communicated
  3. how error will be detected and corrected

## Quality criteria

In Naturalistic Inquiry trustworthiness is established by credibility, applicability, consistency and neutrality:



*Quality criteria for Naturalistic Inquiry,  
model by Tonnie van der Zouwen*

## Interviews

Basic kinds of interview questions:

1. Experience/ behavior: eliciting descriptions of experience, behaviors, actions (What are some of the most memorable experiences you have had as ....)
2. Opinion/ value: try to find out what people think, to tell us the goals, intentions, desires, values (why did you become a .....)
3. Feeling: understanding emotional responses (How did you feel when ....)
4. Knowledge: factual information (How many people are working here?)
5. Sensory: what sensory stimuli are respondents sensitive to (Why do you like plants in your room?)
6. Background/ demographic: understanding the respondent's education, previous experiences, age, residence etc. (Will you briefly explain your educational background?)

## Literature:

Erlandson, David A. et al.: Doing Naturalistic Inquiry (1993)

Guba & Lincoln: 4<sup>th</sup> Generation Evaluation (1989)

Heylighen, Francis & Dewaele: The formality of language (1999)