



# Relative roles of qualitative and quantitative methodologies in interdisciplinary research

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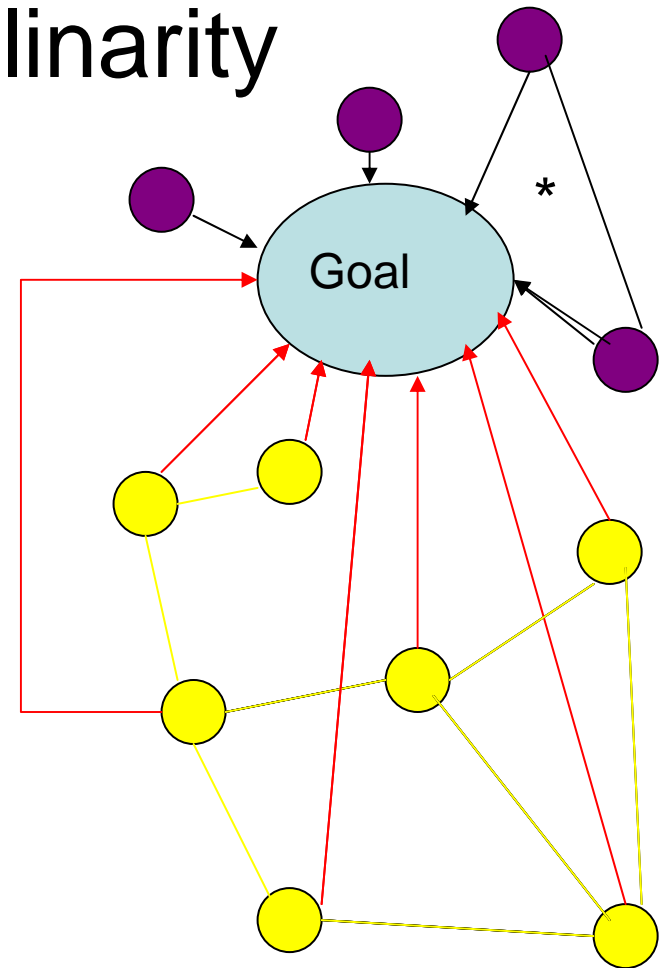
# Your experiences



What methodologies have you used or are you planning to use in your RELU projects?

# Interdisciplinarity

- Crosses disciplinary boundaries
- Common goal setting
- Integration of disciplines
- Development of integrated knowledge and theory
- Integration of non-academic participants



\* Adapted from Tress, Tress and Fry (2005)

# Some assertions

- Quantitative and qualitative are not synonymous with social and natural sciences
- There are a huge variety of methods, most projects/researchers use only a small subset
- There are similarities in natural and social science, quantitative and qualitative methods in practice but they are presented in very different ways

## Commonly held assumptions – are these disputable?

### Qualitative methods

- Help us to understand the meanings that people apply to social phenomena
- Focus on process
- Open models
- Generate non generalizable data
- Inductive/abductive
- Presentation of results may be more difficult

### Quantitative methods

- Objective
- Generalizable
- De-contextualize human behaviour
- Closed models
- Tend to be deductive and involve hypothesis testing
- May provide more readily apparent results

# Possible ways of bringing both together

1. Qualitative may contribute to the design of quantitative instruments
2. Quantitative studies may use qualitative to help interpret findings
3. Qualitative studies may use quantitative to help interpret findings
4. May be used to cross-validate findings
5. Some forms of modelling

Adapted from Weinreich (1996)



The challenge of developing methods for interdisciplinary research is to create mutual understanding to achieve a common goal.

What do we need to do to improve our practice?