participants. The conversational approach may result in better ecological validity (*than the semi-structured interview*)

- Useful in socially sensitive issues because people may be more likely to reveal how they think and why they experience what they do

| Narrative | Useful way to gain an in-depth understanding of how people construct meaning in their life  
|          | Can be used with all people because they can use their own language and talk freely without being interrupted  
|          | May be useful in exploring socially sensitive issues because it gives insight into how people think and why they experience what they do  
|          | Time consuming to transcribe and analyse the huge amount of data from narrative interviews  
|          | Narrative may go in all directions because only the participant decides what to tell. Not all data can be used in research.  
|          | Ethical issues involved in having people tell about traumatic experiences (*especially* if they experience a major life crisis). | result in data that do not really represent the individual participant’s beliefs  
|          | Participants may not want to disclose private information if topic is particularly sensitive |
Discuss considerations involved in setting up and carrying out an observation

Decide on type of observation

- Overt/Covert, participant/non-participant observation, and how choice of method could influence the data (e.g. increase participant expectations).
  - Because it is important to pick the right method to avoid bias in the topic under investigation.

Decide on type of data

- Sampling method
  - Consider the selection criteria for participants. Sampling depends on the research topic.
  - Because the focus has to be on how specific people in specific situations
- Data recording
  - Consider decisions of how to make field notes in covert observations.
  - If observation is overt, data collection is expected by participants.
  - Researcher should decide what to note in observations (e.g. conversations, interaction between group members, norms, and power relationships).
  - In socially sensitive areas, videos or audiotapes cannot be used for ethical reasons as it would reveal participants’ identity.
  - Because the researcher may want to focus on a particular aspect of their observation

Conducting investigation

- Observer characteristics
  - Match observers to the target group in a participant observation. (e.g. female researcher would not participate in an observation of a street gang).
  - Because the success of participant observations depends on the researcher’s ability to blend in with participants.
- Degree of involvement in the group
  - In overt observations, the degree of involvement may be superficial.
  - In covert observations, it could be necessary to accompany group members. Could be ethically problematic or dangerous (e.g. street gang).
  - Because the researcher may need to be more involved with the observation in order to understand the causes and motives behind people’s behaviour.
- Objectivity of researcher
  - The researcher stays a long time in the field and could become more subjective as time passes. Better if more observers work in the field and compare data.
  - Researcher needs to be attentive to participant expectancy and researcher bias. Credibility checks and reflexivity needs to be in place.
  - Because it makes sure that the researcher gains unbiased data about the topic under investigation.
- Ethical considerations
  - Informed consent. For covert observation, the group’s permission to study them is not obtained.
  - Debriefing of participants after the study – gain retrospective consent in covert observations if possible.
Discuss sampling techniques appropriate to qualitative research

- The goal of sampling techniques is to select participants who are particularly informative about the research under investigation.

**Purposive sampling**

- Participants are selected based on salient characteristics relevant to the topic of research.
- Used because it can gather a sample that reflects the diversity of the sample population.

**Snowball sampling**

- Participants already in the study helps the researcher recruit more participants through their social networks.
- Used because it is an easy way to recruit participants for research

**Convenience sampling**

- Participants are chosen based on availability. People at hand are asked if they are willing to participate in the research. Those who are asked are “volunteers”.
- Used because it is an easy way to recruit participants for research

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sampling</th>
<th>Strengths</th>
<th>Limitations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Purposive**| - Participants represent the research topic because they are selected specifically based on salient characteristics relevant to the research.  
- It is a relatively easy way to select a sample. A sample may be supplemented with more participants during the research. | - Sampling may be biased. (If the sampling process is based on objective selection criteria, documented, and explained, the bias is limited).  
- It is difficult to generalise from a small purposive sample. |
| **Snowball** | - It is a cost-efficient and easy way to recruit participants.  
- It is useful in sensitive research where participants are not easily accessible. | - It is likely to be biased because participants know each other and may have same attitudes or experiences.  
- Ethical issues (anonymity and confidentiality are difficult to maintain since participants know each other). |
| **Convenience** | - It is an easy and cost-efficient way to recruit participants.  
- It is a quick way to collect data and do research. | - It is likely to be biased.  
- It is likely to generate research with low credibility and poor information. |