

### *Qualitative Research Questions*

With qualitative research, we are attempting to get a better understanding of a phenomenon (which means an event, occurrence or situation). The aim is to draw in-depth insights about this phenomenon and, thus, go beyond the *what* to focus on the *why*.

#### **State Your Topic**

First identify what you would like to research.

**Student perception of quality feedback**

#### **Identify Your Gap**

Sift through research about your topic to help yourself narrow it down. Where does the gap lie? What can you add to the conversation of research that is already available, and where can you add it?

**Ample research has been done on student perception of effective feedback at the secondary and university levels; however, little research has been done on adult learner perception of feedback in a graduate context within the United States.**

#### **Define the Problem**

Identify what problem you are trying to solve. This is essentially going to answer, “Why does your research matter?”

**There is a disconnect between perceptions of quality feedback between adult learners and instructors.**

#### **Specify the Purpose**

Identify what the purpose of your research is. What are you hoping to achieve?

**I want to be able to unveil the gap in understanding between student perception and instructor practice in feedback.**

#### **Write the Question(s)**

Based on the information above, you can then derive a quality research question. Remember, at Westcliff, we typically narrow it to three. Consider the following tips:

- (a) Starting your questions with *what* or *how*
- (b) Using verbs such as: generate, identify, explain, experience, and explore (or for other ideas, see [here](#))

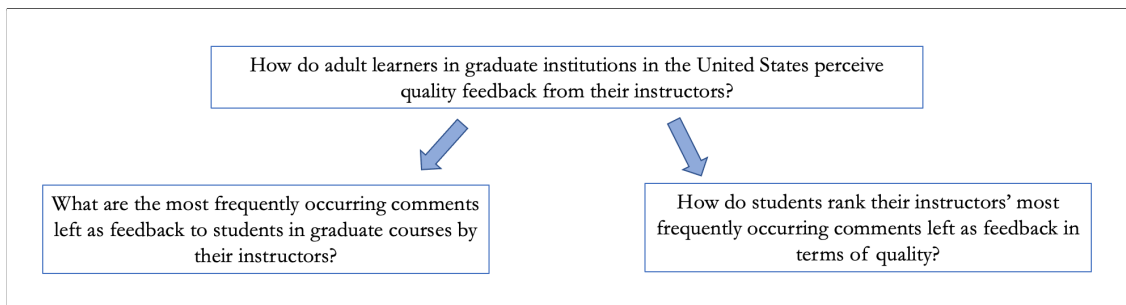
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**Central Question**

This question is the most general of your questions. Though, please note, you still want this to be narrow enough for you to actually answer based on your findings.

**Sub-Questions**

Derive two sub-questions from your central question. These are more specific questions that will help you to answer the central question. To determine further questions, consider thinking through elements related to the procedure or potentially issues involved.



**Ensure Alignment**

After writing the question, look back at your problem and your purpose. Ensure you can answer yes to the following:

- Will these questions help me to find information that will address this problem?
- Will answering these questions help me accomplish my purpose?

**Quality Research Question Tips**

Ensure the question is	Explanation
Manageable	Is it too big to answer through my study? Or is it too small?
Specific	Does each question focus on only one topic and problem?
Legitimate	Is it a question and not a statement? Is it an open-ended question and not a yes/no question?
Clear	Will others understand what you are studying? (Consider asking a peer to review and tell you what they think you are attempting to study)