

### 6.3.2. Triangulation

Different types of triangulation have been identified, including theoretical triangulation (using multiple perspectives to analyze the same set of data), investigator triangulation (using multiple observers or interviewers), and methodological triangulation (using different measures or research methods to investigate a particular phenomenon). The most common definition of triangulation, however, is that it entails the use of multiple, independent methods of obtaining data in a single investigation in order to arrive at the same research findings.

As Johnson (1992) noted, “[T]he value of triangulation is that it reduces observer or interviewer bias and enhances the validity and reliability (accuracy) of the information” (p. 146). By collecting data through a variety of means, the researcher helps address many of the concerns with the various qualitative data collection methods that were pointed out earlier in this chapter. One method alone cannot provide adequate support. It may take two or more independent sources to support the study and its conclusions.

For example, in their study of the effects of training on peer revision processes in second language writing, McGroarty and Zhu (1997) assessed the effects of training in terms of students’ ability to critique peer writing, quality of student writing, and students’ attitudes toward peer revision and writing in general. Their experiment included four instructors and 169 students, with each instructor teaching one class in the experimental condition (which included training for peer revision via instructor conferences) and one class in the control condition (which employed peer revision without such training). Their research used a range of different measures, data sources, and methods. The authors pointed out that “the combination of measures, data sources, and methods not only allowed triangulation of the

finding that training for peer revision improves students' ability to critique peer writing and their attitudes toward peer revision, but also illuminated other aspects of peer revision processes" (p. 2).