CATHERINE **MARSHALL** | GRETCHEN B. **ROSSMAN** | GERARDO L. **BLANCO**

SEVENTH EDITION

DESIGNING QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

Designing Qualitative Research

Seventh Edition

Dedication

In this seventh edition we once again dedicate the book to all our many students—those we have worked with in the past, those we are working with now, and those we will work with in the future, either directly and face-to-face or through this new edition.

Our intent with this book is to guide readers to carry on the many qualitative traditions with keen insights and deep commitments to their participants and with the belief that they will strive to build bridges across traditions as they take up multidisciplinary, hybrid forms of qualitative inquiry. Collectively, our quantitative report of past students adds up to over 100 doctoral dissertations, more than 40 master's theses, and close to 900 class or workshop participants. Our qualitative report of past students fits into three categories: the puzzled and skeptical, the deeply thoughtful, and the "Well, I hate statistics so I might as well try this."

We look forward to the work of our future students, and readers, no matter what their stance toward qualitative inquiry. We hope this new edition challenges preconceptions and moves forward our variegated forms of inquiry.

Designing Qualitative Research

Seventh Edition

Catherine Marshall
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Gretchen B. Rossman
University of Massachusetts Amherst

Gerardo L. Blanco
Boston College

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FOR INFORMATION

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Thousand Oaks, California 91320
E-mail: order@sagepub.com

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• Preface to the Seventh Edition •

Since the first edition of *Designing Qualitative Research*, the context for systematic inquiry has undergone seismic shifts. In this newest edition, we have brought in contemporary issues, methods, and considerations that have emerged since publication of the sixth edition in 2016. Specifically, we have articulated the quite unusual global and national contexts that unfolded as we wrote this edition: the movements for racial justice, the coronavirus pandemic, the climate crisis, and the U.S. presidential election. As we wrote, we could not ignore these powerful, sometimes terrifying, circumstances. You will find examples drawing on these contexts throughout the book, especially in new vignettes and pedagogical activities.

We have added extensive material on the evolution of the field and what we envision as its future, including discussions of the **history** as well as **emerging, quite fascinating, genres** of qualitative inquiry. Although we discussed the internet and technological applications in the sixth edition, this new edition provides a sustained and deeper focus on the **burgeoning use of social media and internet applications** in conducting qualitative research. As the development of new applications burgeons, we have decided not to list specific ones, as they will be outdated tomorrow!

We also revisit and update sections on various genres: arts-informed inquiry, multimodal inquiry, critical discourse analysis, queer/quare theory, critical race theory, case studies, grounded theory, and autoethnography. We have expanded our suggestions for writing about strategies for data analysis at the proposal stage and for presenting analyses in writing final reports or other modalities. We also emphasize the need for systematic inquiry, trying to caution those who might write: "Don't worry, I'll just figure it out once I get in the field!" To encourage using other modalities for sharing results, we describe the many non-text-based ways of sharing the findings of a study with various audiences: plays, dances, poems, novels, and others.

We deepen our attention to the ways research can be attuned to **policy and practice**—from problem identification to presenting findings in non-traditional ways to an explicit focus on trustworthiness, credibility, and ethics woven into the text. Examples from current global and U.S. contexts provide examples within these discussions. Notably, we have added **application activities** throughout the chapters to provide opportunities for the reader to try out ideas. These are activities that we have used in classes over time and have been quite successful. Another notable addition is the inclusion at the end of each chapter of **opportunities and challenges**. We have embedded these points in each chapter to ensure their pedagogical relevance. We have also revised the work for reader-friendliness and to add fresh, updated references. Still, we keep some of the grandfathers and grandmothers who pioneered qualitative inquiry.

Our dialogues between learners continue: Keren Dalyot and Karla Guiliano Sarr. Just after the Further Reading lists, we have also list some of our **favorites and**

classics, as we realized that these reading lists can be somewhat daunting. This suggestion came from some of Catherine's students; we thank them for this. And we have revised and updated the lists of key concepts at the end of each chapter.

Now that qualitative research methodology has matured, in this seventh edition we incorporate the advances and challenges presented by new technologies and provocative, creative modes of presentation. Further, considering the warmer climate for qualitative inquiry on many university campuses, we have placed less emphasis on defending and more on asserting the appropriateness of qualitative inquiry. We believe that the momentum supporting the "goodness" of qualitative inquiry for many kinds of research questions moves us past conservative trends stipulating that appropriate—and acceptable—inquiry can take only one form: the randomized, controlled experiment. Such stipulations have been written into policy governing research and evaluation of federally funded programs. So this edition reflects these turns of events. We value and honor the university as *the* institution that continues the struggles against political waves and protects all forms of inquiry. Universities are still reasonably gentle places to find support for qualitative research.

Our book originally met the need for advice on designing qualitative research, given the complexity, flexibility, and controversies of its many genres. We find that this need persists, and doctoral students, research managers, policy analysts, and researchers anticipating multimethod team research will continue to find clear and direct guidance in this edition. Qualitative research designs are currently used in the fields of health behavior, education, urban planning, public relations and communications, sociology, international studies, psychology, management, social work, health policy, nursing, and more. Our focus tends to be on research in **applied fields** such as those listed here. While we acknowledge the many developments that have come from autoethnography, performance ethnography, and cultural studies, as examples, we focus on guiding those working in fields that demand practical answers to complex questions.

Designing Qualitative Research was written because qualitative reports were intriguing but mystical. Earthy, evocative ethnographies seemed just to appear by magic. Thick texts extolled the philosophical stances and cultural premises of qualitative research. A few researchers provided chapters or appendices describing their procedures; however, researchers and students had no guidance on how to proceed. This book has filled that void, to provide specific advice on design. Then and now, in this seventh edition, we have benefited from the research experience of those who first systematically documented their designs and processes, and also from the probing questions of our doctoral students. Thus, we provide readers with connections to the **classics** of qualitative genres, as well as present the issues and design dilemmas of researchers with new questions for the current global crises we face—the coronavirus pandemic, racial injustice, threats to democratic principles, and the existential threats of climate change.

The seventh edition's timely vignettes illustrate the methodological challenges posed by the intellectual, ethical, political, and technological advances affecting society and, hence, those who choose to rely on qualitative research design for inquiry into these challenges. A few vignettes were written by our current or recent graduate students, and they are given bylines to honor their contributions. Vignettes include, for

example, the challenges in studying Black Lives Matter protests as an activist oneself; the challenges in designing research with refugee and immigrant populations; sensitivities in translating from a local language to the postcolonial language to English; issues in designing research with vulnerable, COVID-19-affected elderly populations; and issues dealing with institutional review boards. Other vignettes include discussions of researchers' explicitly political stances toward promoting democracy while conducting evaluations of community development, and critical theorists' puzzling over reporting research without colonizing those who allowed them into their lives. Because qualitative design is not linear, different pedagogical strategies are required; the vignettes and textboxes, we hope, assist readers in transferring suggestions about design to their own research.

This edition relies on the most recent APA guidelines, particularly in regards the use of personal pronouns. Still, at times, we use gender-signalling pronouns to preserve narrative flow. In addition, we are deeply sympathetic toward the terms that different identity groups choose, and we have tried to be up to date with these terms but recognize that we won't get it "right" all the time.

The most exciting aspect of this seventh edition is **Gerardo L. Blanco** joining as a co-author. A former student of Gretchen's and a close colleague, Gerry brings fresh new ideas to this edition, as well as a wealth of experience in conducting, writing about, and critiquing qualitative inquiry. The three of us have a collective total of close to 80 years' experience teaching qualitative methodology to graduate students. Nothing keeps us attuned to qualitative research dilemmas more than the challenges our students present in classes and dissertations. We appreciate the many hundreds who have continuously pressed for innovative approaches and posed research questions fresh from real-life problems; many have graciously allowed us to use their work in vignettes. Finally, we, and our readers, benefit from the contributions of reviewers in scholarly journals and anonymous reviews, as well as from critical suggestions from our own students. As noted above, we deeply appreciate the writing contributions of several of our current and former students: Keren Dalyot, Paul St. John Frisoli, Mark Johnson, Aaron Kuntz, Rachael B. Lawrence, Karla Guiliano Sarr, and Ariel Tichnor-Wagner. We acknowledge their wonderful contributions by listing them as the authors of various sections.

We also thank Helen Salmon at SAGE Publications for her ongoing guidance and wisdom in producing this edition, and we thank the following reviewers who contributed important insights, which we have incorporated: Nicole K. Drumhiller, American Public University System; Stephanie Medley-Rath, Indiana University Kokomo; Cynthia Stevens, DePaul University; Ashley Sovereign, Saint Mary's University of Minnesota; and Jean Lee, Colorado College. We hope our efforts will continue to provide a practical guide, assisting researchers as they craft sound, thoughtful, and sensitive proposals for qualitative inquiry that is robust and ethical.

PowerPoints and figures and tables from the book are available on an accompanying instructor website at **https://edge.sagepub.com/marshall7e**

Catherine Marshall, Gretchen B. Rossman, & Gerardo L. Blanco

• About the Authors •

Catherine Marshall is the William Eaves Distinguished Professor Emerita of Educational Leadership and Policy at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. After completing her PhD, she served on the faculty of the University of Pennsylvania and at Vanderbilt University before settling as professor at North Carolina. The ongoing goal of her teaching and research has been to use an interdisciplinary approach to analyze the cultures of schools, state policy cultures, gender issues, and social justice issues. She has published extensively on the politics of education, qualitative methodology, women's access to careers, and socialization, language, and values in educational administration.

Marshall's honors include the Campbell Award for Lifetime Intellectual Contributions to the Field, given by the Politics of Education Association (2009); the University Council for Educational Administration's Campbell Award for Lifetime Achievement and Contributions to Educational Administration (2008); the American Educational Research Association's (AERA) Willystine Goodsell Award for her scholarship, activism, and community building on behalf of women and education (2004); and a Ford Foundation grant for Social Justice Leadership (2002). In the American Educational Association, she was elected to head the Politics and Policy Division, and she also created an AERA Special Interest Group called Leadership for Social Justice.

Marshall is the author or editor of numerous other books. These include *Activist Educators: Breaking Past Limits; Culture and Education Policy in the American States; The Assistant Principal: Leadership Choices and Challenges; The New Politics of Gender and Race;* and *Feminist Critical Policy Analysis*. This book's origin came early in her scholarly career, while conducting qualitative research on policy and teaching literally hundreds of doctoral students how to adopt and adapt the qualitative approach into workable proposals. She recognized a need and began to develop this book.

Gretchen B. Rossman is Professor Emerita of International Education and the Center for International Education at the University of Massachusetts Amherst. She received her PhD in education from the University of Pennsylvania, with a specialization in higher-education administration. She has served as a visiting professor at Harvard University's Graduate School of Education. Prior to coming to the University of Massachusetts, she was senior research associate at Research for Better Schools in Philadelphia. With an international reputation as a qualitative methodologist, she has expertise in qualitative research design and methods, mixed-methods monitoring and evaluation, and inquiry in education. Over the past

30+ years, she has coauthored 15 books, 2 of which are editions of major qualitative research texts (*Learning in the Field*, third edition, with Sharon F. Rallis, and the present seventh edition of *Designing Qualitative Research*, with Catherine Marshall and Gerardo L. Blanco—both widely used guides for qualitative inquiry). In addition, she has published a book titled *The Research Journey: An Introduction to Inquiry* (with Sharon Rallis). She has also authored or coauthored more than 50 articles, book chapters, and technical reports focused on methodological issues in qualitative research synthesis, mixed-methods evaluation, and ethical research practice, as well as the analysis and evaluation of educational reform efforts both in the United States and internationally.

Professor Rossman has served as principal investigator (PI) or co-PI on several large U.S. Agency for International Development–funded projects (in Palestine, the Southern Sudan, Malawi, Tanzania, and India); as co-PI on a World Bank–funded multigrade schooling project (Senegal and Gambia); as lead trainer for a Save the Children–funded participatory monitoring and evaluation of professional training (Azerbaijan); and as external evaluator on several domestic projects, including a Department of Education–funded reform initiative, a National Science Foundation–funded middle-grades science initiative, and a number of projects implementing more inclusive practices for students with disabilities.

Gerardo L. Blanco is Associate Professor of Educational Leadership and Higher Education, and Academic Director of the Center for International Higher Education at Boston College's Lynch School of Education and Human Development. He received his Ed.D. in Educational Policy and Leadership, with a concentration in Higher Education, from the University of Massachusetts Amherst. Prior to joining Boston College, he served on the faculty of the University of Massachusetts Boston and at the University of Connecticut. His research explores the intersections of quality and internationalization in higher education and is motivated by a commitment to global social justice and a deep curiosity for the ways higher education institutions define, improve and communicate their value to different stakeholder groups. The author of over 30 journal articles to date, his research has been published in *Higher Education*, *Studies in Higher Education*, the *Comparative Education Review*, and the *Review of Higher Education*. In 2017, he received the "Best Research Article Award" from the Comparative & International Education Society's Higher Education SIG. In 2014 and 2020, his work received honorable mentions from the same organization.

Blanco is a Fulbright Specialist; his teaching, research and consulting have taken place in 15 countries and 5 continents. He has been a visiting faculty member at Shaanxi Normal University (China), visiting expert at the International Centre for Higher Education Research (INCHER) at the University of Kassel (Germany) and teaching fellow at the John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin (Poland).

Sara Miller McCune founded SAGE Publishing in 1965 to support the dissemination of usable knowledge and educate a global community. SAGE publishes more than 1000 journals and over 600 new books each year, spanning a wide range of subject areas. Our growing selection of library products includes archives, data, case studies and video. SAGE remains majority owned by our founder and after her lifetime will become owned by a charitable trust that secures the company's continued independence.

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Introduction

Numbers are numbing; they cloak detail and may not excite people to action. Some numbers, like the federal deficit, are too overwhelming for individuals to focus on. This reality has been painfully illustrated in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, with victims worldwide counted in the tens of millions—a scale too large to comprehend. It is possible, and even likely, to become numb toward the daily count of new infections, hospitalizations, and deaths, while human empathy may force us to listen to individual stories of loss and grief.

> *Statistics don't bleed. It is the detail that counts. We are unable . . . to process our total awareness: we can only focus on little lumps of reality.*
>
> —Arthur Koestler (1945, p. 92)

Qualitative research methodologies are now well-established, important modes of inquiry for the social sciences and applied fields, such as education, regional planning, health sciences, social work, community development, and management. Long dominated by research methods borrowed from the experimental sciences, the social sciences now present an array of alternative genres. One important genre, ethnography, includes autoethnography, virtual ethnography, compressed ethnography, and the more familiar generic ethnography, derived from anthropology. Phenomenological approaches grew directly from strands of Western philosophy, and interdisciplinary work has spawned sociolinguistics, critical discourse analysis, life histories, narrative analysis, arts-based inquiry, and visual methodologies. Such an array is sometimes confusing.

The critical traditions, including postmodern, post-structural, and postcolonial perspectives, contribute to critical discourse analysis, a variety of gender and feminist research approaches, critical race theory and analysis, queer theory and analysis, cultural studies, critical ethnography, and autoethnography. Emerging and intriguing modes of representation include performance ethnography and intersectional standpoint methodology, and the explosion of computer-based technologies has spawned Internet ethnography and multimodal forms of inquiry. Action research and participatory research, often explicitly ideological and emancipatory, intend to critique and

radically change fundamental social structures and processes and to reconceptualize the entire research enterprise. Many of these genres, derived from traditional and interdisciplinary scholarship, are now frequently used in policy studies and professional fields. More than two decades ago, Denzin and Lincoln (1994) noted, "The extent to which the 'qualitative revolution' is taking over the social sciences and related professional fields is nothing short of amazing" (p. ix); this is still true today.

Each of these disciplinary traditions rests on somewhat different assumptions about what constitutes proper inquiry within the qualitative, or interpretive, paradigm. Throughout this text, we refer to *qualitative research* and *qualitative inquiry* as if they were one agreed-on approach. If this were the case, it might be reassuring for you, but unfortunately it is not. As Denzin and Lincoln (2005) wrote, "qualitative research is a field of inquiry in its own right. It crosscuts disciplines, fields, and subject matters. A complex, interconnected family of terms, concepts, and assumptions surround [*sic*] the term *qualitative research*" (p. 2).

Qualitative research genres exist in great variety, and many excellent texts serve as guides to their assumptions and approaches. However, many qualitative researchers, despite their various methodological stances, tend to espouse some common values and enact a family of procedures for the conduct of a study. They are intrigued by the complexity of social interactions expressed in daily life and by the meanings the participants themselves attribute to these interactions. They are also exquisitely aware that they work in and through interpretations—their own and others'—layered in complex hermeneutic circles. These interests take qualitative researchers into natural settings, rather than laboratories, and foster pragmatism in using multiple methods—"a wide range of interconnected interpretive practices" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 4)—for exploring a topic. Thus, qualitative research is pragmatic, interpretive, and grounded in the lived experiences of people. Below we offer six general hallmarks of qualitative research and five common stances of researchers who practice it (see Rossman & Rallis, 2017, pp. 8–11; also see Table 1.1).

Qualitative research typically

- takes place in the natural world,
- draws on multiple methods that respect the humanity of the participants in the study,
- focuses on context,
- is emergent and evolving rather than tightly prefigured,
- is fundamentally interpretive, and
- assumes multiple truths exist, rather than one monolithic Truth.

Qualitative researchers, they maintain, tend to

- view social worlds as holistic and complex,
- engage in systematic reflection on who they are in the conduct of the research,

- remain sensitive to their own biographies/social identities and how these shape the study (i.e., they are reflexive),
- rely on complex reasoning that moves dialectically between deduction and induction, and
- conduct their inquiries systematically (see Table 1.1).

Qualitative research, then, is a broad approach to the study of social phenomena. The various genres are naturalistic, interpretive, and increasingly critical, and they typically draw on multiple methods of inquiry. This book is intended to be a guide for researchers who have chosen some genre of qualitative methods in their effort to understand—and perhaps change—a complex social phenomenon, and who seek to develop solid proposals for **ethical research practice** as they plan their inquiry.

The insightful case study, the rich description of ethnography, the narratives of complex personal journeys—all are the products of systematic inquiry. In their beginnings, however, they were modest research proposals. Three decades ago, qualitative researchers had to search hard to find useful guidelines for writing thorough, convincing research proposals. Since then, many useful texts have been published (we cite several at the end of this chapter); these texts provide guidance in learning how to craft a solid research proposal. They help fill the gap created, for example, by

TABLE 1.1 • Characteristics of Qualitative Research and Researchers

Qualitative Research
Takes place in the natural world
Uses multiple methods that are interactive and humanistic
Focuses on context
Is emergent rather than tightly prefigured
Is fundamentally interpretive
Assumes multiple truths
Qualitative Researchers
View social phenomena holistically
Systematically reflect on who they are in the inquiry
Are sensitive to their personal biography and how it shapes the study
Use complex reasoning that is multifaceted and iterative
Conduct systematic inquiry

Source: Adapted from Rossman and Rallis (2017, pp. 7–9). Used with permission.

policy analyses that offer findings and recommendations with few details on how research led to them and by published reports of qualitative research that lack sufficient detail to provide strong examples of how the studies were designed. All too often, beginning qualitative researchers have difficulty learning how to design a useful and generative study from such reports. Other reports are written as if the process unfolded smoothly, with none of the messiness inherent in any research. These versions are also difficult to learn from. This book provides specific guidance for writing strong and convincing proposals for ethical research grounded in the assumptions and practice of qualitative methodology.

This book, organized as a guide through the process of writing a qualitative research proposal, shows you how to write a proposal that will convince reviewers. It will detail how to create a qualitative study that is useful and trustworthy by defining explicit steps to follow, principles to adhere to, and rationales for the strengths of qualitative research.

Although qualitative research has an accepted place in formal research arenas—the "amazing takeover" described above—dissertation committees and reviewers for funding agencies still need to see proposals that are well developed, sound, rigorous, and ethical. This has become especially salient in the era of "the gold standard" promulgated by the U.S. government, which holds that randomized controlled trials are the preferred approach to producing useful and generalizable findings. Now, in the 2020s, the methodological wars are a distant memory and many researchers seek to manage mixing paradigms and pleasing old-school scholars—both quantitative and qualitative—by combining qualitative and quantitative data (Creswell & Creswell, 2017; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2012).

We, the authors of this book, have taken part in the steady progression of qualitative inquiry and indeed illustrate its evolution over the years. As we collaborated in this new edition, we came to think of ourselves as an intergenerational team, with each of us producing and being the result of particular moments in the rich history of qualitative inquiry. Marshall's and Rossman's earliest work survived through the 1980s, when qualitative inquiry was seen as belonging to anthropology and, in other fields, was denigrated as "just stories" or as not credible for journal articles or career building. "Real" research was seen as a search that would find positive Truths (positivism), which was equated with findings from experimental studies with control groups and hundreds of random subjects. Even sociology, the study of human group relationships, was dominated by statistics and searches through demography for cause–effect relationships.

But then came questioning of the ethics and impersonality of seeing people as "subjects" to be manipulated and, importantly, research focusing on particular variables without enough context. Too, postmodern and postcolonial thought brought forth the challenge to the idea that Truth was a stable, knowable goal. Women and people of color, knowing through too many experiences that the worth of their truths, needs, and realities was often ignored by those who could decide what should and should not be recognized, became more prominent voices. Then qualitative inquiry gained leaps and bounds, with infusions from feminist, gender, and critical theory and cultural studies. As well as thinking through their own frustrations, such literatures helped people begin to see that Truth was something people in power proclaimed,

further marginalizing silenced voices and reaffirming taken-for-granted systems of domination. Today, women, as well as Black people, Indigenous peoples, and people of color, along with LGBTQ+ individuals, people with disabilities, and other minoritized groups, have created communities of affinity and allyship. While equal status and full participation are not yet a reality, many insights from these groups have become mainstream in the academic canon.

The three authors of this book have gloried in the emergence of robust qualitative inquiry. Marshall was Rossman's graduate studies professor, and both have taught hundreds of students the *hows* and *whys* of qualitative inquiry over the decades. Then Blanco was one of Rossman's students, continuing the lineage for you readers to perpetuate.

In more than one way, participating in the development of a new edition of *Designing Qualitative Research* feels like joining an ongoing conversation. Both as a graduate student and as a faculty member, *DQR* has been an important resource in my scholarship. Adding my voice as an author to this text that has been a companion to so many qualitative researchers in many fields could be a daunting undertaking. How do you join a conversation that has been going on for three decades? My attempt at answering this question involves listening for meaning, but also for tone and inflection, and identifying the pauses where you can—hopefully—add something to the conversation.

While I share many perspectives with Marshall and Rossman, by virtue of the academic lineage we have discussed, my experiences differ from theirs in some ways. For as long as I have been in the field, qualitative research has been a credible way to conduct inquiry, researchers have had the option to use software for qualitative data analysis, and I have always had at least one expert faculty member—but often several—to provide advice on qualitative methods. For me, research is almost always something done in a borrowed language, English, different from my mother tongue, Spanish.

Sociologists, clinical psychologists, community health workers, criminologists, anthropologists, political scientists, regional planners, and others from a range of the social sciences and applied fields will find this guide useful. Throughout, we provide examples from many fields, with plenty from education (because of our own backgrounds). The principles, challenges, and opportunities are transferable across disciplines and into other applied fields.

This book does not replace the numerous texts, readers, journal articles, and websites that are important for learning about various qualitative genres and the nuances of their preferred methods. It is meant to complement those resources that explicate the philosophical bases, historical development, principles and methods of

practice, and findings of qualitative studies. Our purpose is to give practical, useful guidance for writing proposals that fit within the qualitative paradigm and that are successful.

We should mention, as a cautionary note, that many of the examples presented here—indeed, the entire structure and organization of the book—suggest that the processes of proposal development are linear and transparent. As we note throughout the text, this is not the case. The vignettes are written in well-polished prose, often because they are the final versions of sections in successful proposals. The structure of the book may suggest that one proceeds from Point A to Point B in a seamless and quite logical manner. Such are the challenges of presenting an iterative, recursive process in formal academic writing. The looping back and forth, the frustrations—such things are masked. We trust that you will keep this in mind.

Considerations

When considering writing a proposal for a research study that will use qualitative methods, you may find it valuable to weigh three interrelated concerns that capture key questions of feasibility, competence and ethics, and interest; we refer to these as the **do-ability**, the **should-do-ability**, and the **want-to-do-ability**.

"Do-Ability": Considerations of Feasibility

One set of considerations captures the feasibility, the "do-ability," of the study. Is the study I am considering possible and realistic? Judgments about resources (time, money), access to the site or population of interest or both, and your knowledge and skills come into play here. Proposals seeking external funding and those for dissertation research must include a discussion of resources. Strategies to gain access to a site or identify participants for the study should also be discussed. Throughout the proposal, you should demonstrate your competence to conduct a thorough, ethical, qualitative research study. In citing the methodological literature and discussing pilot studies or previous research, you demonstrate your experience in conducting qualitative research and familiarity with the ongoing discourse on methodology, thereby situating your own work within the evolving context of research.

Thus, this set of questions focuses on considerations of feasibility. Are there sufficient resources to support the conduct of the study? Are access and willing participation likely in the setting? Is the study focused enough so it can be completed? Do you provide evidence of methodological competence?

"Should-Do-Ability": Considerations of Potential Significance and Ethics

Another set of considerations in building a solid proposal addresses whether the study has the potential to contribute to theorizing and research—to the ongoing discourse

in a social science discipline or an applied field, to policy issues and policymaking, and/or to issues of practice. Is this study likely to be useful to other researchers, policymakers, practitioners? Are there major ethical pitfalls to be considered? You will need to argue that the study will likely contribute to scholarship, policy, and/or practice, and address the familiar question, "So what?" To this, you should respond cogently and knowledgeably when asked why the study should be conducted. Thus, this set of considerations centers on the following questions: Should the study be conducted? How will it contribute to scholarship? Policy deliberations? Practice?

However, another crucial facet of these "should" considerations is the critically important area of ethics and ethical practice: What ethical concerns or issues may arise? What resources can you draw on to respond sensitively to these issues? Because ethical concerns are so important in any inquiry involving human beings, we return to this topic in Chapter 3 and highlight it throughout the book.

"Want-to-Do-Ability": Considerations of Sustained and Sustaining Interest

This set of questions captures your engagement with the topic. Far removed from the days of assertions of the dispassionate scientist, qualitative researchers (and all researchers, we claim) care deeply about the topic that they inquire about. Am I sufficiently committed to learning about this topic to sustain the energy to complete it? Qualitative research, however, is neither naively subjectivist nor biased (all-too-common criticisms). Rather, qualitative methodologies acknowledge that *all* research in the social science disciplines and applied fields may well be subjective (in the sense of a subjective caring), and shift the discourse to a discussion of epistemology and to considerations for ensuring trustworthy and credible studies (which we discuss more fully in Chapter 3). Thus, this third set of considerations captures the importance of commitment and compelling interest to sustain the study from design to implementation to analysis to sharing the findings.

The proposal, then, is an argument that makes the case and convinces reviewers that the study can be done and should be done, and that there is sufficient energy and interest to sustain it.

The Challenges

Research proposals consist of two major sections: (1) the **conceptual framework** and (2) the design and research methods. Roughly corresponding to the *what*—the substantive focus of the inquiry—and the *how*—the means for conducting it—these two sections describe in detail the specific topic or issue to be explored and the methods proposed for exploration. In a sound, well-developed, well-argued proposal, the sections are integrally related: They share common epistemological assumptions;

research questions and methods chosen to explore the topic are congruent and relate to one another organically.

To achieve this goal, researchers who would conduct qualitative research face several challenges, for example, in

- developing a conceptual framework for the study that is thorough, concise, elegant, and generative;
- planning a design that is systematic and manageable, yet flexible; and
- integrating these into a coherent argument that convinces the proposal readers (a funding agency or dissertation committee) to approve the study.

They should also

- demonstrate their *competence* to conduct the study (introduced above in the "do-ability" considerations),
- depict how they will be mindful about issues of *ethical practice* (introduced above in the "should-do-ability" considerations), and
- provide details of strategies to ensure that the study is *trustworthy*.

Each of these topics is taken up throughout the book (see the overview at the end of this chapter), providing guidance at the proposal development stage to help meet these challenges. In the rest of this chapter, we provide an overview of the need to develop a coherent conceptual framework and a solid design. We then turn to the necessity for the researcher to demonstrate competence to conduct the study.

Conceptual Framework

The first major section of the proposal—the conceptual framework—demands a solid rationale. In examining a specific setting or set of individuals, you should show how you are studying instances of a larger phenomenon. By linking the specific research questions to larger theoretical constructs, to existing puzzles or contested positions in a field, or to important policy issues, you argue that the particulars of this study serve to illuminate larger issues and therefore hold potential significance for that field. The doctoral student in economics, for example, who demonstrates that qualitative case studies of five families' financial decision-making are relevant for understanding larger forces in the marketplace, has met this condition. The case studies are significant because they illuminate in detail larger economic forces while focusing on individuals. We develop the logic undergirding the conceptual framework in Chapter 4.

Design and Methods

The second major section of a proposal, also requiring a sound rationale, is devoted to the design of the study and the selection of specific methods. This section demonstrates

that the study is feasible. You should show that the design and methods are the result of a series of decisions made based on knowledge gained from the methodological literature and previous work. Those decisions should not derive just from the methodological literature, however. Their justification should also flow logically from the research questions and from the conceptual framework.

Because qualitative research proposals are at times unfamiliar to reviewers, the logic supporting the choice of the proposed methods should be sound. Ensuring a clear, logical rationale in support of qualitative methods entails attention to six topics:

1. The *assumptions* of qualitative approaches in general and for the specific genre or hybrid approach of the study
2. The ***trustworthiness*** of the overall design
3. The *ethical issues* that may arise
4. The *choice of the overall design*, with an accompanying rationale for selecting a site, a sample, the participants, or any combination of these
5. The rationale behind the selection of *specific data collection methods* and how these will help inform the research questions
6. A realistic projection of the *resource needs* to implement the study as planned

To anticipate the overview of the book at the end of this chapter, the first topic is discussed in Chapter 2, trustworthiness and ethics are elaborated in Chapter 3, Chapter 4 takes up the important task of building a conceptual framework, and Chapter 5 discusses design considerations—the *how* of the study. Chapters 6 and 7 discuss a variety of methods for gathering data. Chapter 8 presents ways to describe the researcher's intended approach to data analysis. Chapter 9 offers examples of ways to share what you have learned, whether through a blog, an op-ed piece, a traditional dissertation or scholarly article, or a novel. In addition to these considerations, however, is the crucial need to argue that you are competent to conduct the study, discussed next.

Researcher Competence

Another challenge facing the writer is to demonstrate **researcher competence** explicitly and implicitly. The exact standard of competence used for evaluating the proposal depends on the purpose and scope of the research. Standards applied to a dissertation proposal will likely differ from those used to evaluate a multiyear-funded project written by established researchers. Paradoxically, even though dissertation research is intended to provide an opportunity for learning the craft, all portions of the dissertation proposal will be subjected to careful scrutiny. You will be expected to show your capability by thorough attention to every facet of the conceptual framework and **research design**. Established researchers, on the other hand, may not receive such careful scrutiny because their record of previous work engenders trust and the logic of good faith preserves standards for research. Although this may seem unfair, it nevertheless is the reality of proposal evaluation.

To demonstrate competence, then, you should refer to their previous work and discuss the strengths and weaknesses of a pilot study as well as coursework and other relevant education. The high quality of the proposal's organization and its conceptual framework showcases your knowledge of the relevant literature and rigorous research design. All this entails building a well-supported argument that convinces reviewers of the study's importance and soundness.

Developing an Argument

Central to this book is the premise that developing a proposal is a process of building an *argument* that supports the proposal. Like the logic of formal debate or the reasoning in a position paper, a research proposal is intended to convince the reader that the research holds potential significance and relevance, that the design of the study is sound, and that the researcher is capable of conducting the study successfully. You should, therefore, build a logical argument for the endeavor, amass evidence in support of each point, and show how the entire enterprise is conceptually integrated. Specifically, "a proposal is an argument *for* your study. It needs to explain the logic behind the proposed research, rather than simply describe or summarize the study, and to do so in a way that nonspecialists will understand" (Maxwell, 2005, p. 119).

To illuminate this process of building an argument, we offer two vignettes. The first describes a doctoral student in sociology convincing the dissertation committee that qualitative methods are best suited for exploratory research on the culture of a hospital. The student intends to uncover patterns in the work lives of participants that will lead to important improvements in the treatment of patients. Vignette 2 shows researchers building a rationale based on the strengths of qualitative methods for policy analysis. The researchers had to convince legislators that qualitative methods would yield useful, vivid analyses that could inform the policymaking process. Both vignettes are based on experiences of our graduate students. Following the vignettes, we develop the implications for building an argument in support of qualitative proposals and then provide an overview of the rest of the book.

As O'Brien reviewed the notes she had written to help with the proposal defense, she realized that her strongest argument rested on two aspects of the proposed study's significance:

its exploratory purpose and its commitment to improving patient treatment in large urban hospitals. She realized that the latter aspect might be construed as biased, but if she kept the rationale grounded in the need to better understand complex interactions, tacit processes, and often hidden beliefs and values, she could demonstrate the study's clear potential to improve practice.

Her committee was composed of two quantitatively trained sociologists and a medical anthropologist. She knew she had the support of the anthropologist, whose advice had been crucial during the several proposal drafts she had written. The sociologists, however, were more likely to be critical of the design.

O'Brien decided to begin her presentation with an explication of the four purposes of research (exploration, explanation, description, and prediction) to link the purpose of her proposed study to general principles regarding the conduct of inquiry. She could then proceed quite logically to a discussion of the ways exploratory research serves to identify important variables for subsequent explanatory or predictive research. This logic could allay the concerns of the two quantitatively oriented sociologists, who would search the proposal for testable hypotheses, instrumentation and operationalization of variables, and tests of reliability.

The second major justification of the study would develop from its significance for practice. O'Brien recalled how she had reviewed empirical studies indicating that organizational conditions had a significant effect on wellness and hospital-leaving rates. What had not been identified in those studies were the specific interactions between hospital staff and patients, the widely shared beliefs about patients among the staff, and the organizational norms governing patient treatment. Her research, she would argue, would help identify those tacit, often hidden, aspects of organizational life. This, in turn, could be useful both for policy regarding health care and for practice in health care facilities.

That O'Brien would be engaging in exploratory research where the relevant variables had not been identified and uncovering the tacit aspects of organizational life strongly suggested qualitative methods. Fieldwork would be most appropriate for discovering the relevant variables and building a thorough, rich, detailed description of hospital culture. By linking her proposed research to concepts familiar to the quantitative sociologists, O'Brien hoped to draw the sociologists into the logic supporting her proposal and convince them of its sound design.

A researcher's first task, even before formulating the proposal, is quite often to convince critics that the research has the potential to be useful (for theoretical development in the field, in currents of empirical research, in policy issues, and/or in concerns of practice). O'Brien faced this challenge and developed a rationale supporting the choice of qualitative research methods. In many cases, and especially in policy research, one can appeal to policymakers' frustration with previous research. You should aim to build an argument that may well convince them that qualitative research will lead to strong, detailed conclusions and recommendations. The next vignette, also fictitious, shows how two policy analysts convinced their superiors that they could answer pressing questions with qualitative methods.

Why, 6 months after state legislators had allocated $10 million to provide temporary shelters, were homeless families still sleeping in cars? Keppel and Wilson, researchers in the legislative analyst's office, knew that the question demanded qualitative research methodology. Convincing their skeptical superiors, however, would be a real challenge. They scoured their texts on research methods, selected convincing phrases and examples, and prepared a memo to demonstrate the viability of qualitative research and build the capacity of the legislative analyst's office in that direction. They argued that, too often, the office's research and evaluations missed the mark. The memo began with a quote about how an approximate answer to the right question is better than an exact answer to the wrong question. The winning points, though, in their presentation to their superiors related to two major goals. They spoke of needing to discover the right questions to ask so the systematic collection of data would follow. Thus, Keppel and Wilson convinced their superiors that their findings would help define the important questions, describe patterns of implementation, and identify the challenges and barriers that could lead to more effective policy outcomes.

In Vignette 3, we see researchers convincing others that a qualitative study is needed. This underscores the notion that researchers proposing qualitative inquiry do best by emphasizing the promise of quality, depth, and richness in the findings. They may, however, encounter puzzlement and resistance from those accustomed to surveys and quasi-experimental research, and may need to translate between qualitative and quantitative paradigms. Researchers who are convinced that a qualitative approach is best for the research question or problem at hand should make a case that "thick description" (Geertz, 1973, p. 5) and systematic and detailed analysis will yield valuable explanations of processes. Think of having a "**critical friend**" who can raise tough questions and serve as a sounding board for your thought processes, and help you worry about how any preconceptions might have overly influenced your data collection and analysis. Think of the task of developing a convincing proposal as posing the questions asked by Luker (2008) in her delightful book *Salsa Dancing Into the Social Sciences*:

> The one question I *always* try to think about, as I make every single decision in my research, is what would my smartest, nastiest, most skeptical, and meanest colleague think of this particular decision? How can I persuade someone who does not share my taken-for-granted assumptions about the world that my research is valid? (p. 47, emphasis in original)

Fifteen years later, we feel less need to be defensive with such smart and skeptical colleagues. We now push forward, knowing that our holistic inquiries into complexities will yield research that can move people to moral action. As we write, the coronavirus pandemic engulfs the globe, as do its attendant economic devastations. And social justice concerns have overtaken us all with the increasing number of videos, photos, and first-person accounts of police brutality. Police officers face difficult dilemmas as protests over the execution of Black Americans have ripped the very thin veneer off public apathy toward the fear and anguish that many Black Americans live with on a daily basis. Such crises, along with the erosion of polar ice caps, raging forest fires, and devastating hurricanes, call attention to the need for research that enables people to see into the depths of such continually emerging crises. Research needs embodied conceptualizing, not just continuous citing of numbers of deaths, stranded polar bears, wealth gaps, and hungry children. Increasingly, research is conducted in collaboration with **communities of practice**, where, with other scholars and practitioners, members can share worries about "fuzzy problems . . . and, in turn, be open to gentle critical feedback" (Blanco & Rossman, in press). Through such communities of practice and reliance on critical friends, researchers avoid being the lone researcher whose study may be irrelevant and disconnected to practice and real-world significance.

Overview of the Book

This chapter has introduced the key issues and challenges in developing a solid and convincing proposal for qualitative research. Chapter 2 provides brief discussions of several qualitative research genres, including intriguing developments from critical perspectives. We hope this will help you situate your proposal within one of these genres or within some wonderfully hybrid mix.

Because of their continuing importance to the research enterprise, social life, and human well-being, considerations of ethical practice are woven in throughout the book. We discuss ethics in some depth in Chapter 3 but also apply these considerations in the other chapters. In addition, in Chapter 3, we address concerns of ensuring ethical processes and trustworthy, credible qualitative research studies from the proposal stage.

In Chapter 4, we turn to the complex task of building a conceptual framework around the study. This process entails moving beyond the initial puzzle or intriguing paradox by embedding it in appropriate traditions of research—"currents of thought" (Schram, 2006, p. 63)—linking the specific case to larger theoretical domains. This framing should also demonstrate the "problem" that the proposed study will explore, which then links the study to its hoped-for significance for larger social policy issues, concerns of practice, and people's everyday lives, or some combination of these. Thus, the study's general focus and research questions, the literature, and the significance of the work are interrelated. We call this the substantive focus of the study—the *what*.

Chapter 5 presents a detailed discussion of the *how* of the study. Having focused on a research topic with a set of questions or a domain to explore, the proposal should describe how systematic inquiry will yield data that will provide answers to the questions. You should discuss the logic and assumptions of the overall design and

methods, linking these directly to the focus of the study and justifying the choice of qualitative methods.

Chapter 6 describes the primary methods of data collection typically used in qualitative inquiry: in-depth interviewing, observation, participant observation, and analyzing artifacts and material cultures, including documents. Chapter 7 offers somewhat more specialized and focused methods that may supplement the primary ones or could be used in and of themselves as the primary method for a particular study. These two chapters are not intended to replace the many exemplary texts that deal in great detail with specific methods; rather, we present brief discussions of various alternatives and discuss the ways they can be generative, as well as noting challenges in their implementation. Chapter 8 describes ways to discuss, in a preliminary manner, how the complicated tasks of managing, recording, and analyzing qualitative data will be accomplished. This discussion is necessarily brief because you cannot specify the exact categories and themes for analysis at the proposal stage, but you can still describe the strategies you will likely use and link these to the conceptual framework.

Chapter 9 revisits the idea of the proposal as an argument, demonstrating precedents and strategies for writing up or presenting research with the central notion of audience. We also return to the key considerations of trustworthiness discussed in Chapter 3 and offer strategies for evaluating the soundness and competence of a qualitative proposal, with special attention to building a logical rationale and answering challenges from critics.

Throughout the book, we use vignettes to illustrate our points. Many are drawn from our own work and that of other social scientists; some have been written by our graduate students, and they are given full credit in those instances. The principles depicted in the vignettes apply to research grounded in several disciplines as well as in the applied fields; they challenge you to apply them to your own design.

Three themes run through this book. The first is that **design flexibility** is a crucial feature of qualitative inquiry, even though demands for specificity in design and method seem to preclude such flexibility. We urge you to think of the proposal as an initial plan—one that is thorough, sound, well thought out, and based on current knowledge. The proposal demonstrates your sensitivity to the setting, the issues to be explored, and the ethical dilemmas sure to be encountered, but it also reminds the reader that considerations as yet unforeseen (Milner, 2007) may well dictate changes in this initial plan. Therefore, the language used in discussing the design and methods is sure, positive, and active, while you reserve the right to modify what is currently proposed.

The second theme, which we have already introduced, is the **proposal as an argument**. Because its primary purpose is to convince the reader that the research shows promise of being substantive and will likely contribute to the field, that it is well conceived, and that you are capable of carrying it through, the proposal should rely on reasoning and evidence sufficient to convince the reader. The logic undergirding it should be carefully argued. All this will demonstrate a thorough knowledge of both the topic to be explored and the methods to be used. At times, we give guidance and use terminology that should assist in translating qualitative design assumptions for more quantitatively oriented audiences. In describing the proposal as an argument, we often mention the reader of the proposal to remind you, the reader of this book, that a sense of audience is critical in crafting a solid research proposal.

And the third theme is **collaboration**. Over the years, all three of us have experienced wonderfully generative, sometimes contentious, collaborative relationships with critical friends. Our work is enriched through these relationships; we therefore encourage you to create a community of practice with thoughtful critical friends who can ask you the sorts of tough questions noted above in the quote from Luker.

Toward the end of most chapters, you will find a dialogue between two of our former graduate students. We hope these dialogues provide a model of the kind of dialogues you might have with your critical friends or community of practice. The dialogue participants, Karla Guiliano Sarr and Keren Dalyot, were our graduate students as we wrote the sixth edition of *Designing Qualitative Research*. Karla is now an independent international consultant working on research and evaluation projects. Keren is a researcher in the Applied Science Communication Research Group with the Faculty in Education in Science and Technology, Technion, Israel. With their approval, we have slightly edited their original dialogues.

Also, we provide application activities throughout various chapters and sometimes as a culminating activity at the end of a chapter (as we do in this chapter). We also offer books and articles for further reading, with a short list of "some of our favorites and classics," and key terms at the end of each chapter.

Opportunities and Challenges

The opportunities and challenges ahead of you as you undertake learning about—and doing—qualitative inquiry are exciting, exhausting, inspiring, and . . . just plain old hard work. Much is learned, we believe, by experience; so be gentle with yourself as you undertake to learn and practice both the "science" and the art of conducting useful, ethical, engaging qualitative research. The application activity below is intended to help you learn about yourself as a qualitative inquirer, directing you to areas where you might seek out support and further learning opportunities.

APPLICATION ACTIVITY 1.1

WHAT DO I BRING TO QUALITATIVE RESEARCH? WHAT ELSE SHOULD I LEARN?

Read through the list of skills and personal dispositions below, asking yourself, "What do I already seem to have? And what else should I learn about?" Take at least 30 minutes to ponder the skills and dispositions, noting where you believe you have some strengths and where you might need further support. When you are done, share with your trusted critical friends to help you refine your initial judgments. It might be interesting to engage with these ideas now, as you embark on your learning, and then again when you complete a course or a small-scale study. Then compare.

Remember: This activity is intended to help you identify areas of strength (which you could share with others) and areas that might need some support (which you could obtain from your critical friends). **Be kind to yourself!**

(Continued)

(Continued)

Skills:

1. Listening skills
2. Memory for details and names
3. Ability to write clearly
4. Diligence in recording data
5. Comfort and ease in writing reports
6. Ease in navigating unstructured situations
7. Ability to assume a nonjudgmental and nonpartisan stance
8. Analytic skills in seeking how data fit into a theoretical structure
9. Diligence in not distorting data by imposing your preferred conceptual framework
10. Ability to analyze data (i.e., to think about the larger research questions while actually implementing the study)
11. Comfort working with some degree of independence
12. Ability to observe a situation while involved in that situation
13. Flexibility in recording data (i.e., ability to operate from memory and by taking full notes)
14. Awareness of alternative techniques of data collection with no emotional investment in any one method
15. Willingness to keep wondering what is going on

Dispositions:

1. Ability and willingness to reflect on your feelings
2. Ability to be a respectful onlooker
3. Ease and comfort in relating with those *not* of your own social class, race or ethnicity, gender, or age
4. Comfort approaching total strangers and engaging in a wide variety of small talk
5. Ease in helping participants feel comfortable with you
6. Satisfaction in being with, listening to, and trying to understand others' experiences
7. Comfort in taking a passive role
8. Sensitivity to when a discussion could be disturbing to participants

In sum, qualitative researchers strive to be humble, modest, and curious about the individuals in the study while holding to standards of integrity, respect, and empathy.

Barbour, R. (2013). *Introducing qualitative research: A student's guide to the craft of doing qualitative research* (2nd ed.). SAGE.

Bloomberg, L. D., & Volpe, M. (2019). *Completing your qualitative dissertation: A roadmap from beginning to end* (4th ed.). SAGE.

Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, D. (2018). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (5th ed.). SAGE.

Durdella, N. (2019). *Qualitative dissertation methodology: A guide for research design and methods*. SAGE.

Flick, U. (2020). *An introduction to qualitative research* (6th ed.). SAGE.

Merriam, S. B., & Tisdell, E. (2015). *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation* (4th ed.). Jossey-Bass.

Padgett, D. (2017). *Qualitative methods in social work research*. SAGE.

Patton, M. Q. (2015). *Qualitative research and evaluation methods: Integrating theory and practice* (4th ed.). SAGE.

Rossman, G. B., & Rallis, S. F. (2017). *An introduction to qualitative research: Learning in the field* (4th ed.). SAGE.

Janesick, V. J. (2016). *"Stretching" exercises for qualitative researchers* (4th ed.). SAGE.

Luker, K. (2008). *Salsa dancing into the social sciences: Research in an age of info-glut*. Harvard University Press.

Schram, T. H. (2006). *Conceptualizing and proposing qualitative research* (2nd ed.). Pearson Prentice Hall.

Qualitative Research Genres

Qualitative methodologists attempt to organize the various genres or approaches into categories or strands; this can be useful for proposal writers, who can situate their study within one of these strands. We refer to these as *methodological currents of thought*, employing Schram's (2006) quite useful phrase to describe theoretical and empirical strands that inform a conceptual framework. Historically, this categorizing was relatively straightforward; with the amazing proliferation of genres, however, the task has become more challenging. This chapter provides a brief summary of the historical, canonical ways of organizing qualitative research genres, followed by discussions of genres that offer alternatives, at times with a focus on a specific population and often from a critical stance with emancipatory goals. Our purpose here is to help proposal writers situate their studies to provide a more nuanced argument for the specific approach.

Historically, qualitative methodologists developed typologies to organize the field. (We refer you to the sixth edition of this book for brief historical details.) Almost twenty years ago, Patton (2002) provided a substantial list of theoretical orientations in qualitative inquiry; this list included, in part, ethnography, autoethnography, phenomenology, symbolic interaction, ecological psychology, systems theory, chaos theory, and grounded theory. The evolution of this thinking is evident in the fourth edition of his book (Patton, 2015), where ethnomethodology, semiotics, hermeneutics, postmodernism, and narrative inquiry are added. In 2005, Denzin and Lincoln recognized case studies; ethnography, participant observation, and performance ethnography; phenomenology and ethnomethodology; grounded theory; life history and *testimonio*; historical method; action and applied research; and clinical research. This was updated in 2018, when they added ethnodrama/ethnotheater, visual methods, and a focus on social justice inquiry to grounded theory. Creswell has consistently (1997–2017) articulated five major genres and has continued this typology through the fifth edition of his book (Creswell & Poth, 2017): narrative research, phenomenology, grounded theory, ethnography, and case study. Merriam and Tisdell (2016) describe six common qualitative research designs: basic qualitative research, phenomenology, ethnography, grounded theory, narrative inquiry, and qualitative case

TABLE 2.1 ● Canonical Typologies of Qualitative Research

Patton (2015) (partial)	Denzin and Lincoln (2018)	Creswell and Poth (2017)	Merriam and Tisdell (2016)	Ravitch and Carl (2016)
Common or similar genres				
Ethnography Autoethnography	Ethnography Performance ethnography Ethnodrama/ ethnotheater	Ethnography	Ethnography	Ethnography
Narrative inquiry	Life history and *testimonio*	Narrative research	Narrative inquiry	Narrative research
Phenomenology Ethnomethodology Heuristic inquiry	Phenomenology Ethnomethodology	Phenomenology	Phenomenology	Phenomenology
Grounded theory	Grounded theory Case study	Grounded theory Case study	Grounded theory Qualitative case studies	Grounded theory Case study research

studies. We also mention Ravitch and Carl (2016), who list nine approaches: ethnography and critical ethnography, case study research, action research and participatory action research, case study research, evaluation research, grounded theory, narrative inquiry, phenomenology, and practitioner research. See Table 2.1 for a comparison.

Building on the discussion provided in Gall et al. (2020), analysis of these lists, especially those with similar entries, shows a focus on a specific level or "unit of analysis": (1) *society and culture*, as seen in ethnography, action research, case studies, and often grounded theory; (2) *individual lived experience*, as exemplified by phenomenological approaches, some feminist inquiry, and life histories; and (3) *language and communication*—whether spoken or expressed in text—as in sociolinguistic approaches, including narrative analysis, critical discourse analysis, and conversation analysis. Below, we offer short descriptions of these canonical genres before turning to those genres that offer more explicit opportunities for critical qualitative inquiry.

We note here and below that the term *critical* has become problematic in social inquiry. Many use it vaguely and loosely, seeming to expect the reader to know precisely what is meant by this ambiguous term. Clearly, many refer to "critical theory," which itself is a huge and contested field. Others imply that using the term provides legitimacy to their work, placing it squarely among those who seek to raise and address issues of power, dominance, social inequities, and damaging discriminatory practices

in the social world. We note here that one of the typologies listed above, that of Ravitch and Carl (2016), foregrounds the potential "criticality" of qualitative inquiry. We ask that, as with any vague and perhaps contested term, proposal writers be clear and specific and fully describe those critical scholars who inform their work.

In our discussion of the canonical genres, below, we have also included notes on grounded theory and case study approaches, as well as arts-based inquiry. None of these maps fit neatly into one of the three foci listed above, as a researcher relying on grounded theory approaches, case study methodology, or arts-informed inquiry could focus on a group or organization (society and culture), on individuals, or on arts as culturally produced "texts." While first articulated by Eisner (1991), **arts-informed qualitative inquiry** has witnessed a growing focus that may well be a result of the recent explosion in the access to and use of the Internet and social media networking. Instant access to images and videos through the Internet and social networking has encouraged, in part, the development of this genre, where a multiplicity of images, sounds, and perhaps even odors are integrated into a single research project. We discuss arts-informed inquiry below, noting its increasing visibility in the qualitative research landscape. Thus, the major genres we list in this seventh edition include ethnographic approaches, phenomenological and narrative approaches, sociolinguistic approaches, grounded theory and analysis, case studies, and arts-informed inquiry. A few of the sections discussing the various genres have been written by our current or former graduate students. We indicate this by listing their names as authors of those sections.

Canonical Genres

A Focus on Society and Culture: Ethnographic Approaches

Ethnography is the hallmark of qualitative inquiry and, as Patton (2015) notes, "the earliest distinct tradition" (p. 81). Derived from anthropology and qualitative sociology, ethnographies study human groups, seeking to understand how they collectively form and maintain a culture. Thus, *culture* is a central concept for ethnographies. Focusing on an analysis of actions and interactions within the group, culture "describes the way things are and prescribes the ways people should act" (Rossman & Rallis, 2017, p. 82).

Ethnographers—those who inscribe (graph) the culture (ethnos)—typically study groups, communities, organizations, or perhaps social movements through long-term immersion in the setting and by using a variety of data collection methods. Through the primary approach of participant observation (discussed in Chapter 6), ethnographers describe and analyze patterns of interactions, roles, ceremonies and rituals, and artifacts of that cultural group. Historically, ethnographers have drawn on the constructs of "emic" and "etic" to capture what was once seen as two separate worldviews: The emic was considered the insider's perspective, while the etic was thought of as the outsider's—the researcher's. These terms have been relied on over the years. Our stance,

however, is that the notion of differing insider–outsider perspectives on culture is a true binary and, hence, not particularly useful in learning and writing about shifting, sometimes contradictory, understandings of a particular culture or cultural group, whether those understandings belong to members of the group or the researcher. Our position is that the boundary inherent in the emic–etic binary is artificial.

Classical ethnography has been enriched by variations on its central principles and practices. Internet ethnography and critical ethnography are discussed briefly below, as are autoethnography (see Ellis & Bochner, 2016) and performance ethnography (see Denzin, 2003). These variations offer flexible approaches, but all derive from the foundational principles of classical ethnography.

A Focus on Individual Lived Experience: Phenomenological Approaches

Phenomenological approaches seek to explore, describe, and analyze the meaning of individual lived experience: "how they perceive it, describe it, feel about it, judge it, remember it, make sense of it, and talk about it with others" (Patton, 2002, p. 115). Derived from the German philosophy of **phenomenology** (see, e.g., Husserl, 1913/2012), this family of approaches (including hermeneutics as a methodology for examining text) typically involves several long, in-depth interviews with individuals who have experienced the phenomenon of interest. Analysis proceeds from the central assumption that there is an *essence* to an experience that is shared with others who have also had that experience. The experiences of those participating in the study—those who have had a similar experience—are analyzed as unique expressions and then compared to identify the essence. The focus is on life as lived.

As narrative approaches have burgeoned and as an example of the increasing hybridity of the large field of qualitative inquiry, one could argue that narratives and analyses of texts and talk are examples of interdisciplinary work with links to psychology (Bruner, 1990) and literature (Polkinghorne, 1988) that blends a focus on individual lived experience from phenomenology with the analysis of expressions of self found in narrative inquiry.

A Focus on Talk and Text: Sociolinguistic Approaches

Related to ethnographic approaches in their interest in understanding the meanings participants derive from and construct in social interactions and settings, sociolinguistic approaches focus on communicative behavior: talk and text. Researchers within this genre tend to record naturally occurring talk for analysis, although discourse analysts tend to embed talk in larger societal and cultural narratives (see Silverman, 2010, especially Chapters 6 and 7). The ubiquity of "talk" makes it quite generative for analysis. Specifically,

> face-to-face social interaction (or other live interaction mediated by phones and other technological media) is the most immediate and the most frequently experienced social reality. The heart of our social and personal being lies in the immediate contact with other humans. (Peräkylä, 2005, p. 874)

Analyzing talk, then, is a central focus for discourse analysis, critical discourse analysis, conversation analysis (see Peräkylä, 2005), and other variations within this genre. The focus for inquiry may be how particular speech events are accomplished, how identity is established and reproduced, or how social identity characteristics shape communicative behaviors. Recent critical examples in this genre focus on how "talk" expresses racist and other forms of oppression and aggression in everyday interactions (see Sue, 2010; Yosso et al., 2009). Also see recent work on bullying, including *gaslighting*—intimidation or psychological abuse (Sarkis, 2017).

Grounded Theory Approaches

First articulated by Glaser and Strauss (1967), grounded theory is an overall approach to inquiry with the primary purpose of generating theories that explain the interactions and/or settings of interest. In its original conception, grounded theory sought to build explanations of social phenomena by working backward, if you will, from data into theory, rather than through the more traditional approaches relied on in the social sciences at that time (from theory/hypothesis to data, back to theory). The term *grounded theory* was intended to capture this idea: Work began "on the ground," prior to building theoretical insights. As such, it was somewhat revolutionary but soon suffered from substantial critique from other methodologists who argued that no researcher could enter "the field" without sensitizing concepts or working understandings (hypotheses) of the phenomena under investigation. Modifications to Glaser and Strauss's (1967) ideas emerged as Strauss began to work with Corbin (Strauss & Corbin, 1990), developing constructivist grounded theory approaches stipulating that theories and data are constructed by the researcher in interaction with and interpretation of the social phenomena of interest; they are not discovered, as the original ideas of grounded theory suggested.

Recent work by Corbin and Strauss (2015) and especially Charmaz (2015) develops these ideas more fully. Central to grounded theory are approaches to analysis that include open coding and axial coding. Open coding is the process of identifying and naming the data. "Essentially, each line, sentence, paragraph etc. is read in search of the answer to the repeated question 'what is this about? What is being referenced here?'" (Borgatti, n.d., para. 8). More on coding is illustrated in Chapter 7. Through the comparative processes of axial coding, these categories are related to one other, frequently searching for causal explanations for events and interactions. The softening of Glaser and Strauss's original ideas (especially by Corbin and Charmaz) makes them more accessible to many researchers who seek to make theory-building contributions about the phenomena that interest them.

Case Studies

Case studies are widely used among qualitative researchers because of their explicit focus on context and dynamic interactions, often over time. While many assume that case studies rely only on qualitative methods, such is not the case. One of the strengths of the case study approach is its methodological eclecticism; a variety of

methods may be used, including those that generate quantitative data. The flexibility of the case study approach prompted Stake (2005) to note that "a majority of researchers doing casework call their studies by some other name" (p. 443).

However, when relying primarily (or exclusively) on qualitative methods, the researcher may be informed by the assumptions or strategies of a variety of qualitative genres. A case study could be primarily ethnographic but also draw on critical discourse analysis, thus blending genres. Single-standing genre or not, case studies present many advantages, chief among them being the flexibility to incorporate multiple perspectives, data collection tools, and interpretive strategies. However, the merits of the case study as a qualitative genre face skeptics (Stake, 2005) as well as supporters (Creswell & Poth, 2017; Krueger & Casey, 2014; Yin, 2017). Many methodologists have contributed to contest the misplaced objections against the value of case studies (Flyvbjerg, 2011; Kennedy, 1979; Yin, 2017).

Even though there have been many attempts to define the case study, and despite the variations existing among these definitions, the centrality of contextualized deep understanding is recognized almost uniformly. Case studies favor intensity and depth, as well as exploring the interaction between case and context (Flyvbjerg, 2011). Also widely recognized is the need for defining the unit of analysis—an individual, a small group, an intervention—and setting boundaries around the case (Yin, 2017). When many cases are available for study, it is necessary to clarify the selection process; for instance, one may be interested in a particular case in and of itself (an intrinsic case), or one may wish to explore a case as an illustration of a larger phenomenon (instrumental case), and one could even be interested in exploring several instances of a phenomenon (multiple case study; Stake, 2005). While different criteria are acceptable depending on the study, researchers should be able to present rationales for selection depending on purpose and intended use. Selection criteria may include researchers' familiarity with the case and the case's intrinsic significance, among many other criteria (Thomas, 2011b). Once the case has been carefully selected and defined, researchers may draw on data collection and analytical strategies according to the unique opportunities and challenges the case presents.

Given the interpretative nature of qualitative inquiry, it is possible to state that, rather than merely identifying and isolating a case, researchers reconstruct it. The critical and postmodern turns in qualitative inquiry, characterized by skepticism toward master narratives and grand theories, open new spaces for epistemological debate. As a result, the discussion has departed from arguing the case study's ability to establish generalizations and has been directed toward *phronesis* (Thomas, 2011a). Phronesis involves practical, contextualized knowledge—"practical wisdom, common sense" (Flyvbjerg, 2011, p. 313; see also, Thomas, 2010, 2011a). These ideas are not new to qualitative inquiry, and yet they may foster a resurgence of case study research as a means to construct practical knowledge that is responsive to its environment.

Arts-Informed and Multimodal Inquiry

Rachael B. Lawrence

Arts-based and arts-informed qualitative research is an emerging genre of qualitative inquiry. Although only recently recognized in the formal research literature, this line of inquiry may not be so new (Harvard University, 2008). Theorists and practitioners of arts-based and arts-informed research view the distinction between arts and sciences as an artificial bifurcation of formerly interrelated and intertwined thought processes and activities; viewing "the arts" and "research" as separate processes may, in some ways, harm both fields (Barone & Eisner, 2012; Butler-Kisber, 2010; Sullivan, 2010). Would Leonardo da Vinci the inventor have been able to visualize as he did without arts training? Would Albert Einstein the violinist have conceptualized relativity without musical training? Would Caroline Herschel have discovered comets or theorized about space without training on the opera stage? Because the fields of arts and sciences were not so distinct in the past, many researchers are examining ways the two fields can work together to generate knowledge and understanding.

Because the arts play a key role in the way people make sense of their worlds and surroundings, "arts-based researchers consciously place creative and critical processes at the core of research process so as to fully investigate the contexts that shape complex human thoughts and actions" (Sullivan, 2010, p. 58). Instead of standing as separate disciplines, the arts and inquiry can dynamically inform each other. Research can inform the development of artistic pieces, and the arts can inform research at nearly any point of the journey. Arts-based or arts-informed research means that artistic processes or artistic pieces are incorporated in the development, data collection, and/or analysis of the project, or that they are being used to represent findings. Consider how the act of drawing or painting may help with the conceptualization of a project, or how poetry may be a tool for data analysis. Are there times when a dramatic play, film, photograph collection, collage, or musical piece may serve as a trustworthy and powerful way to present findings? Arts-based and arts-informed researchers believe so (see Margolis & Pauwels, 2011; Pink, 2012a; Rose, 2012).

* * * *

In the past four decades, a critical turn has taken place in the social sciences, humanities, and applied fields. Some qualitative researchers have espoused postmodern, postpositivist, and postcolonial theoretical perspectives that critique traditional social science (see De Zengotita, 2018; Gandhi, 2019; Seidman, 2016). The level of commitment to and engagement with these theoretical perspectives presents significant variation. While these critical approaches occasionally lead to fresh new approaches to data generation, analysis, and presentation, attaching the word *critical* or the prefix *post-* has at times become an academic performativity to signal one's currency in the field or, worse, a box that has to be checked. These scholars challenge the historical assumption of neutrality in inquiry and assert that *all* research is interpretive and

fundamentally political, spoken "from within a distinct interpretive community that configures, in its special way, the multicultural, gendered components of the research act" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 21). Luker (2008) describes this as our "fishiness":

> Whether we know it or not, we are guided by our taken-for-granted assumptions about what constitutes "good," "rigorous" methods whenever we undertake to do research. How could we not be? The studying of the social order is itself a social process, so how could the process of doing it not be surrounded by assumptions, fetishes, beliefs, and values that are not simply mirror reflections of objective reality, if there is such a thing? . . . We are fish studying water, and our very fishiness shapes how we think about it. (p. 31)

This argument underscores that research involves issues of power and that traditionally conducted social science research has silenced many marginalized and oppressed groups in society by making them the passive objects of inquiry. Qualitative research is deemed especially guilty because of its historical complicity with colonialism (Bishop, 2005), especially when anthropologists' understandings of culture could provide tools for colonizers. Those espousing critical perspectives have developed research strategies that are openly ideological and have empowering and democratizing goals. Some of these can be understood as "counternarratives," as they situate themselves as challenging the historical, neutral image of social science and its sometimes totalizing grand narratives. Of these, we see various forms of **narrative analysis**, including autoethnography and *testimonio*, as counternarratives; such studies explicitly take on the hegemonic grand narratives of dominant voices and seek to find a legitimate space for life experiences to be heard. Given this goal of telling one's story, these genres can be seen as having assumptions consistent with phenomenological approaches. Such may well be the case and represents another example of the increasing hybridity of methodological choices even under the large umbrella of qualitative inquiry.

An interdisciplinary approach with many guises, *critical narrative analysis* seeks to describe the meaning of experience for those who frequently are socially marginalized or oppressed, as they construct stories (narratives) about their lives. Life histories, biographies and autobiographies, oral histories, and personal narratives are all forms of narrative analysis. Each specific approach assumes that storytelling is integral to understanding lives and that all people construct narratives as a process in constructing and reconstructing identity (Sfard & Prusak, 2005). Some approaches focus on the sociolinguistic techniques a narrator uses, others on life events and a narrator's meaning making. When framed by feminist or critical theory, narrative analysis also can have an emancipatory purpose (Chase, 2005), as when stories are produced and politicized as counternarratives to prevailing oppressive "grand narratives" (discussed below under autoethnography, critical race, critical feminist, and queer theory).

We list several more critically informed genres in Table 2.2 and provide brief discussions of their key approaches and assumptions below. Rather than a comprehensive list, we think of *critical* as an umbrella term that includes many different epistemological traditions.

We argue that either canonical or critical assumptions can undergird each of the major and specialized genres. Canonical qualitative research assumes that

TABLE 2.2 ● Critical Genres of Qualitative Research

Scholarly Traditions	Qualitative Genres
Critical theory and cultural studies	Critical ethnography Critical discourse analysis Grounded theory, intersectionality inquiry, social justice inquiry
Queer theory	Queer/quare worldmaking LGBT analysis
Critical race theory	Critical race analysis CRiT walks
Critical feminist theories	Feminist qualitative research Standpoint research Intersectional research (disabled women, women of color, etc.)
Postcolonial theories	Decolonizing methods Indigenous methodologies
Critical technology studies	Internet and social media networking studies Netnography and online ethnography Critical social media research Online activism analysis

(a) knowledge is not objective Truth but is produced intersubjectively; (b) the researcher learns from participants to understand the meaning of their lives but should maintain a stance of neutrality; and (c) society is reasonably structured and primarily orderly and predictable. Postmodern and postcolonial perspectives also assume that knowledge is subjective and must be challenged and critiqued. Similarly, critical theory; critical race, critical feminist, and queer theory; and cultural studies also assume that knowledge is subjective but view society as essentially conflictual and oppressive. These positions critique traditional modes of knowledge production (i.e., research) that have evolved in settings structured to legitimize elite social scientists and to exclude other forms of knowing. Critical race theorists, critical feminist researchers, and those espousing postcolonial perspectives point to the exclusion of "peripheral" knowledges and truths from traditional knowledge production (Alcadipani et al., 2015; Delgado et al., 2017; Liegghio & Caragata, 2020). By means of such challenges, it becomes clear that the assumptions behind

research questions should be interrogated, deconstructed, and sometimes dismantled and reframed.

Such inquiry could contribute to radical change or emancipation from oppressive social structures, either through a sustained critique or through direct advocacy and action taken by the researcher, often in collaboration with participants in the study. All these critiques share five assertions:

> (1) Research fundamentally involves issues of *power*; (2) the research report is not transparent, but rather it is *authored* by a raced, gendered, classed, and politically oriented individual; (3) race, class, and gender [among other social identities] are crucial for understanding experience; (4) historically, *traditional research has silenced* members of oppressed and marginalized groups; and (5) systems of divisions and oppression were historically constructed and are continuously reinforced. (Rossman & Rallis, 2017, p. 80, emphasis added)

These more critical perspectives on qualitative research contain three injunctions: As researchers, we should

1. examine how we represent the participants—the Other or the subaltern (Spivak, 1998)—and search for their counternarratives and modes of domination (Seidman, 2016) in our work;
2. scrutinize the "complex interplay of our own personal biography, power and status, interactions with participants, and the written word" (Rossman & Rallis, 2017, p. 80); and
3. be vigilant about the dynamics of ethics and politics in our work.

One implication of these concerns is that qualitative researchers pay close attention to their participants' reactions and to the *voice* they use in their work as a representation of the relationship between themselves and their participants. Another is that the traditional criteria for judging the adequacy or trustworthiness of a work have become essentially contested. As a result, the novice researcher might be left floundering for guidance as to what *will* constitute thoughtful and ethical research. We discuss these issues in Chapter 3.

As noted above, those frustrated with traditional qualitative research may find greater flexibility of expression in critical ethnography, autoethnography, critical discourse analysis, action and participatory action research, queer theory and analysis, critical race theory and analysis, gender studies, cultural studies, or Internet ethnography, to mention a few of the more critical genres under the qualitative inquiry umbrella. Each embraces changing existing social structures and processes as a primary purpose and, when framed by explicitly critical orientations, has openly political agendas and often emancipatory goals. We briefly discuss each genre below.

APPLICATION ACTIVITY 2.1

SITUATING YOURSELF

Imagine you are embarking on a study of immigrants to the United States via its southern border. You are passionate about helping find ways to better serve migrant youth as they seek better life opportunities in the United States.

Consider the canonical and more critical genres discussed in this chapter. Are you inclined to a more critical theoretical grounding or not? This is a first decision. Then consider which of the genres discussed appeals most to you. Ask yourself the following:

- Am I interested in the lived experiences of a few individuals?
- Am I interested in communication patterns among migrant youth and customs officers?
- Am I interested in new patterns of social engagement that emerge in camps holding these youth?

Ponder where you feel most comfortable focusing your gaze. Discuss with your critical friends how such a focus could be well served by various genres.

Critical Genres

Critical Ethnography

Critical ethnography is grounded in theories assuming that society is structured by class and status, as well as by race, ethnicity, gender, and sexual orientation, to maintain the oppression of marginalized groups. As defined by Madison (2012), "critical ethnography begins with an ethical responsibility to address processes of unfairness or injustice within a particular *lived* domain" (p. 5, emphasis in the original). Historically, critical ethnography developed from the commitment to radical education in several works sharply critical of accepted teaching practice (hooks, 1994). In education alone, critical ethnography has exploded to more than 1,500 articles (Beach & Vigo-Arrazola, 2020). Critical ethnography can also go beyond the classroom to ask questions about the historical forces shaping societal patterns, as well as the fundamental issues and dilemmas of policy, power, and dominance in institutions, including their role in reproducing and reinforcing inequities such as those based on gender, class, and race (Thériault, 2016; Vigo-Arrazola & Dieste Gracia, 2020).

Importantly, critical ethnography embraces studies that explore identity construction, as individuals and groups evolve to develop an understanding and a way of coping within the constraints of societal views of the "correct" way of being. We note that the emergence of intersectionality (Hill-Collins, 2019) encourages research to focus on the ways class, race, and gender, for example, intersect. This is apparent during the current pandemic and attendant economic upheaval, where both are interrelated

and affect marginalized communities disproportionately. For example, Miled (2019) interrogated her positionality when doing critical ethnography to examine the intersections of gender, age, and religion by exploring the experiences of young Muslim women.

We should also note here the recent development of postcritical ethnography, which moves beyond critical ethnography to explicitly incorporate postmodern perspectives. This discourse community develops critical social narratives that are ethnographies in the traditional sense but in which the involved social scientist explicitly takes a political stand (Everhart, 2005). Postcritical ethnographers use narrative, performance, poetry, autoethnography, and ethnographic fiction as their forms of representation. Their goal is to take a stand (like participatory action researchers) and have greater impact than that allowed by a 20-page article in an academic journal or a book read by 40 people (Noblit et al., 2005). In another example, Anders and Lester (2019) engaged with postcritical ethnography to explore the loss experienced by Burundian refugees living in U.S. Appalachia. They explain that, at its core, "postcritical work is justice work" and this justice work can be "civil, political, economic, social, cultural and racial" (Anders & Lester, 2019, p. 925). While presenting their findings in a traditional academic journal article, they engage with performance, playing with spacing, alignment, and capitalization in a style that resembles poetry or spoken-word performance.

Another of postcritical ethnography's forms of representation that has entered the lexicon of qualitative scholars is the notion of performance. **Performance ethnography** has become a critical mode of representing ethnographic materials, "the staged reenactment of ethnographically derived notes" (Alexander, 2005, p. 411). Embodying cultural knowledge through performance not only depicts cultural practice but might also lead to social change, as actors and audience reconceptualize their social circumstances. This genre finds representation in popular theater (Erel et al., 2017), arts-based studies (Barone & Eisner, 2012; see above in arts-informed inquiry), music (Said, 2007), and other media. It also evokes the notion of "cultural performance": the methods and resources available to members of a community or social identity group to construct and reconstruct (perform) those identities (Teman & Saldaña, 2019).

Autoethnography

More closely related to autobiography than traditional ethnography, **autoethnography** is a reflexive approach to understanding the human condition through critical and engaged analysis of one's own experiences. For historical context within the field of sociology, Ellis (see, especially, 1986) turned to autoethnography following public condemnation of how participants in the ethnographic study of "fisher folk" in Tidewater, Maryland, were treated (see Allen, 1997, for details). Although a precise definition is difficult, autoethnography is both a method and a product. Through self-observation and analysis of various personal artifacts, autoethnographers seek to produce personal stories and narratives that depict their lives, based on the assumption that these aspects of their lives resonate with the experiences of others. At their best, autoethnographies are counternarratives that challenge the predominant grand narratives of a particular aspect of the social world by providing alternative, deeply

personal viewpoints. Examples include Boylorn (2013), Ellis and Bochner (2016), Hughes and Pennington (2017), and Larsen (2014). However, at times autoethnographies become intellectual "navel-gazing," revealing intimate details of lives that seem out of place (to some) in social science discourse. This has led some to call for a "moderate" approach to autoethnography, characterized by balancing "innovation, imagination" on one hand and "rigor and usefulness" on the other (Stahlke Wall, 2016, p. 1).

The rise of autoethnography within qualitative inquiry parallels the extraordinary increase in opportunities for public self-disclosure found in contemporary society. Personal blogs; reality television shows that invite sharing of intimate details; YouTube, where one can share personal video clips instantaneously—all have fostered or encouraged the kind of self-disclosure that autoethnography represents. The rise of digital autoethnography (Atay, 2020) illustrates the many new opportunities that online lives provide qualitative researchers.

Critical Discourse Analysis

Critical discourse analysis focuses on issues of power, and on the ways linguistic expression reflects uneven distribution between dominant and marginalized populations (Rogers, 2004). This focus on *discourse*, which includes talk and text, explores how language shapes lives. Under the umbrella of critical discourse analysis, it is possible to identify strategies that are grounded in different ontological and epistemological assumptions. The term *discourse* is interpreted and used in vastly different ways (Mills, 2004). All critical discourse analysis approaches share a commitment to reveal and confront dominant discourses and ideology through careful consideration of spoken and written language, and even nonverbal expression. A critical-realist strand of critical discourse analysis relies on Marxist assumptions, in line with Frankfurt School–style commitment to critical theory and ideology critique. In contrast, post-structuralist approach to discourse analysis is at the same time based on and critical of structural linguistics (De Saussure, 2011). Most critical discourse analysis approaches take a critical stance, recognize that reality is socially constructed, and embrace social action or change as the ultimate goal of their analytical process (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002).

The French theorist Michel Foucault has become influential across the social sciences (Gane, 2018) over the past three decades. Foucault (1972) proposed turning familiar or taken-for-granted discourses into unfamiliar entities to be analyzed in connection with their specific environments. Taken-for-granted ideas about prisons, mental illness, and sexuality were the focus of Foucault's studies, but the principles have been applied to schools, universities, and nearly every aspect of social life.

Despite the value of efforts intended to systematize the craft of critical discourse analysis, it is important to emphasize that there is not a step-by-step process to follow even though some useful guides are available. For instance, Boréus and Bergström (2017) outline eight approaches to discourse analysis, including argumentation and metaphor analysis. Wodak and Meyer (2016) present multiple approaches to discourse analysis grounded in different theoretical traditions. Some strategies shared across approaches are comparing texts, substituting elements in the text for others to

elucidate relations among elements, identifying different voices or perspectives, and conducting close detailed analysis; these strategies have the purpose of identifying patterns and exploring the implications of different discursive constructions (Machin & Mayr, 2013). While these steps are to be considered heuristics, standards of practice require critical discourse analysis to be "solid," "comprehensive," and "transparent" (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002, p. 173).

Action Research and Participatory Action Research

Action research replaces the traditional social science claim of neutrality and objectivity to seek full, collaborative inquiry by all participants, often to engage in sustained change in organizations, communities, or institutions (Stringer, 2007). It seeks to decentralize traditional research by staying committed to local contexts rather than to the quest for Truth and to liberation of research from its excessive reliance on the "restrictive conventional rules of the research game" (Guba, 1978, as quoted in Stringer, 1996, p. x). When ideally executed, action research blurs the distinctions between researcher and participants, creating a democratic inquiry process. It is often practiced in organizational contexts and in education, where professionals collaboratively question their practice, make changes, and assess the effects of those changes (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2005; McNiff & Whitehead, 2003; Sagor, 2005). Also active in social work, business management, and community development (Hollingsworth, 1997), researchers who engage in action research do so to improve their practice.

Perhaps more visible in international work, **participatory action research** draws on the precept of emancipation, as articulated by Freire (1970), that sustainable empowerment and development should begin with the concerns of the marginalized (Krueger-Henney & Ruglis, 2020). In addition to an explicit commitment to action, the hallmark of participatory action research is full collaboration between researcher and participants in posing the questions to be pursued and in gathering data to respond to them. It entails a cycle of research, reflection, and action. Examples include research from a feminist perspective (M. Fine & Torre, 2019), research among indigenous populations (Mayazumi, 2009; Peltier, 2018), and research among youth (Ozer, 2017), along with many others.

APPLICATION ACTIVITY 2.2

WRITING A MEMO

In a short memo, describe and analyze how two different genres could be fruitfully combined—for example, a more ethnographic approach with critical discourse analysis, or participatory action research and arts-informed inquiry. The purpose of this memo is to clarify—for you—the potential for a hybrid approach. Share your memo with your critical friends for discussion and feedback.