1 INTRODUCTION TO QUALITATIVE INQUIRY AND RESEARCH DESIGN

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

- Why focus on examining five approaches to qualitative inquiry?
- What does positioning oneself as a qualitative researcher involve?
- What are the distinguishing characteristics of qualitative research?
- What are the key readings for each of the five selected approaches?

The idea for this book was inspired by conversations that took place during a summer qualitative research seminar in Vail, Colorado, sponsored by the University of Denver under the able guidance of Edith King of the College of Education. At that 1994 seminar, while discussing qualitative data analysis, John began on a personal note, introducing one of his recently completed qualitative studies—a case study of a campus response to a student gun incident (Asmussen & Creswell, 1995). John knew this case might provoke some discussion and present some complex analysis issues. It involved a Midwestern university's reaction to a gunman who entered an actuarial science undergraduate class with a semiautomatic rifle and attempted to fire on students in his class. The rifle jammed and did not discharge, and the gunman fled and was captured a few miles away. Standing before the group, John chronicled the events of the case, the themes, and the lessons we learned about a university reaction to a near tragic event. Then, unplanned, Harry Wolcott of the University of Oregon, another resource person for this seminar, raised his hand and asked for the podium. He explained how *he* would approach the study as a cultural anthropologist. To John's surprise, Harry had "turned" his case study into ethnography, framing the study in an entirely new way. After Harry had concluded, Les Goodchild, then of University of Denver, discussed how he would examine the gunman case from a historical perspective. Together the three had, then, offered multiple renderings of the incident, to create surprising "turns" of the initial case study using different qualitative approaches. It was this event that sparked an idea that John had long harbored—that the design of a qualitative study is related to the specific *approach* taken to **qualitative research** (see the glossary for definitions of bold terms). John began to write the first edition of this book, guided by a single, compelling question: How does the type or approach of qualitative inquiry shape the design or procedures of a study?

This chapter will introduce you to qualitative research and the five approaches to inquiry examined in this book. We do this by describing our approach to this book including our rationale for examining five qualitative research approaches and our positioning as qualitative researchers. Then we help you begin to distinguish qualitative research by discussing our definition and nine common characteristics. Finally, alongside presenting our selection of the five qualitative approaches examined in this book, we offer key book readings for narrative research, phenomenology, grounded theory, ethnography, and case study.

RATIONALE FOR OUR APPROACH TO THE BOOK

In this book, we examine five different approaches to qualitative inquiry—narrative, phenomenology, grounded theory, ethnography, and case studies—and put them side by side to compare and contrast. Differences across the five approaches are most vividly displayed by exploring their use throughout the process of qualitative research, including the introduction to a study through its purpose and research questions, data collection, data analysis, report writing, and standards of validation and evaluation. By studying published qualitative journal articles, we can see, for example, that research questions framed from grounded theory are different from questions framed from a phenomenological study.

This combination of the different approaches and how their distinctiveness plays out in the process of research is what distinguishes this book from others on qualitative research that you may have read. Most qualitative researchers focus on only one approach—say ethnography or grounded theory—and try to convince their readers of the value of that approach. This makes sense in our highly specialized world of academia. However, students and beginning qualitative researchers need choices that fit their research problems and that suit their own interests in conducting research. We hope this book opens up the expanse of qualitative research and invites readers to examine multiple ways of engaging in the process of research. It provides qualitative researchers with options for conducting qualitative inquiry and helps them with decisions about what approach is best to use in studying their research problems. With so many books on qualitative research in general and on the various approaches of inquiry, qualitative researchers are often at a loss for understanding what options (i.e., approaches) exist and how one makes an informed choice of an option for research.

By reading this book and engaging with the learning features, we hope that you will gain a better understanding of the steps in the process of research, recognize the differences and similarities among the five qualitative **approaches to inquiry**, and apply new understandings to inform the design of qualitative research using the five approaches to inquiry.

POSITIONING OURSELVES

You need to know some information about our backgrounds in order to understand our approach to this book. The evolution of this book has been influenced by the multifaceted and dynamic contexts in which we work and live and especially by the people with whom and the communities

with which we interact. This presents an opportunity for us to introduce (and model) the principle of being transparent about one's positionality when presenting research—and in our case, a rationale for our content. We write from the standpoint of conveying an understanding of the process of qualitative research (whether you want to call it the scientific method or something else), a focus on strong methods features such as extensive qualitative data collection, rigorous data analysis through multiple steps, and the use of computer programs. Moreover, this book reflects John's highlighting the structure of writing, whether the writing is a qualitative study, a poem, or creative nonfiction. An enduring interest of John's has been the *composition* of qualitative research. This compositional interest flows into how to best structure qualitative inquiry and to visualize how the structure shifts and changes given different approaches to research. For Cheryl, a persistent research interest in promoting use of findings and processes has led to her focus on providing enhanced *access* to the generation of findings in qualitative research and seeking diverse *formats* for the communication and evaluation of research.

John was trained as a quantitative researcher almost 50 years ago. By the mid-1980s, John was asked to teach the first qualitative research course at his university, and he proceeded to do so. This was followed a few years later with the writing of the first edition of this book. While John has expanded his repertoire to mixed methods research, he continually returns to his strong interest in qualitative research. Over the years, John has evolved into an applied research methodologist with a specialization in **research design**, qualitative research, and mixed methods research.

Cheryl was trained as a quantitative researcher within the biological natural sciences about 30 years ago. When working as a high school science teacher, she began to question the limitations of the quantitative evidence test scores for assessing and reporting student learning. Instead, she began to draw upon more qualitative evidence to inform her communication with students and parents. This was followed by a return to graduate school to gain expertise in qualitative research methods and eventually to engage in the emerging field of mixed methods research. As an applied researcher and program evaluator, she is committed to building research capacity through mentoring her students and collaborators in rigorous methods across a variety of organizational settings.

John's interest in structured features has often placed him in the camp of postpositivist writers in qualitative inquiry (see Denzin & Lincoln, 2005), but like most researchers, he defies easy categorization. In an article about a homeless shelter in *Qualitative Inquiry* (D. W. Miller et al., 1998), John's ethnography assumed a realist, a confessional, and an advocacy stance. Also, he is not advocating the acceptance of qualitative research in a "quantitative" world (Ely et al., 1991). Qualitative inquiry represents a legitimate mode of social and human science exploration, without apology or comparisons to quantitative research. In the same way, Cheryl draws on her experiences as a quantitative and mixed methods researcher in her qualitative work but is careful to maintain the essential characteristics of qualitative research discussed in this introductory chapter.

John also tends to be oriented toward citing numerous ideas to document articles; to incorporate the latest writings from the ever-growing, vast literature of qualitative inquiry; and to advance an applied, practical form of conducting research. John concurs with Agger (1991), who says that readers

and writers can understand methodology in less technical ways, thereby affording greater access to scholars and democratizing science. We continue to seek and be influenced by our interactions with beginning and more experienced researchers who are expanding their methodological expertise in our courses, workshops, and conferences. Always before us as we write is the picture of a beginning master's or doctoral student who is learning qualitative research for the first time. Because this picture remains central in our thinking, some may say that we oversimplify the craft of research. This picture may well blur the image for a more seasoned qualitative writer—and especially one who seeks more advanced discussions and who looks for problematizing the process of research. It is important to both of us that, in this book, we provide access to learning about five qualitative research approaches in a way that stimulates the beginning of a qualitative inquiry journey.

TRY THIS NOW 1.1
DESCRIBING YOUR POSITIONALITY TO QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

Positionality is shaped by many influences including the researcher's lived experience. What are some key aspects of your lived experiences that may influence the conduct of qualitative research for you? How would you convey these influences in a positionality statement?

DEFINING QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

We typically begin a book about qualitative research by posing a definition for it. This seemingly uncomplicated approach has become more difficult in recent years. We note that some extremely useful introductory books on qualitative research these days do not contain a definition that can be easily located (e.g., Morse & Richards, 2002; Weis & Fine, 2000). Perhaps this has less to do with the authors' decision to convey the nature of this inquiry and more to do with a reluctance to "fix" a definition. Other authors advance a definition. The evolving definition in *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Research* (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994, 2000, 2005, 2011b, 2018b) conveys the ever-changing nature of qualitative inquiry from social construction, to interpretivism, and then on to social justice in the world. We include the latest definition here:

> Qualitative research consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible. These practices transform the world. They turn the world into a series of representations, including field notes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recordings, and memos to the self. At this level, qualitative research involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of or interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them. (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018a, p. 10)

Although some of the traditional approaches to qualitative research, such as the "interpretive, naturalistic approach" and "meanings," are evident in this definition, the

definition also has a strong orientation toward the impact of qualitative research and its ability to transform the world.

As applied research methodologists, our working definitions of qualitative research incorporate many of the Denzin and Lincoln elements, but it provides greater emphasis on the design of research and the use of distinct approaches to inquiry (e.g., ethnography, narrative). We adopt the following definition:

> Qualitative research begins with assumptions and the use of interpretive/theoretical frameworks that inform the study of research problems addressing the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem. To study this problem, qualitative researchers use an emerging qualitative approach to inquiry, the collection of data in a natural setting sensitive to the people and places under study, and data analysis that is both inductive and deductive and establishes patterns or themes. The final written report or presentation includes the voices of participants, the reflexivity of the researcher, a complex description and interpretation of the problem, and its contribution to the literature or a call for change. (Creswell, 2013, p. 44)

Distinguishing Characteristics

Our rationale underlying our working definition of qualitative research emphasizes the design of research and the use of distinct approaches to inquiry (e.g., ethnography, narrative). It is helpful to move from a more general definition to specific characteristics found in qualitative research. We believe that the characteristics have evolved over time (which we can see across the editions of this book!) and they certainly do not present a definitive set of elements. Key among the shifts over time, qualitative research today involves closer attention to the interpretive nature of the research; the role of the researcher and the methods used for data collection; situating the study within the political, social, and cultural context of the research setting; and the reflexivity or "presence" of the researchers in the work they do and the accounts they present. Examine Table 1.1 for how these common characteristics have remained unchanged or evolved in some way over time and across influential introductory qualitative research books. The nine common characteristics of qualitative research are as follows and are presented in no specific order of importance:

- *Natural setting*. Qualitative researchers often collect data in the field at the site where participants experience the issue or problem under study. They do not bring individuals into a lab (a contrived situation), nor do they typically send out instruments for individuals to complete, such as in survey research. Instead, qualitative researchers gather information by talking directly to people and seeing them behave and act within their context. These interactions might occur over time face-to-face and be influenced by technology.

- *Researcher as key instrument*. Qualitative researchers collect data themselves through examining documents, observing behavior, and interviewing participants. They may use an instrument, but it is one designed by the researcher using open-ended questions.

TABLE 1.1 ■ Distinguishing Characteristics of Qualitative Research

Characteristics	LeCompte & Schensul (1999)	Hatch (2002)	Ravitch & Carl (2020)	Marshall, Rossman, & Blanco (2021)	Creswell & Poth (2023)	Trends Over Time/ Across Books
Conducted in a natural setting (the field)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Unchanged
Relies on the researcher as key instrument in data collection	—	Yes	Yes	—	Yes	Increased prominence
Involves using multiple methods	Yes	—	—	Yes	Yes	Increased prominence
Involves complex reasoning through inductive and deductive logic	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Unchanged
Focuses on participants' multiple perspectives and meanings	Yes	Yes	Yes	—	Yes	Increased prominence
Is situated within the larger context or setting of participants or sites	Yes	—	Yes	Yes	Yes	Increased prominence
Involves an emergent and evolving design	—	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Mostly unchanged
Is reflective and interpretive of researcher's background influences	—	—	Yes	Yes	Yes	Increased prominence
Presents a holistic, complex picture	—	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Mostly unchanged

Note: The em-dashes represent the absence of reference to the characteristic by specific authors.

They do not tend to use or rely on questionnaires or instruments developed by other researchers. A key exception is when qualitative researchers access existing qualitative data for secondary analysis (see Chapter 7 for further information and cautions).

- *Multiple methods*. Qualitative researchers typically gather multiple forms of data, such as interviews, observations, and documents, rather than rely on a single data source. Then they review the data and make sense of it, organizing it into categories or themes that cut across all of the data sources.

- *Complex reasoning through inductive and deductive logic*. Qualitative researchers build their patterns, categories, and themes from the "bottom up" by organizing the data inductively into increasingly more abstract units of information. This inductive process involves researchers working back and forth between the themes and the database until they establish a comprehensive set of themes. It may also involve collaborating with the participants interactively so that they have a chance to shape the themes or abstractions that emerge from the process. Researchers also use deductive thinking in that they build themes that are constantly being checked against the data. The inductive–deductive logic process means that the qualitative researcher uses complex reasoning skills throughout the process of research.

- *Participants' multiple perspectives and meanings*. In the entire qualitative research process, the researchers keep a focus on learning the meaning that the participants hold about the problem or issue, not the meaning that the researchers bring to the research or writers from the literature. The participant meanings further suggest multiple perspectives on a topic and diverse views. This is why a theme developed in a qualitative report should reflect multiple perspectives of the participants in the study.

- *Context-dependent*. The research is situated within the context or setting of participants or sites. In order to report the setting in which the problem is being studied, the researcher must seek an understanding of contextual features and their influence on participants' experiences (e.g., social, political, and historical). This is essential because the particular contexts allow researchers to "understand how events, actions, and meaning are shaped by the unique circumstances in which these occur" (Maxwell, 2013, p. 30). It is important for the researcher to assume contexts are dynamic, to monitor for various changes over time, and to respond appropriately.

- *Emergent design.* The research process for qualitative researchers is emergent. This means that the initial plan for research cannot be tightly prescribed and that all phases of the process may change or shift after the researchers enter the field and begin to collect data. For example, the questions may change, the forms of data collection may be altered, and the individuals studied and the sites visited may be modified during the process of conducting the study. The key idea behind qualitative research is to learn about the problem or issue from participants and engage in the best practices to obtain that information.

- *Reflexivity.* Researchers "position themselves" in a qualitative research study. This means that researchers engage in practices that help them understand how they influence the research process and convey (i.e., in a method section, in an introduction, or in other places in a study) their background (e.g., work experiences, cultural experiences, history), how it informs their interpretation of the information in a study, and what they have to gain from the study. Wolcott (2010) said the following:

Our readers have a right to know about us. And they do not want to know whether we played in the high school band. They want to know what prompts our interest in the topics we investigate, to whom we are reporting, and what we personally stand to gain from our study. (p. 36)

- *Complex account.* Qualitative researchers try to develop a complex picture of the problem or issue under study. This involves reporting multiple perspectives, identifying the many factors involved in a situation, and generally sketching the larger picture that emerges. Researchers are bound not by cause-and-effect relationships among factors but rather by describing the complex interactions of factors in any situation.

SELECTION OF THE FIVE APPROACHES

Those undertaking qualitative studies have a baffling number of choices of approaches. One can gain a sense of this diversity by examining several classifications or typologies. Tesch (1990) provided a classification consisting of 28 approaches organized into four branches of a flow-chart, sorting out these approaches based on the central interest of the investigator. Wolcott (1992) classified approaches in a "tree" diagram with branches of the tree designating strategies for data collection. W. L. Miller and Crabtree (1992) organized 18 types according to the "domain" of human life of primary concern to the researcher, such as a focus on the individual, the social world, or the culture. In the field of education, Jacob (1987) categorized all qualitative research into "traditions," such as ecological psychology, symbolic interactionism, and holistic ethnography. Jacob's categorization provided a key framework for the first edition of this book. Lancy (1993) organized qualitative inquiry into discipline perspectives, such as anthropology, sociology, biology, cognitive psychology, and history. Denzin and Lincoln (1994, 2005, 2011b, 2018b) have organized and reorganized their types of qualitative strategies over the years.

Table 1.2 provides these and other various classifications of qualitative approaches that have surfaced. This list is not meant to be exhaustive of the possibilities; it is intended to illustrate the diversity of approaches recommended by different authors and how the disciplines might emphasize some approaches over others.

Looking closely at these classifications, we can discern that some approaches consistently appear, such as ethnography, grounded theory, phenomenology, and case studies. Also, a number of narrative-related approaches have been discussed, such as life history, autoethnography, and biography. With so many possibilities, how was the selection decision made to focus on the five approaches presented in this book?

TABLE 1.2 ■ Qualitative Approaches Mentioned by Authors and Their Disciplines/Fields			
Authors	**Qualitative Approaches Mentioned by the Authors**		**Disciplines**
Jacob (1987)	● Ecological psychology ● Ethnography of communication	● Holistic ethnography ● Symbolic interactionism	● Cognitive anthropology	Education
Munhall & Oiler (1986)	● Phenomenology ● Historical research	● Grounded theory	● Ethnography	Nursing
Lancy (1993)	● Anthropological perspectives ● Case studies ● Personal accounts	● Sociological perspectives ● Historical inquiries	● Biological perspectives ● Cognitive studies	Education
Strauss & Corbin (1990)	● Grounded theory ● Life histories	● Ethnography ● Conversational analysis	● Phenomenology	Sociology, nursing
Morse (1994)	● Phenomenology ● Grounded theory	● Ethnography	● Ethnoscience	Nursing
Moustakas (1994)	● Ethnography ● Empirical phenomenological research ● Phenomenology	● Grounded theory ● Heuristic research	● Hermeneutics ● Transcendental	Psychology
Denzin & Lincoln (1994)	● Case studies ● Ethnomethodology ● Biographical	● Ethnography ● Interpretative practices ● Historical	● Phenomenology ● Grounded theory ● Clinical research	Social sciences
Miles & Huberman (1994)	Approaches to Qualitative Data Analysis		
	● Interpretivism	● Social anthropology	● Collaborative social research	Social sciences
Slife & Williams (1995)	Categories of Qualitative Methods		
	● Ethnography	● Phenomenology	● Studies of artifacts	Psychology

(*Continued*)

Authors	Qualitative Approaches Mentioned by the Authors			Disciplines
Denzin & Lincoln (2005)	• Performance, critical, and public ethnography • Grounded theory • Interpretive practices	• Life history • Case studies	• Narrative authority • Participatory action research	Social sciences
Saldaña (2011)	• Ethnography • Case study • Narrative inquiry • Evaluation research • Critical inquiry	• Grounded theory • Content analysis • Arts-based research • Action research • Autoethnography	• Phenomenology • Mixed methods research • Investigative journalism	Arts (theater)
Denzin & Lincoln (2011b, 2018b)	**Research Strategies**			Social sciences
	• Ethnography • Ethnomethodology • Historical method • Clinical research	• Case study • Phenomenology • Grounded theory • Action and applied research	• Ethnography, participant observation, performance • Life history, testimonio	
Mertens (2019)	**Types of Qualitative Research**			Education, psychology
	• Ethnographic research • Grounded theory	• Case study • Participatory action research	• Phenomenological research	
Marshall et al. (2021)	• Ethnographic approaches	• Phenomenological approaches	• Sociolinguistic approaches (e.g., critical genres)	Education

TABLE 1.2 ■ Qualitative Approaches Mentioned by Authors and Their Disciplines/Fields (Continued)

The choice of the five approaches resulted from reflecting on personal interests, selecting different approaches popular in the social science and health science literature, and electing to choose representative discipline orientations. Both of us have had personal experience with all five approaches and have advised students and participated on research teams using these qualitative approaches. Beyond these personal experiences, our reading of the qualitative literature has been ongoing and our learning continues. The five approaches discussed in this book reflect the types of qualitative research that we most frequently see in the social, behavioral, and health science literature. It

is not unusual, too, for authors to state that certain approaches are most important in their field (e.g., Morse & Field, 1995). Also, we prefer approaches with systematic procedures for inquiry. The books we have chosen to illustrate each approach tend to have rigorous data collection procedures and analysis methods that are attractive to beginning researchers. The primary books chosen for each approach also represent different discipline perspectives in the social, behavioral, and health sciences. This is an attractive feature to broaden the audience for the book and to recognize the diverse disciplines that have embraced qualitative research. For example, narrative originates from the humanities and social sciences, phenomenology from psychology and philosophy, grounded theory from sociology, ethnography from anthropology and sociology, and case studies from the human and social sciences and applied areas such as evaluation research.

We recognize the possibility of including more than five approaches. We see the involvement of qualitative scholars in, for example, discourse analysis (Cheek, 2004) and in participatory action research (Ivankova, 2015). A strong possibility for adding a sixth approach in future editions might be "descriptive methods." Several authors have described this approach as a "foundational method," "thematic analysis," "descriptive analysis," or a "descriptive" approach to inquiry (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Levitt et al., 2018; Sandelowski, 2010). A descriptive method approach involves the researcher staying close to the data, using limited frameworks and interpretations, and cataloging the data into themes. It is a popular approach among qualitative health researchers. Also, recent standards from the American Psychological Association highlight "thematic analysis" as one of the qualitative designs (American Psychological Association, 2020). It can be distinguished from the "analytic traditions" found in discipline fields (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 78) and emphasized in this book (e.g., narrative studies, phenomenology, ethnography). We chose, however, not to include "descriptive methods" as a sixth, distinct approach because our chapters emphasize the foundational ideas (e.g., coding, themes) closely aligned with the "descriptive method."

KEY BOOK READINGS

The primary ideas that we use to discuss each approach come from select books. More specifically, we will rely heavily on two books for each approach. These are the books that we highly recommend for you to get started in learning a specific approach to qualitative inquiry. These books include classics often cited by authors, as well as new works. They also reflect diverse disciplines and perspectives. In addition, please see the essential readings for each chapter listed under the Further Readings heading at the end of each chapter.

Narrative Research

Clandinin, D. J. (2023). *Engaging in narrative inquiry* (2nd ed.). Routledge.

In this updated edition from the 2013 book, Jean Clandinin articulates her intention to "return to the question of what it is that narrative inquirers do" (2023, p. 7). The first three chapters are noteworthy for her practical guidance detailing what it means to think and act narratively. She illustrates this guidance by using updated examples.

Riessman, C. K. (2008). *Narrative methods for the human sciences*. Sage.

Catherine Riessman uses cross-disciplinary exemplars alongside detailed descriptions for four specific methods of narrative analysis (thematic, structural, dialogic/performance, and visual). A unique contribution is the discussion of visual analysis and how images can be used within qualitative research.

Phenomenology

Moustakas, C. (1994). *Phenomenological research methods*. Sage.

Clark Moustakas contributes a description of a heuristic process in phenomenological analysis. His practical instructions in the systematic interpretation of interview transcripts is helpful for extracting themes common across interviews or unique to an interview and then creating a conceptual link.

van Manen, M. (2023). *Phenomenology of practice: Meaning-giving methods in phenomenological research and writing* (2nd ed.). Routledge.

In this updated edition, Max van Manen describes the evolution of key phenomenological ideas, presents a range of methods, and discusses writing. Among the key contributions are his discussion of methodological issues and his description of a variety of phenomenological orientations.

Grounded Theory

Charmaz, K. (2014). *Constructing grounded theory* (2nd ed.). Sage.

Kathy Charmaz uses examples from varied disciplines and professions as well as reflections from scholars about doing grounded theory from a constructivist perspective. Her detailed descriptions of coding and writing processes, including guidelines and examples, provide essential practical guidance.

Corbin, J., & Strauss, A. (2015). *Basics of qualitative research: Techniques and procedures for developing grounded theory* (4th ed.). Sage.

To enrich the reader experience with viewpoints from former students and colleagues, Julie Corbin and Anselm Strauss use a pedagogical feature called Insider Insights. Of note is a summary of data analysis processes (see pp. 216–219).

Ethnography

Fetterman, D. M. (2019). *Ethnography: Step-by-step* (4th ed.). Sage.

In the fourth edition, David Fetterman expands discussions of ethnography to highlight reflexivity and the use of theory. The revised chapter on anthropological concepts further emphasizes culture and contextualization during the cyclical processes of acquiring ethnographic knowledge of human life. This, along with the updated descriptions of ethnographic equipment in Chapter 4 and the analytical strategies described in Chapter 5, make this resource required reading.

Wolcott, H. F. (2008a). *Ethnography: A way of seeing* (2nd ed.). AltaMira Press.

A good understanding of the nature of ethnography, the study of groups, and the development of an understanding of culture is provided by Harry Wolcott. In particular, his emphasis on both the artistic and common sense elements involved in fieldwork provides a unique perspective.

Case Study

Thomas, G. (2021). *How to do your case study* (3rd ed.). Sage.

Comprehensive guidance about when and how to use case studies is provided by Gary Thomas. In particular, he expands coverage of navigating ethical issues and multidisciplinary case examples in the newest edition.

Yin, R. K. (2017). *Case study research and applications: Design and methods* (6th ed.). Sage.

Robert Yin adds breadth and depth to this new edition with his emphasis on systems and procedures for generating reliable findings and valid interpretations in designs (see Chapter 2), data collection (see Chapter 4), and analysis (see Chapter 5).

CHAPTER CHECK-IN

1. Can you "see" how this book is distinguished from other books in its focus on examining five approaches to qualitative inquiry? Compare the purpose of this book with those of at least two other introductory qualitative research books; for ideas see Table 1.2.

2. Can you discern the influences of your lived experiences in your positionality statement representing your approach to qualitative research? Review your response to the Try this Now 1.1 activity.

3. Can you recognize how authors incorporate the nine distinguishing characteristics of qualitative research? Select one of the qualitative articles presented in Appendices B through F. Begin with identifying each of the characteristics advanced in this chapter (summarized in Table 1.1) as they have been applied in the journal article. Note which characteristics are easy and which are more difficult to identify.

SUMMARY

In this chapter, we introduced ourselves and this book examining five approaches to qualitative research. We began with a rationale for why examining different approaches is helpful to qualitative researchers followed by a description of our backgrounds to understand our approach to this book. We asked you to consider some of your life experiences that may influence how you approach qualitative research. We provided our definition of qualitative research as an approach to inquiry that begins with assumptions, an interpretive or theoretical lens, and the

study of research problems exploring the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem. Nine common characteristics of qualitative research were described, including collecting data in natural settings with a sensitivity to the people under study, using inductive and deductive analysis strategies to establish patterns or themes, and developing a complex description and interpretation of the problem that provides for the voices of participants and a reflexivity of the researchers. Recent introductory textbooks underscore the characteristics embedded in this definition. We described our selection of the five approaches and the key book readings for each approach.

CHAPTER KEY TERMS

Approaches to inquiry   Research design
Qualitative research

FURTHER READINGS

The following resources are offered as additional references for this chapter. The list should not be considered exhaustive, and readers are encouraged to seek out other readings in the end-of-book reference list.

Beck, C. T. (2021). *Introduction to phenomenology*. Sage.

Cheryl Tatano Beck draws on her depth of experience to contrast interpretive and descriptive phenomenology from design to reporting specific key authors. See Chapters 5 and 7 describing the unique aspects of Clark Moustakas's modification of Adrian van Kaam's descriptive phenomenological methodology and Max van Manen's hermeneutic phenomenological approach, respectively.

Denzin, N. K., Lincoln, Y. S., Giardina, M. D., & Cannella, G. S. (2023). *The SAGE handbook of qualitative research* (6th ed.). Sage.

New topics and approaches are covered in this sixth edition, including the theoretical frames of intersectionality, critical disability research, and postcolonial and decolonized knowledge from familiar and emerging authors.

Hammersley, M., & Atkinson, P. (2019). *Ethnography: Principles in practice* (4th ed.). Routledge.

A new chapter on "ethnography in the digital world" and expanded discussions about the ethical issues involved in ethnographic research make this fourth edition an excellent resource. See Chapter 1 for features that most ethnographic work involves.

Kim, J.-H. (2015). *Understanding narrative inquiry: The crafting and analysis of stories as research*. Sage.

Jeong-Hee Kim guides readers through the narrative inquiry process with the author's own research experiences, locating narrative inquiry in the interdisciplinary context. Unique contributions include describing five genres of narrative research (see Chapter 4) and discussions of the role of theory in narrative inquiry.

Morse, J. M., Bowers, B. J., Charmaz, K., Clarke, A. E., Cobin, J., & Poor, C. J. (with Stern, P. N.). (Eds.). (2021). *Developing grounded theory: The second generation revisited* (2nd ed.). Routledge.

In this updated edition, the authors provide a succinct overview of the development of grounded theory and distinguish among Glaserian and Straussian grounded theory as well as Charmaz's constructivist grounded theory and Clarke's situational analysis.

Stake, R. (1995). *The art of case study research*. Sage.

Through his personable style, Robert Stake offers insights gained from experience along with illustrative examples. The book reads differently than a typical text, emphasizing the "art" involved in conducting a case study and the role of researcher's intuition.