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# A Holistic Teaching Approach for Your Qualitative Research Class: A Book Review

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### Abstract

A book review on *Teaching Qualitative Research: Strategies for engaging emerging scholars*, written by Raji Swaminathan and Thalia M. Mulvihill, published in 2018. This review offers an overall look into an instructor's book by highlighting its unique features for teaching qualitative research in the social sciences. The review presents the main intent of the book, which is the authors' holistic pedagogical approach for teaching qualitative inquiry. Swaminathan and Mulvihill offer readers a melding of qualitative pedagogy and holistic pedagogy, a clear strength of this book. The review concludes by sharing potential readership, as well as, possible applications.

### Keywords

Teaching Qualitative Research, Holistic Pedagogy, Qualitative Inquiry, Curriculum Development, Experiential Learning

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## **A Holistic Teaching Approach for Your Qualitative Research Class: A Book Review**

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*A book review on Teaching Qualitative Research: Strategies for engaging emerging scholars, written by Raji Swaminathan and Thalia M. Mulvihill, published in 2018. This review offers an overall look into an instructor's book by highlighting its unique features for teaching qualitative research in the social sciences. The review presents the main intent of the book, which is the authors' holistic pedagogical approach for teaching qualitative inquiry. Swaminathan and Mulvihill offer readers a melding of qualitative pedagogy and holistic pedagogy—a clear strength of this book. The review concludes by sharing potential readership as well as possible applications. Keywords: Teaching Qualitative Research, Holistic Pedagogy, Qualitative Inquiry, Curriculum Development, Experiential Learning*

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At a glance, the book's chapters are organized from themes such as “what it means to teach qualitative research” (Swaminathan & Mulvihill, 2018, p. 1), to teaching students how to think qualitatively, to engaging students via experiential learning about qualitative concepts, to educating novice researchers about writing a qualitative research article. The chapters offer a sample curriculum with class activities (including their duration), discussion questions, and suggested readings for students. There are exercises available for instructors as part of their own reflective journal. The authors' holistic approach emphasizes that although they provide very specific and detailed teaching suggestions, these ideas can be adjusted to students' needs and for the instructor to insert their own voice and specialty.

The strength that this teacher's manual holds is its philosophy of teaching, known as the holistic pedagogical approach. This approach is further explained early in the book so that the instructor reading it can have a clear picture of the holistic educator's value system. According to Swaminathan and Mulvihill (2018), a holistic teaching style encourages inclusivity, social justice, curiosity, flexibility, self-investigation, collaboration, and contemplative inquiry (pp. 38-39). In other words, the educator's stance is not only to teach and guide, but it is also to learn, self-reflect, and collaborate with students. Swaminathan and Mulvihill also explain how this stance is complementary to a qualitative researcher's stance (2018, p. 40). For example, qualitative thinking requires being aware of one's own position and understanding our interaction with the study impacts the study. Similarly, in holistic teaching our interaction with the student influences the student's learning and vice versa. Hence, the holistic pedagogical approach to teaching qualitative inquiry can be seen as a natural fit.

Swaminathan and Mulvihill's teaching sensibilities are apparent in the book's thoughtful compilation of teaching suggestions. They share with the reader how their own teaching experiences, especially the lessons they have learned from such teaching experiences, have informed the content of this book. This a useful resource for those instructors looking for a well-formatted, concise, big-picture way of teaching qualitative research. It is also a useful resource for curriculum development and for those considering a more holistic teaching approach, especially in the social sciences discipline. Thus, this book may be a good fit for

those educators looking for a more reflective, mindful teaching experience that is complementary to teaching qualitative inquiry.

### **Reference**

Swaminathan, R., & Mulvihill, T. M. (2018). *Teaching qualitative research: Strategies for engaging emerging scholars*. New York, NY: Guilford Press.

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