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## Difficult Questions for Difficult Decisions: A Book Review

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### Abstract

*Qualitative Researching* goes beyond a simple how-to book. While it is “suitable for all levels” and “easy to follow”, *Qualitative Researching* poses difficult questions to help the researcher become both critical and creative. Jennifer Mason helps the reader gets actively involved in the research process with an “investigative energy” in which she walks the reader through different ideas. A thorough and well thought out book, *Qualitative Researching* helps those designing a research project build a strong foundation by examining each step of the process through challenging questions.

### Keywords

Qualitative Research, Research Design, Research Process, Critical Questions

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## Difficult Questions for Difficult Decisions: A Book Review

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Upon my first look at *Qualitative Researching*, my impression was that it would be a simple how-to book. This might come from the fact that while I was reading this book, I was in my first course for qualitative research in my doctoral program. Prior to this class, I had a basic knowledge of both quantitative and qualitative research. I knew about general terminology but had yet to delve into the actual application of these ideas. I was drawn to this book as I thought it could help me to further my education and application of qualitative research.

The short review on the back cover implied this book would be “suitable for all levels” and “easy to follow . . . providing insight and advice.” *Qualitative Researching* poses difficult questions from different theoretical perspectives and helps the researcher become both critical and creative. People often say “never judge a book by its cover;” however, in my opinion, the back cover of *Qualitative Researching* provides a fairly accurate depiction of the contents of the book.

*Qualitative Researching* is broken down into three parts and flows in order of the research process. As research continues to develop, so does this book as it is now in its third edition. Jennifer Mason’s hope is that the reader/researcher gets actively involved in qualitative research with creativity and “investigative energy.” Jennifer Mason not only presents difficult questions but also presents different possibilities while allowing readers to generate their own questions and ideas. This book is not a checklist or complete list for conducting qualitative research but is more of a guide that allows you to expand, revise, and revisit research questions and projects. As Jennifer Mason stated in the preface, “The chapters are organized around elements of research process on which decisions need to be made.”

Each chapter connects with the previous one and leads you into the upcoming one, yet chapters could still be read out of order and be understood and useful. This is due to the fact that at the beginning of each chapter, Jennifer Mason briefly reviews the previous chapter. The way she writes this book on such an in-depth subject feels like she is having a conversation with you. This makes the material a bit easier to soak in and allows you to truly consider the questions and ideas she poses. She provides tables and boxes in the chapters to further illustrate what she discusses in the text. She does not push her ideas as to what is right but rather gives way for readers to discover their own answers, beliefs, or questions. She offers her perspective but leaves room for her perspective to be challenged.

*Qualitative Researching* focuses on intellectual and practical concerns that arise when formulating and conducting qualitative research. Jennifer Mason walks the reader through

these concerns and builds upon each new idea presented throughout the chapters. If there is something that is not specifically addressed or covered in the text, Mason explains why she did not include it and recommends further reading and resources. *Qualitative Researching* could be used by graduate students wanting to further their understanding of the steps involved with creating a research project or researchers who are looking to develop their research project with a strong foundation. Overall, this is a useful resource for those interested in or currently involved in any type of qualitative research.

### Reference

Mason, J. (2018). *Qualitative researching*. London, UK: Sage Publications.

### Author Note

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