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Something for Everyone: A Review of Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing among Five Approaches

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Abstract

Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approaches (2018), by John W. Creswell and Cheryl N. Poth was written for anyone who is considering themselves to be researchers or interested in learning more about qualitative research. As students in doctoral programs studying family therapy at Nova Southeastern University, we felt that parts of the text were explicitly tailored toward the social sciences; however, the chapters are useful for anyone interested in qualitative research from many angles and aspects.

Keywords

Qualitative Inquiry, Research Design, Narrative Research, Phenomenology, Grounded Theory, Ethnography, Case Studies

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Something for Everyone: A Review of *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approaches*

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The Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approaches (2018), by John W. Creswell and Cheryl N. Poth was written for anyone who is considering themselves to be researchers or interested in learning more about qualitative research. As students in doctoral programs studying family therapy at Nova Southeastern University, we felt that parts of the text were explicitly tailored toward the social sciences; however, the chapters are useful for anyone interested in qualitative research from many angles and aspects. Keywords: Qualitative Inquiry, Research Design, Narrative Research, Phenomenology, Grounded Theory, Ethnography, Case Studies

Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design. Choosing Among Five Approaches, by John W. Creswell and Cheryl N. Poth (2018), was written for anyone who is considering themselves to be researchers or interested in learning more about qualitative research. The intended readers are students in general—possibly those interested in social sciences—or, more specifically, students and researchers in the field of qualitative research. As students in doctoral programs studying family therapy at Nova Southeastern University, we felt that parts of the text were explicitly tailored toward the social sciences; however, the chapters are useful for anyone interested in qualitative research. The writers offer a strong introduction about what they wanted to say, and it clearly keeps its focuses on the purpose of showing qualitative research from many angles and aspects.

To begin, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approaches* (2018), was written for everyone who is interested in research and who is interested in researching a specific phenomenon. Creswell and Poth explain the word phenomena as an abstract or concrete construct that is of interest to qualitative researchers. Some phenomena require different measurements, different ways of collecting data, and different ways of conducting the research process. People who are interested of examining human behavior require this approach to qualitative research approach.

Qualitative researchers from different fields of the social sciences, including family therapists, can find relevant information in this book. The text was originally intended to be directed primarily toward students. However, it gives relevant points to researchers at many levels. The authors want readers to understand the research process, offering new and unique strategies if they are at a turning point. Such readers are most likely to benefit from this book by following the important points in this easy-to-follow guide.

For instance, this book is continuously assessing and formulating the answer to the question: “How does the type or approach of qualitative inquiry shape the design or procedures of a study?” (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 2). In this fourth edition, readers gain another perspective to locating the answer to this question from the five traditions: Narrative Research, Phenomenology, Grounded Theory, Ethnography, Case Studies. The readers learn different approaches to qualitative inquiry and become able to compare them side by side. Readers can make comparisons between them not only through the descriptions of them, but also through the case studies and examples are provided. For example, the authors are making their point as they investigate how the research questions are formulated from different study methods.

Furthermore, the book is very successful at keeping focus on its purpose: that is, how to help readers understand the different approaches and the distinctions between them). This approach is distinguished from other related books, which are usually focused on only one approach. Despite the diverse approach, readers will benefit from the clear, understandable language. The information is provided in a manner that has no suggestion from the authors of what approach they should use, but rather focuses on providing all the tools to be able to choose the best fit for one's research problems and interest. The ultimate goal is to provide students (i.e. the readers) with the necessary options to "examine multiple ways of engaging in the process of research" (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 9) and be able to make an informed decision of what is the best for them.

Unlike previous editions, Creswell has updated this fourth edition in tandem with his co-author, Poth, by making the content of the book related to the information that led to the success of previous versions but also evoking many new ideas that are sprinkled throughout the chapters. Thus, the authors left the main core understanding of qualitative research, the respect in terms of the approaches and they still reflect on the benefit of each approach in an updated way, but they expanded the chapters to incorporate feedback. Specifically, they included more diversity and ethical issues, bettered the discussion, improved the integration of data management, new techniques for analyzing the data, and added more visuals and recent literature. For better understanding, they also included a "check-in" session at the end of each paragraph. The authors emphasized, "Qualitative inquiry represents a legitimate mode of social and human science exploration, without an apology or comparisons to quantitative research" (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 7).

A strong message conveyed by the text is that—by use of citations and references—their work is empirically supported by both new and seminal work. They incorporate the latest articles, writings, and research findings which shows the ideas freshness, and the intention, which is to provide the pure information, and let the reader choose which one fits. In relation to this, the authors use language in way that is easy to understand, and the examples are clearly targeting the right audience (i.e., researchers and students). As a result, the tone of the text is more conversational with a strong focus on the application of ideas. We, personally, keep coming back to this book for the clear guidance because it fulfills what we, as beginning researchers, are looking for.

Especially helpful are the exercises at the end of the all chapters, called "Check-in's." We appreciated them because they each wrapped-up the information provided and deepened it by allowing us to practice the concepts discussed. The visual aids were also useful, particularly in the way that they represented the topic. As readers, we appreciated the simple explanations of what the topic is about and how it was explained in reasonable steps. In general, the authors carefully chose the examples they provided and ensured that the exercises matched with them. All of the examples were put it in a personalized manner; they continuously explained that the researcher needs to take responsibility to go beyond the minimum, and they must familiarize themselves with the research contexts, participants, and respect the appropriate ways of interacting.

As a team, the authors each bring a distinctive perspective. Creswell bring a traditionally validated approach, while Poth is a new voice, contributing to the development of these ideas. Creswell is a fan of mixed methods, and his writing is very fruitful. He wrote twenty-seven books on mixed methods research, qualitative research, and research design. Poth teaches graduate level research methods and program evaluation courses, so she is in a daily interaction with students through teaching, mentoring, and supervising. In summary, we would recommend this book to graduate and doctoral students in particular, as both authors incorporated research advice to make this book as valuable possible for beginning researchers. Overall, the book provides a guidebook for people in many areas to learn and expand their

knowledge about qualitative research. We truly feel that readers can benefit substantially from the information that is provided by this text.

References

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Author Note

Cecilia Tarnoki is a student at Nova Southeastern University (NSU) and a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist who is currently pursuing her Ph.D. in Marriage and Family Therapy. She received a Master's degree in Marriage and Family Therapy at NSU and a Master's degree in Physical Education Semmelweis University Faculty of Physical Education and Sport Sciences in Hungary. As a therapist, with a background in teaching (Physical Education and Special Education), and training Applied Behavioral Analysis she brings forth a theoretical approach that reflects the systemic viewpoint using evidenced based practices. More, she offers an integrative strength-based approach of Solution-Focused Brief Therapy, Bowen Therapy to diverse population of individuals, couples and families who presented challenges. She is experienced in working with children and youth, and different ethnic and sexual minority populations, as well as special needs. She practices with a philosophy of being genuinely fair, kind, and inclusive, valuing each client regardless of their mental condition, the symptoms they display, or their crises they are facing, or where are they from. Correspondence regarding this article can be addressed directly to: ct580@mynsu.nova.edu.

Katheryne Puentes is a student at Nova Southeastern University (NSU) who is currently thriving for her Ph.D in Marriage and Family Therapy. She received a Master's in Counseling with a concentration of Mental Health at NSU. She has been working in the field for 5 years with clients from different diversity backgrounds; her specialty is working with clients who have mental health diagnosis's ranging from Anxiety to Bipolar. She utilizes the DSM 5 to understand the clients' symptoms, in order to provide the best treatment, but she enforces that the diagnosis is not the client. She loves working systemically with family members to gain a better understanding of their family patterns, cycles and their perspective within the family unit. Her lens and model are focused on evidence base practices within Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT). An individual within CBT can recognize their feelings, thought patterns and how they both impact their behaviors. Another lens that she uses is Solution Focused Brief Therapy, which is goal driven to the point that the client comes up with realistic goals that focus on what they want to work on for their future. She continues to learn about different models and how she can incorporate them within therapy because not one client is the same. Correspondence regarding this article can also be addressed directly to: kp1111@mynsu.nova.edu.

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