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Introduction

The work on this book began during a 1994 summer qualitative seminar in Vail, Colorado, sponsored by the University of Denver under the able guidance of Edith King of the College of Education. At that 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 Denver University, discussed how he would examine the gunman case from a historical perspective. Together the three had, then, multiple renderings of the incident, 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 related to the specific *approach* taken to

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qualitative research (see the glossary in Appendix A for definitions of bold italics 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?

Purpose and Rationale for the Book

This book is now in its fourth edition, and we are still formulating an answer to this question. For this new edition, John sought to include another perspective to the conversation. Our primary intent in this book is to examine five different approaches to qualitative inquiry—narrative, phenomenology, grounded theory, ethnography, and case studies—and put them side by side so that we can see their differences. These differences can be most vividly displayed by exploring their use throughout the process of 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. For example, by studying qualitative articles in journals, we can see that research questions framed from grounded theory look different than 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. Hopefully, 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 research students 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, we hope that you will gain a better understanding of the steps in the process of research, learn five qualitative approaches to inquiry, and understand the differences and similarities among the five *approaches to inquiry*.

What Is New in This Edition

Since John wrote the first, second, and third editions of this book, the content of the book has both remained the same and changed. In this edition, we introduce several new ideas:

- We have updated the key book readings introduced in Chapter 1 to reflect advances within each approach in narrative research (Clandinin, 2013), in phenomenology (van Manen, 2014), in grounded theory (Charmaz, 2014; Corbin & Strauss, 2015), and in case study (Yin, 2014).

- Based on reviewers' feedback, we have revised Chapter 2 on the philosophical assumptions and the interpretive frameworks used by qualitative researchers and expanded our use of studies to illustrate differences among interpretive frameworks.

- Across all the chapters, we have responded to reviewers' comments about the need for further inclusivity and diversity in our examples and references. We have added descriptions of each of the further readings at the end of the chapter to help readers to decide which readings are most appropriate for their needs.

- In Chapter 3, we have expanded the section on ethical issues that traces the types of qualitative ethical dilemmas likely to arise at different phases of the research process that are developed in subsequent chapters. In this way, we are continuing to expand the ethical coverage in this book in response to reviewer feedback.

- We have added two sections in Chapter 3 for guiding qualitative researchers' thinking about their own study by describing features of a good qualitative study and design considerations for engaging readers. We have added two visuals summarizing when to use qualitative research and describing phases of research, and revised the section on writing structures for a proposal.

- In discussing each of the five approaches in this book in Chapter 4, we have added visuals and enhanced descriptions related to "defining characteristics" of the approach. Readers will have our best assessment of the key features of the approach summarized in one place in the end of chapter tables. Also in Chapter 4, we have incorporated new visuals, updated key book readings, and added recent literature for each approach.

- We have updated the illustrative articles used in the book in Chapter 5 and replaced some outdated references with new examples. Consequently, we have added two new articles: one in ethnographic research (Mac an Ghaill & Haywood, 2015) and one in case study research (Frelin, 2015).

- In Chapter 6, we have provided additional purpose statement examples to include an alternative to the "scriptlike" purpose. In the discussion about subresearch questions, we have provided examples for each type of approach to guide subdivision of the central question into several parts.

- In the area of data collection in Chapter 7, we needed to better integrate issues of data management (e.g., data storage and security) as well as articles reflective of developments in data collection (e.g., computer-mediated, visual methods) to keep pace with new ways of gathering qualitative data.

- We also expanded the coverage of ethical considerations in earlier editions of this book and added two new visuals summarizing the procedures for preparing and conducting interviews and observations.

- In data analysis, in Chapter 8, we have expanded our discussion of new techniques that are being discussed for analyzing the data in each of the five approaches, cited recent references inclusive of audiovisual materials, and revised the visual representation of data analysis spiral. We also have updated the discussion about the use of memoing, developing interpretations, and representing data. In the description of qualitative computer software analysis packages, we have updated resources and added a section related to "how to decide whether to use a computer program."
- In the writing of qualitative research, as presented in Chapter 9, we have added more information about ethical considerations and reflexivity as well as their importance and guidance for incorporating into a qualitative study.
- We have updated the descriptions of validation and reliability perspectives and strategies in Chapter 10, including new visual summaries and greater detail in comparing standards of quality across the five approaches.
- At the end of each chapter, you will find a "check-in" section to practice specific skills introduced in the chapter. Many of these exercises have been rewritten in this new edition to reflect our growing understanding of the specific skills that a qualitative researcher needs to know.
- In the final chapter, we have added the text of the initial qualitative gunman case study and have not only "turned" the case study into a narrative project, a phenomenology, a grounded theory study, and an ethnography but we have also made more explicit what changes actually occurred in this reworking.
- As with all new editions, we have updated the references to include recent books on qualitative research methods as well as select journal articles that illustrate these methods.

Many areas have also remained the same as in the third edition. These include the following:

- The core characteristics of qualitative research have remained essentially the same.
- An emphasis on social justice as one of the primary features of qualitative research is continued in this edition. While a social justice orientation may not be for everyone, it has again been given primacy in the recent edition of the *SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Research* (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011).
- The need for considering ethical issues both in advance and responding as issues emerge throughout the research process.
- A healthy respect exists for variations within each of the five approaches. We have come to understand that there is no single way to approach an ethnography, a grounded theory study, and so forth. We have selectively chosen what we believe to be the most popular approaches within each approach and to highlight books that emphasize them.

- On a similar note, we have continued to use the five approaches that have now stood the test of time since the first edition. This is not to say that we have not considered additional approaches. Participatory action research, for example, could certainly be a sixth approach, but we include some discussion of it in the interpretive framework passages in Chapter 2 (Kemmis & Wilkinson, 1998). Also, discourse analysis and conversational analysis could certainly have been included as an additional approach (Cheek, 2004), but we have added some thoughts about conversational approaches in narrative approaches. Mixed methods, too, is sometimes so closely associated with qualitative research that it is considered one of the genres (see Saldaña, 2011). However, we see mixed methods as a distinct methodology from qualitative inquiry and one that bridges qualitative and quantitative research. Further, it has its own distinct literature (see Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011); thus, we wanted to limit the scope of this book to qualitative approaches. Accordingly, we have chosen to keep the initial five approaches and to expand within these five approaches.
- We have continued to provide resources throughout the book for the qualitative researcher. We have included a detailed glossary of terms (and have added terms from the last edition), an analytic table of contents that organizes the material in this book according to the five approaches, and complete journal articles that model designing and writing a study within each of the five approaches. For both inexperienced and experienced researchers, we highlighted key resources at the ends of chapters for further reading that can extend the material in this book.
- The term used in the first edition, *traditions*, has now been replaced by *approaches*, and we have continued this use of terms in subsequent editions. This approach signals that we not only want to respect past approaches but we also want to encourage current practices in qualitative research. Other writers have referred to the approaches as "strategies of inquiry" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005), "varieties" (Tesch, 1990), or "methods" (Morse & Richards, 2002). By *research design*, we refer to the entire process of research from conceptualizing a problem to writing research questions and on to data collection, analysis, interpretation, and report writing (Bogdan & Taylor, 1975). Yin (2009) commented, "The design is the logical sequence that connects the empirical data to a study's initial research questions and, ultimately, to its conclusions" (p. 29). Hence, we included in the specific design features from the broad philosophical and theoretical perspectives to the quality and validation of a study.

Positioning Ourselves

You need to know some information about our backgrounds in order to understand the approach adopted in this book. John was trained as a quantitative researcher about 40 years ago. By the mid-1980s, John was asked to teach the first qualitative research course at my university, and he volunteered 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 as well as qualitative research, he continually returns to a 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. Interestingly, Cheryl was also trained as a quantitative researcher within the biological natural sciences. 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.

This background explains why 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, John has developed a fascination with 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 lead to her focus on providing enhanced *access* to what findings are generated and seeking diverse *formats* for how research and evaluation is communicated.

John's interest in structured features has often placed him in the camp of post-positivist writers in qualitative inquiry (see Denzin & Lincoln, 2005), but like most researchers, he defies easy categorization. In an article in *Qualitative Inquiry* about a homeless shelter (Miller, Creswell, & Olander, 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, Anzul, Friedman, Garner, & Steinmetz, 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 that we discuss in Chapter 3.

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. For example, it was not enough for John to convey philosophical assumptions of

qualitative inquiry in Chapter 2; he also had to construct a discussion around how these philosophical ideas are applied in the design and writing of a qualitative study. 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 democraticizing science. We continue to seek and be influenced by our interactions with beginning and more experienced researchers who are expanding their method-ological 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 quali-tative 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 qualita-tive inquiry journey.

Definition of 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 to qualitative research these days do not contain a definition that can be easily located (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 concern about advancing a "fixed" definition. Other authors advance a definition. The evolving definition by Denzin and Lincoln (1994, 2000, 2005, 2011) in their *SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Research* conveys the ever-changing nature of qualitative inquiry from social construction, to interpretivism, and then on to social justice in the world. We include their latest definition here:

> Qualitative research is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. 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, 2011, p. 3)

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)

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 flowchart, 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. 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 (2011) have organized and reorganized their types of qualitative strategies over the years.

Table 1.1 provides these and other various classifications of qualitative approaches that have surfaced over the years. 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 appear consistently over the years, such as ethnography, grounded theory, phenomenology, and case studies. Also, a number of narrative-related approaches have

TABLE 1.1 ● Qualitative Approaches Mentioned by Authors and Their Disciplines/Fields			
Authors	**Qualitative Approaches**		**Disciplines**
Jacob (1987)	• Ecological psychology • Ethnography of communication	• Holistic ethnography • Symbolic interactionism	• Cognitive anthropology Education
Munhall and Oiler (1986)	• Phenomenology • Historical research	• Grounded theory	• Ethnography Nursing
Lancy (1993)	• Anthropological perspectives • Case studies	• Sociological perspectives • Personal accounts	• Biological perspectives • Cognitive studies • Historical inquiries Education
Strauss and 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	• Grounded theory • Heuristic research	• Hermeneutics • Transcendental Phenomenology Psychology
Denzin and Lincoln (1994)	• Case studies • Ethnomethodology • Biographical	• Ethnography • Interpretative practices • Historical	• Phenomenology • Grounded theory • Clinical research Social sciences
Miles and Huberman (1994)	Approaches to Qualitative Data Analysis: • Interpretivism	• Social anthropology	• Collaborative social research Social sciences
Slife and Williams (1995)	Categories of Qualitative Methods: • Ethnography	• Phenomenology	• Studies of artifacts Psychology
Denzin and Lincoln (2005)	• Performance, critical, and public ethnography • Grounded theory	• Interpretive practices • Life history • Clinical research	• Case studies • Narrative authority • Participatory action research Social sciences
Marshall and Rossman (2015)	• Ethnographic approaches	• Phenomenological approaches	• Sociolinguistic approaches (e.g., critical genres) Education

(Continued)

TABLE 1.1 ● (Continued)			
Authors	**Qualitative Approaches**		**Disciplines**
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 and Lincoln (2011)	Research Strategies: • Design • Ethnography • Ethnomethodology • Historical method • Clinical research	• Case study • Phenomenology • Grounded theory • Action and applied research	• Ethnography, participant observation, performance • Life history, testimonio	
Mertens (2015)	Types of Qualitative Research: • Ethnographic research • Grounded theory	• Case study • Participatory action research	• Phenomenological research	Education, psychology

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?

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. Each of us have had personal experience with each of the five and have advised students and participated on research teams using these qualitative approaches. Beyond these personal experiences, our reading 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 fields (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 procedures of rigorous data collection 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.

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 on 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 reflect classics often cited by authors as well as new works. They also reflect diverse disciplines and perspectives. Please see the essential readings for each chapter listed under the Further Readings heading appearing after each chapter summary.

Narrative Research

Clandinin, D. J. (2013). *Engaging in narrative inquiry*. Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press.

In this book, Jean Clandinin articulates her intention to "return to the question of what it is that narrative inquirers do" (p. 18). Chapter 2 is noteworthy for her practical guidance using detailed descriptions and examples of educational research what it means to think and act narratively.

Riessman, C. K. (2008). *Narrative methods for the human sciences.* Thousand Oaks, CA: 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.* Thousand Oaks, CA: 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. (2014). *Phenomenology of practice: Meaning-giving methods in phenomenological research and writing.* Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press.

Max van Manen describes the evolution of key phenomenological ideas, presents a range of methods, and discusses current issues. Among the key contributions is his summary of seven criteria for appraising phenomenological reporting (see p. 355).

Grounded Theory

Charmaz, K. (2014). *Constructing grounded theory* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

In this new edition, Kathy Charmaz provides additional examples from varied disciplines and professions as well as reflections from scholars about using grounded theory. Features of the second edition include further details related to the coding and writing processes including guidelines and examples.

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

A new pedagogical feature of the fourth edition by Julie Corbin and Anselm Strauss called Insider Insights provides viewpoints from former students and colleagues to enrich the reading experience. Of particular note is a summary of analyses processes (see pp. 216–219).

Ethnography

Fetterman, D. M. (2010). *Ethnography: Step-by-step* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

David Fetterman offers discussions about the basic features of ethnography and the use of theory. The chapter on anthropological concepts provides a useful connection between the cyclical processes of acquiring ethnographic knowledge and human life. This, along with the analytical strategies described in Chapter 5, make this resource required reading.

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

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

Stake, R. (1995). *The art of case study research.* Thousand Oaks, CA: 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.

Yin, R. K. (2014). *Case study research: Design and method* (5th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Robert Yin adds breadth and depth to this new edition with end-of-chapter tutorials. His emphasis on systems and procedures for generating reliable findings and valid interpretations is particularly noted in designs (see Chapter 2), data collection (see Chapter 4), and analysis (see Chapter 5).

Audience

Although multiple audiences, both known and unknown, exist for any text (Fetterman, 2010), we direct this book toward academics and scholars affiliated with the social, human, and health sciences. Examples throughout the book illustrate the diversity of disciplines and fields of study including sociology, psychology, education, nursing, family medicine, allied health, urban studies, marketing, communication and journalism, educational psychology, family science and therapy, and other social and human science areas.

Our aim is to provide a useful text for those who produce scholarly qualitative research in the form of journal articles, theses, or dissertations. We have pitched the level of discussion to be suitable for upper-division students and beyond into graduate school. For graduate students writing master's theses or doctoral dissertations, we compare and contrast the five approaches in the hope that such analysis helps in establishing a rationale for the choice of a type to use. For beginning qualitative researchers, we introduce the philosophical and interpretive frameworks that shape qualitative research followed by the basic elements in designing a qualitative study. We feel that understanding the basics of qualitative research is essential before venturing out into the specifics of one of the qualitative approaches. We begin each chapter with an overview of the topic of the chapter and then go into how the topic might be addressed within each of the five approaches. While discussing the basic elements, we suggest several books aimed at the beginning qualitative researcher that can provide a more extensive review of the basics of qualitative research. Such basics are necessary before delving into the five approaches. A focus on comparing the five approaches throughout this book provides an introduction for experienced researchers to approaches that build on their training and research experiences.

Organization

Following this introduction and the list of key book resources, in Chapter 2 we provide an introduction to the philosophical assumptions and interpretive frameworks that inform qualitative research. We emphasize how they might be written into a qualitative study. In Chapter 3, we review the basic elements for designing a qualitative study. These elements begin with a definition of *qualitative research*, the reasons for using this approach, and the phases in the process of research. In Chapter 4, we provide an introduction to each of the five approaches of inquiry: narrative research, phenomenology, grounded theory, ethnography, and case study research. The chapter includes an overview of the elements of each of the five approaches. Chapter 5 continues this discussion by presenting five published journal articles (one on each approach with the complete articles in Appendices B–F), which provide good illustrations of each of the approaches. By reading our overview in Chapter 4 and then reviewing a journal article that illustrates the approach, you can develop a working knowledge of an

approach. Choosing one of the books we recommend for the approach in this chapter and beginning a mastery of it for your research study can then expand this knowledge.

These five preliminary chapters form an introduction to the five approaches and an overview of the process of research design. They set the stage for the remaining chapters, which take up in turn each step in the research process: writing introductions to studies (Chapter 6), collecting data (Chapter 7), analyzing and representing data (Chapter 8), writing qualitative studies (Chapter 9), and validating and evaluating a qualitative study (Chapter 10). Throughout these design chapters, we start with the basics of qualitative research and then expand the discussion to advance and compare the five types.

As a final experience to sharpen distinctions made among the five approaches, we present Chapter 11, in which we present a gunman case study (Asmussen & Creswell, 1995), and "turn" the story from a case study into a narrative biography, a phenomenology, a grounded theory study, and an ethnography. This culminating chapter brings the reader full circle to examining the gunman case in several ways, an extension of John's 1994 Vail seminar experience in looking at the same problem from diverse qualitative perspectives.