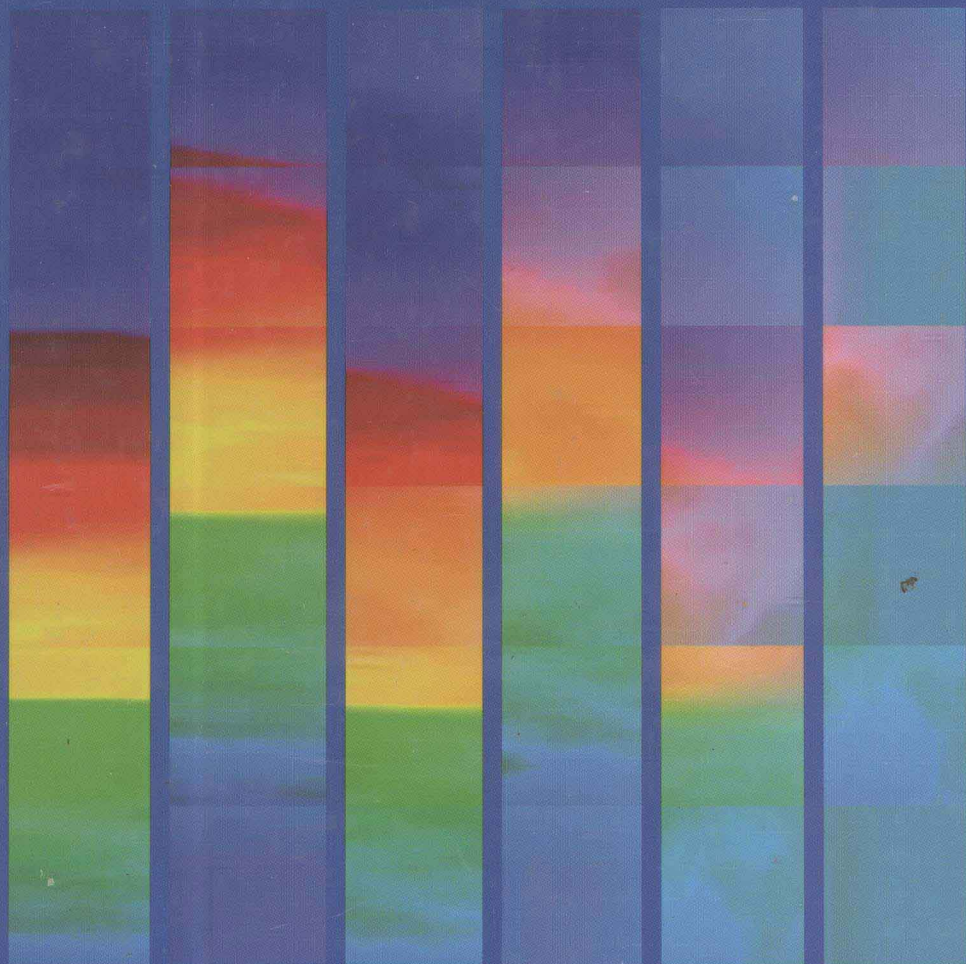


Fourth Edition

Designing Qualitative Research



Sherine Marshall ■ Gretchen B. Rossman



Fourth Edition

Designing Qualitative Research

Catherine Marshall

University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill

Gretchen B. Rossman

University of Massachusetts, Amherst

Copyright © 2006 by Sage Publications, Inc.

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced or utilized in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or by any information storage and retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publisher.

For information:



Sage Publications, Inc.
2455 Teller Road
Thousand Oaks, California 91320
E-mail: order@sagepub.com

Sage Publications Ltd.
1 Oliver's Yard
55 City Road
London EC1Y 1SP
United Kingdom

Sage Publications India Pvt. Ltd.
B-42, Panchsheel Enclave
Post Box 4109
New Delhi 110 017 India

Printed in the United States of America.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Marshall, Catherine.

Designing qualitative research / Catherine Marshall, Gretchen B. Rossman—4th ed.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 1-4129-2488-X (cloth)—ISBN 1-4129-2489-8 (pbk.)

1. Social sciences—Research—Methodology. I. Rossman, Gretchen B. II. Title.

H62.M277 2006

300.72—dc22

2005026958

This book is printed on acid-free paper.

06 07 08 09 10 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

<i>Acquiring Editor:</i>	Lisa Cuevas Shaw
<i>Editorial Assistant:</i>	Karen Gia Wong
<i>Project Editor:</i>	Astrid Virding
<i>Copy Editor:</i>	Tom Lacey
<i>Typesetter:</i>	C&M Digitals (P) Ltd.
<i>Indexer:</i>	Pamela Van Huss
<i>Cover Designer:</i>	Janet Foulger

Fourth Edition

Designing Qualitative Research

Preface to Fourth Edition

Since the publication of the third edition of *Designing Qualitative Research*, the context for systematic inquiry has undergone seismic shifts. As we prepared the proposal for this edition, reviewers commented on the need to “tone down” some of the apparent defensiveness in previous editions. We listened to those gentle critics, agreeing that the climate for qualitative inquiry on many university campuses had become much more supportive. A short two years later, however, the national context supporting research, especially in education (our field), has undergone a dramatic turnaround. The current conservative federal government now stipulates that appropriate—and acceptable—inquiry can take only one form: the randomized, controlled experiment. Such a stipulation is written into policy governing research and evaluation of federally funded programs in education. We find this turn quite shocking. Hence, we have modified this edition to reflect that turn of events while also acknowledging that universities are still reasonably gentle places to find support for qualitative research.

As we now write, we find that qualitative research methodology has matured, despite the current federal climate. This fourth edition addresses the advances and challenges presented by provocative developments and new applications. The book originally met the need for advice on designing qualitative research, given the complexity, the flexibility, and the controversies of its many genres. That need persists: Doctoral students, research managers, policy analysts, and researchers anticipating multimethod team research will continue to find clear and direct guidance in this edition. Qualitative designs are currently used in health behavior, education, urban planning, public relations and communications, sociology, psychology, management, social work, nursing, and more. Our focus tends to be on research in applied fields such as these. While we acknowledge the many developments that have come

from autoethnography, performance ethnography, and cultural studies, as examples, our primary audience continues to be those working in those fields that demand practical answers to complex questions.

Originally, *Designing Qualitative Research* was written because qualitative reports were intriguing but mystical. Earthy, evocative ethnographies seemed to just appear by magic. Researchers and students had no guidance for learning from such work. A few researchers provided chapters or appendixes describing their procedures. Texts extolled the philosophical stances and the cultural premises for qualitative research. We originally wrote this book to fill the void, to provide specific advice on design. Then, and now in this fourth edition, we benefit from the research experience of those who first systematically documented their designs and processes and also from the probing questions of our doctoral students. Thus, we provide readers with connections to the classics of ethnography and other qualitative genres as well as present the issues and design dilemmas of researchers with new questions for the new century. Furthermore, this edition extends and deepens the discussion in the previous edition about strategies for incorporating qualitative methodology with the challenges posed by postmodernists, feminists, and those who demand that research be directly useful to the researched.

This fourth edition continues to provide vignettes to illustrate the methodological challenges posed by the intellectual, ethical, political, and technological advances affecting qualitative research design. New vignettes include, for example, researchers' challenges designing research with refugee and immigrant populations, and new sections address issues of translating into English and dealing with internal review boards. Vignettes from the previous edition of interest include discussions of researchers' explicitly political stances toward promoting democracy while conducting evaluations of community development, and critical theorists' puzzling over reporting research without colonizing those who allowed them into their lives. Because qualitative design is not linear, different pedagogical strategies are required; the vignettes, we hope, assist readers in transferring our words about design to applications in their own research. Also new to this edition are e-mail dialogues between our quite thoughtful graduate assistants who helped with the preparation of this edition. Melanie Shofner, at UNC, and Aaron Kuntz, at UMass, engaged with many of the issues presented in the chapters of the book. They have graciously agreed to include these insightful, very real, and personal reflections as dialogues at the end of each chapter.

We have between us a total of 45 years of teaching collective qualitative methodology to graduate students! Nothing keeps us attuned to qualitative research dilemmas more than the challenges our students present in classes and dissertations. We wish to thank the many hundreds who have continuously pressed for innovative approaches and research questions fresh from real-life problems; many have graciously permitted us to use their questions in vignettes. The reviews by Cynthia S. Jacelon, School of Nursing, University of Massachusetts Amherst; Howard A. Palley, Institute for Human Services Policy, University of Maryland; Nancy J. Parezo, University of Arizona; and Karen Hult, Virginia Polytechnic Institute & State University were especially helpful. Finally, we, and our readers, benefit from the reviews of our book in scholarly journals as well as from diplomatic yet critical suggestions from our own students.

In particular, we appreciate the specific editorial contributions of Melanie and Aaron in creating and balancing the substantial revisions for this new edition. We hope our efforts will continue to provide a practical guide, assisting researchers as they craft sound, thoughtful, and sensitive proposals for qualitative inquiry that is robust and ethical.

Contents

List of Tables	ix
List of Figures	xi
List of Vignettes	xiii
Preface to Fourth Edition	xv
1. Introduction	1
Qualitative Research Genres	3
The Challenges	10
"Should-Do-Ability"	11
"Do-Ability"	11
"Want-to-Do Ability"	11
Developing an Argument	12
Conceptual Framework	12
Design Soundness	13
Researcher Competence	13
Overview of the Book	17
Dialogue Between Learners	18
Further Reading	20
2. The What of the Study: Building the Conceptual Framework	23
Sections of the Proposal	25
Building the Conceptual Framework:	
Topic, Purpose, and Significance	26
Overview	26
The Topic	27
Purpose of the Study	33
Significance and Potential Contributions	33
Posing Research Questions	38

Limitations of the Study	42
Review of Related Literature	43
Dialogue Between Learners	48
Further Reading	49
 3. The How of the Study: Building the Research Design	 51
Meeting the Challenge	52
Justifying Qualitative Research	52
The Qualitative Genre and Overall Approach	54
Overall Strategies	55
The Setting, Site, Population, or Phenomenon	61
Selecting a Sample of People, Actions, Events, and/or Processes	64
The Researcher's Role: Issues of Entry, Reciprocity, Personal Biography, and Ethics	72
Technical Considerations	72
Interpersonal Considerations	78
Review Boards	88
Cultural Challenges to Informed Consent	89
Planning the Exit	91
Dialogue Between Learners	92
Further Reading	93
 4. Data Collection Methods	 97
Primary Methods	98
Observation	98
Participant Observation	100
In-Depth Interviewing	101
Background and Context and Review of Documents	107
Issues With Transcribing and Translating	110
Secondary and Specialized Methods	113
Focus Groups	114
Life Histories and Narrative Inquiry	115
Historical Analysis	119
Films, Videos, and Photography	120
Interaction Analysis	121
Unobtrusive Measures	124
Questionnaires and Surveys	125
Projective Techniques and Psychological Testing	127
Dilemma Analysis	128

Using Computer and Internet Technologies	130
Combining Data Collection Methods	131
General Principles for Designing Data	
Collection Strategies	136
Dialogue Between Learners	139
Further Reading	141
5. Managing, Analyzing, and Interpreting Data	151
Recording and Managing Data	151
Generic Data Analysis Strategies	154
Analytic Procedures	156
Organizing the Data	157
Immersion in the Data	158
Generating Categories and Themes	158
Coding the Data	160
Writing Analytic Memos	161
Offering Interpretations	161
Searching for Alternative Understandings	162
Writing the Report or Representing the Inquiry	162
Dialogue Between Learners	172
Further Reading	174
6. Planning Time and Resources	177
Planning Resources for a Large Study	178
Time	185
Personnel	186
Financial Resources	186
Planning Dissertation Research	187
Mentors and Peers	188
Time on a Small Scale	189
Financing	190
Dialogue Between Learners	195
Further Reading	197
7. Articulating Value and Logic	199
Criteria of Soundness	200
The Design and Methods Should	
Be Explicitly Detailed	205
Research Questions and the Data's Relevance	
Should Be Explicit and Rigorously Argued	206

The Study Should Be Situated in a Scholarly Context	207
Records Should Be Kept	207
Demonstrating the Essential Qualitativeness of the Questions	208
The Value of the Qualitative Approach	208
Demonstrating Precedents	214
A Final Word	215
Dialogue Between Learners	216
References	219
Index	245
About the Authors	261

List of Tables

Table 1.1: Characteristics of Qualitative Research and Researchers	3
Table 1.2: Typologies of Qualitative Research	4
Table 2.1: Sections of a Qualitative Research Proposal	25
Table 2.2: Matching Research Questions and Purpose	34
Table 3.1: Qualitative Genre and Overall Strategy	56
Table 3.2: Data Collection: Sampling Plan	67
Table 3.3: Typology of Sampling Strategies in Qualitative Inquiry	71
Table 4.1: Strengths of Data Collection Methods	133
Table 4.2: Weaknesses of Data Collection Methods	134
Table 4.3: Data Collection Methods Related to Observation Role	135
Table 4.4: Information Types and Methods of Obtaining Information	137
Table 5.1: Log of Data-Gathering Activities	157
Table 6.1: Schedule of Work	182

Table 6.2: Budget Summary	184
Table 6.3: Functions of the Operative Principles of Assumptive Worlds	193
Table 7.1: Questions From Reviewers With Little Qualitative Experience	213
Table 7.2: Questions From Reviewers Attuned to Qualitative Methodology	214

List of Figures

Figure 2.1: Shiva's Circle of Constructivist Inquiry	28
Figure 2.2: Global Eye of Critical/Ecological Inquiry	29
Figure 2.3: The Conceptual Funnel	30
Figure 3.1: Complexity of Design and Interaction	57
Figure 3.2: Reflexive Questions: Triangulated Inquiry	59
Figure 3.3: Informed Consent: Students	87
Figure 4.1: Sample Field Notes	100
Figure 4.2: Sample Interview Notes	103
Figure 5.1: A Continuum of Analysis Strategies	155
Figure 5.2: An Empirical Typology of Teacher Roles in Dealing With High School Dropouts	160

List of Vignettes

Vignette 1: Justifying Fieldwork to Explore Organizational Culture	14
Vignette 2: Convincing Policymakers of the Utility of Qualitative Methods	16
Vignette 3: An Initial Statement	40
Vignette 4: Building Significance Through the Literature	44
Vignette 5: Creative Review of the Literature	45
Vignette 6: Anticipating the Initial Coding Categories	60
Vignette 7: Focusing on People and Events	65
Vignette 8: Sampling People and Behaviors	66
Vignette 9: Negotiating Entry	74
Vignette 10: Negotiating and Maintaining Access With a Transient Vulnerable Population	76
Vignette 11: Building Trust	79
Vignette 12: Moving On	80
Vignette 13: Ethics and Ethnographic Fieldwork	82
Vignette 14: Ethics, Power, and Politics	85

Vignette 15: Talking Through Cultural Challenges	90
Vignette 16: Using Multiple Methods	109
Vignette 17: Choosing Data Collection Methods	132
Vignette 18: Design Flexibility	137
Vignette 19: Data Management	152
Vignette 20: Planning Reporting for Qualitative Participatory Evaluation	165
Vignette 21: Pan in (Academic) Wonderland: Discourse Review	167
Vignette 22: Interspersing Reporting and Analysis	169
Vignette 23: Talking Taboo: Continuing the Research Relationship	170
Vignette 24: Projecting Resources for a Large-Scale Study	179
Vignette 25: Feasibility and Planning for Dissertation Research	187
Vignette 26: Walking the Reviewers Through Qualitative Analysis	191
Vignette 27: Justifying Time for Exploration	209
Vignette 28: Defending Flexibility	211

1

Introduction



Qualitative research genres have become increasingly important modes of inquiry for the social sciences and applied fields such as education, regional planning, nursing, social work, community development, and management. Long dominated by research techniques borrowed from the experimental sciences, the social sciences now present a sometimes confusing array of alternative genres. From anthropology come ethnomethodology, ethnoscience, and the more familiar ethnography. Sociology has yielded symbolic interactionism and the Chicago School. Philosophers would have us engage in concept analysis, and interdisciplinary work has spawned sociolinguistics, discourse analysis, life histories, narrative analysis, and clinical methodology. The critical traditions, including postmodern, post-structuralist, and postcolonial perspectives, contribute critical discourse analysis, feminist research, critical race theory and analysis, cultural studies, critical and performance ethnography, and autoethnography. Action research and participatory research, often explicitly ideological and emancipatory, intend to critique and radically change fundamental social structures and processes and to reconceptualize the entire research enterprise. Many of these genres, derived from traditional and interdisciplinary scholarship, are now frequently used in