Lecture Notes

# Chapter 15: Narrative Inquiry and Case Study Research

## Learning Objectives

* 1. Compare and contrast the two major approaches to qualitative research discussed in this chapter: narrative inquiry and case study research.
  2. Define and compare poststructuralism and postmodernism.
  3. Define and explain how to conduct a narrative inquiry research study.
  4. Define and explain how to conduct case study research.

## Chapter Summary

This chapter begins with a review of qualitative research and its philosophical foundations. Next it presents two qualitative research designs: narrative inquiry and case study research. This chapter will provide student researchers with the basics of these two types of qualitative research designs.

## Annotated Chapter Outline

1. Introduction
   1. Previous chapters have presented quantitative research designs, this chapter begins the description of qualitative research designs.
   2. Narrative inquiry and case study research are described in this chapter. After reading this chapter, the reader should understand how to plan a study using each methodology, the data that will be obtained, and the conclusions that researchers will be able to make after using these designs.
   3. Qualitative Research: Research that relies primarily on the collection of qualitative data.
      1. Emergent design: design type popular in qualitative research where the design emerges or evolves over the course of the research study.
         1. Quite different from quantitative designs.
      2. Figure 15.1: Steps in a qualitative research study. The steps are not always linear or sequential.
         1. Select research topic
         2. Determine research questions
         3. Design the study
         4. Collect data
         5. Analyze data
         6. Generate findings
         7. Validate findings
         8. Write research report
   4. Discussion Question: Compare and contrast the steps of qualitative research to the steps of quantitative research.
   5. Historical Introduction to Poststructuralism and Postmodernism
      1. Poststructural and postmodern ideas critique “science” but background knowledge is needed.
      2. Postmodernism is an intellectual movement that reacted to and rejected what they called modernism. They also rejected what is commonly called positivism. Here are the definitions of modernism and positivism (the ideas they rejected) followed by the definition of postmodernism (the idea they like).
         1. **Postmodernism:** a historical movement that constructs its self-image in opposition to modernism. Emphasizes the primacy of individuality, difference, fragmentation, flux, constant changes, lack of foundations for thought, and interpretation.
         2. **Modernism:** a term used by postmodernists to refer to an earlier and outdated period in the history of science that viewed the world as static (i.e., unchanging) machine where everyone follows the same laws of behavior.
         3. **Positivism:** a term used by qualitative researchers to refer to what might be better labeled “scientism,” which is the belief that all true knowledge must be based on science; the term is used by qualitative researchers, not quantitative researchers.
      3. Discussion Question: Compare and contrast postmodernism, modernism, and positivism.
      4. Another intellectual and historical movement that characterizes some qualitative researchers is called poststructuralism. Rather than rejecting the prior movement from which it takes its name (structuralism), poststructuralists reject parts of structuralism and build on other parts. Here is the definition of structuralism and the movement called structuralism that is popular with a significant number of qualitative researchers:
         1. **Structuralism:** A broad or grand theory that emphasizes the importance of cultural, structural, institutional, and functional relations as constituting a large part of the social world in which humans live and holds that this structure is key in determining meaning an influencing human behavior.
         2. **Poststructuralism:** A historical intellectual movement that rejects universal truth and emphasizes differences, deconstruction.
         3. **Discussion Question:** Compare and contrast structuralism and poststructuralism.
      5. In short, a significant number of qualitative researchers identify with the movements of postmodernism and poststructuralism, and that is why it is important to know what those ideas are all about.
         1. Discussion Question: Describe how postmodernism and poststructuralism related to qualitative research.
   6. Table 15.1 compares the five major approaches to qualitative research which will be covered in this chapter and the next.
2. Narrative Inquiry: This research methodology has become more popular recently.
   1. Introduction: The Importance of Coming to Terms and Definitions
      1. **Narrative Inquiry:** study of experience when experience is understood as lived and told stories. It is a collaboration between researcher and participants, over time, in a place or series of places and in social interaction with their social milieus.
      2. Experience is understood as relational, continuous, and both personal and social.
         1. People are in temporal and social interaction.
   2. Designing a Narrative Study
      1. Fluid kind of research: not a set of procedures or steps to be followed but a relational inquiry methodology that is open to where participants’ stories take the researcher.
      2. Eight design features of narrative inquiry
      3. Four Key Terms to Structure a Narrative Inquiry
         1. **Living and telling stories:** In narrative inquiry, people are seen to live out stories in their experiences and tell stories of those experiences to others.
         2. **Retelling stories:** When researchers inquire into stories, they move beyond regarding a story as a fixed entity and begin to retell stories.
         3. **Reliving stories:** as researchers come alongside research participants, both may begin to relive their stories.
      4. Inquiry Starting Points
         1. Two starting points: asking participants to tell stories of their experiences and the coming alongside participants as they live their lives.
         2. The processes of attending to the living, telling, retelling, and reliving of stories are narrative inquiry regardless of the starting point.
         3. Instead of trying to “bracket” themselves as researchers who live outside the inquiry, they bracket themselves within the inquiry.
      5. Attending to Justifications at the Inquiry Outset and Throughout the Inquiry: Researchers must address all three justifications the outset of the inquiry, throughout the inquiry, and at the end of the inquiry. Answers the “so what” questions.
         1. Personal Justifications: A researcher’s reasons for undertaking a particular narrative inquiry, that is, why this inquiry matters to the researcher as a person.
         2. Practical Justifications: the ways in which the research can make a difference to practice.
         3. Social and/or theoretical justifications: the contribution the research can make to theoretical understandings or to making situations more socially just.
      6. Research Puzzles Rather Than Research Questions
         1. Framing or composing a research puzzle is part of the design process.
         2. **Research Puzzle:** What guides the study by pointing toward the experiences of participants that a researcher wants to understand more deeply.
         3. Carries with it an approach of searching and re-searching again.
      7. Entering Into the Midst: narrative inquiry research occurs in the midst of the researchers’ and participants’ personal and professional lives.
         1. **Being in the midst:** attending to temporal, place, and relational aspects of reality
         2. Negotiations must occur around entry: times and number of times of meetings
         3. Co-composing or living alongside or spaces for telling stories
         4. Nature of field texts
         5. Co-composing research texts: which stories are included, pseudonyms (new names researchers construct to hide the identity of individual research participants).
         6. Exit: what will happen when the research is complete.
      8. From Field to Field Texts
         1. **Field:** the inquiry space created between researchers and participants during conduct of the research. Researchers must follow where participants take them. Field may vary greatly.
         2. **Field texts:** the term narrative inquirers use for data. Can take on many different formats. Composed or co-composed by researcher and participant and reflect the relationship between them.
      9. From Field Texts to Interim and Final Research Texts: working alone or within the relational three-dimensional narrative inquiry space, researchers shape field texts into interim research texts and then final research texts. This is a time marked with tensions and uncertainties.
         1. Interim research texts: the evolving research reports or texts that are continually written and revised during the research project as researcher move from field tests to final research texts.
         2. Final research texts: final representations of a narrative inquiry such as books, and articles, dissertations, thesis, and presentations for academic and nonacademic audiences that are made public for a wider audience.
      10. Relational Ethics at the Heart of Narrative Inquiry- Relational Responsibilities
          1. Ethical issues need to be attended throughout the narrative inquiry process.
          2. **Relational ethics:** caring for and attending to participants’ experiences in responsible and responsive ways.
          3. Hard to anticipate everything that will emerge when preparing for IRB approval because of the negotiations that are part of the narrative inquiry process.
          4. Discussion Question: summarize the narrative inquiry process as well as design features of narrative inquiry.
   3. Narrative Inquiry: So Much More Than Telling Stories
      1. Narrative inquiry is a research approach for studying the experience of lived and told stories. It is a way to understand human experience.
      2. Discussion Question: Develop ideas for research puzzles for narrative inquiry research.
3. **Case Study Research** (a form of qualitative research that is focused on providing a detailed account of the characteristics and dynamics present in one or more cases): Studying cases have been used for a long time in many areas of research.
   1. What Is a Case?
      1. **Case:** a bounded system
      2. Cases are holistic entities that have parts and that act or operate in their environments.
      3. Researcher defines the case, but they study how the system operates.
      4. Each case has an internal and external context.
      5. Discussion Question: What is a case in case study research?
   2. Types of Case Study Research
      1. **Intrinsic Case Study:** interest is in understanding a specific case
         1. Classic single-case design: in depth description to shed light on it
         2. Goal is to understand the case as a holistic entity as well as understanding its inner workings.
         3. Second goal is to understand a more general process based on the analysis of the single case.
         4. Popular in education
         5. Evaluators use it a lot
         6. Often used in exploratory research
      2. **Instrumental Case Study:** interest is in understanding something more general than the particular case.
         1. Case is a means to an end. The researcher wants to learn about something other than the case.
         2. Often want to understand how or why a phenomenon operates as it does.
         3. Case is chosen to develop or test a theory or to understand an important issue better.
         4. Explanation is the goal.
         5. Extreme or typical cases are often chosen.
         6. Used when researchers want to generalize or extend findings.
      3. **Collective Case Study:** studying multiple cases in one research study.
         1. Cases can be compared for similarities and differences.
         2. More effective for testing a theory through multiple cases.
         3. More likely to generalize.
         4. Dept of analysis is sacrificed because of the breadth of analysis from studying multiple cases.
      4. Discussion Question: Compare and contrast the three case study methods presented here.
   3. Data Collection, Analysis, and Report Writing
      1. Multiple methods and multiple data sources are recommended.
      2. In the final report, research questions or “issues” and relevant findings are presented for each question.
      3. Analysis and writing will focus on the case, but other units of analysis can be included.
      4. When using multiple cases, first examine each one individually for themes and patterns (**within-case analysis:** searching for themes and patterns within a single case) and then compare different cases for similarities and differences (**cross-case analysis**: searching for similarities and differences across multiple cases).
      5. Final report written to address research question or issues, provide the relevant findings and present a rich (i.e., vivid and detailed) and holistic (i.e., describes the whole and its parts) description of the case and its context.
      6. Discussion Question: Describe the data collection, analysis, and report writing phases of case study research.