

CHAPTER 11

GROUNDED THEORY PERSPECTIVE

The grounded theory approach was first developed by Glaser and Strauss (1967) as a way to generate a theory based on data that are systematically gathered and analyzed. In general, this is an inductive process in which the theoretical propositions are not presented a priori; rather, the theory emerges from the data that are being collected. However, this process often becomes abductive, with testing of the theory occurring as it emerges from the data. The emerging theory is constantly being compared to the evidence brought forth from new data that are analyzed, as in the “constant comparative method.” The use of *memoing* (i.e., the process of recording the personal thoughts and ideas of the researcher throughout the data collection procedures) is critical when using a systematic, emerging, or constructivist design. Qualitative researchers often use memoing to help make conceptual links between raw data and abstractions to better explain the phenomena being studied within its appropriate context. See Birks, Chapman, and Francis (2008) for an in-depth discussion of memo-writing techniques.

According to Corbin and Strauss (2015), a good grounded theory should (a) fit the phenomenon; (b) provide understanding; (c) provide generality, in that the theory includes extensive variation and is abstract enough to be applicable to a wide variety of contexts; and (d) provide control, in the sense of stating the conditions under which the theory applies and describing a reasonable basis for action.

♦ SYSTEMATIC DESIGN

- The systematic design is the most structured of the grounded theory approaches, with rigid procedures and a preconceived framework for categories. This design emphasizes theory verification based on the *theory that is generated* (i.e., *inductive-deductive process*). The design uses the *three-stage coding method* (*open, axial, and selective*) to help generate a visual depiction of a theory.

♦ EMERGING DESIGN

The emerging design is also a theory generation design; however, it is less prescriptive than the systematic design. This design allows the theory to emerge “naturally” from the data. The key components of this design are fit, work, relevance, and modifiability.

♦ CONSTRUCTIVIST DESIGN

The constructivist design further distances itself from the procedurally laden systematic design, stressing the role of the researcher as an active participant who interacts with the field being explored. Constructivist researchers are interested in the co-construction of knowledge between researcher and participant and embrace and explore the inherent biases within this interaction. This design recognizes that knowledge emerging from the data is not only “discovered” but also created. It is important to be cognizant of the assumptions brought to the investigation by the researcher. Also, one should be aware of the socially constructed meanings that occur during the collection of data and those socially constructed meanings that were in place prior to engaging with the participant.

WHEN TO USE GROUNDED THEORY

- To build/discover theory inductively
- To build/discover substantive and/or formal theory
- When there is little or no prior information on an area or phenomenon
- To study the microcosm of interaction

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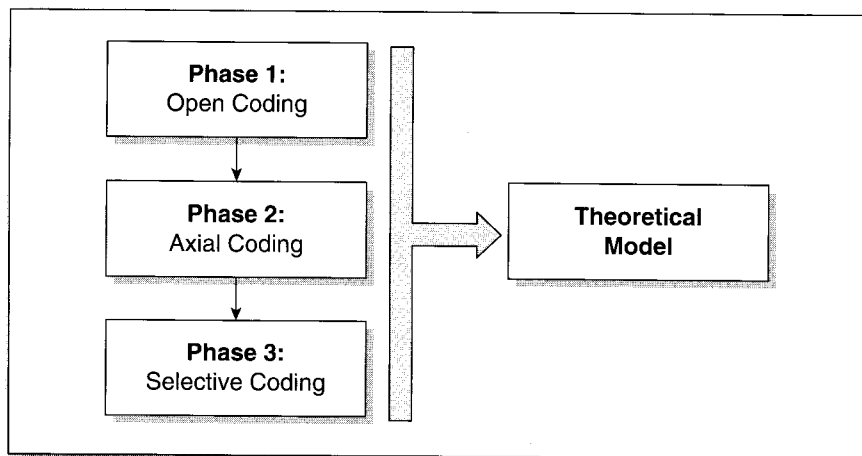
We refer the reader to the following books for further details regarding the grounded theory approach:

Charmaz, K. (2014). *Constructing grounded theory: A practical guide through qualitative analysis* (2nd ed.). London, England: Sage.

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

Glaser, B. G., & Strauss, A. (1967). *The discovery of grounded theory: Strategies for qualitative research*. Hawthorne, NY: Aldine Transaction.

Figure 11.1 Systematic Design



Example for Figure 11.1

Han, G. S., & Davies, C. (2006). Ethnicity, health and medical care: Towards a critical realist analysis of general practice in the Korean community in Sydney. *Ethnicity and Health*, 11(4), 409–430.

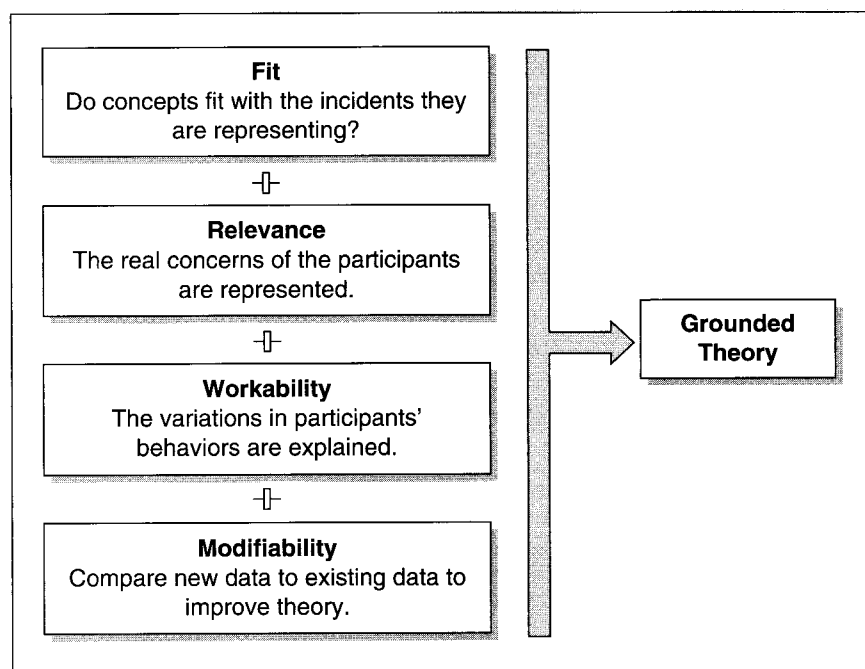
Research Question: What are the general practitioners' views on the health of Koreans and the complex process of providing and seeking effective and satisfactory medical care?

Procedures: This study investigated the use and provision of biomedicine among men on the basis of interview data from eight doctors. Semistructured interview schedules were prepared around the doctors'

views of (a) health, immigrant life, and health care use among Koreans from different socioeconomic backgrounds; (b) common ailments; (c) particular difficulties servicing fellow Koreans; (d) general practitioner referrals to specialists; and (e) the competing nature of doctoring. The interviews with the eight doctors were tape-recorded and then transcribed into a full-text report for analysis.

First, *open coding* of the data was conducted to form categories of information about the event being examined. Next, *axial coding* was performed; this step involved the researchers taking one of the categories generated during open coding and exploring it as a core phenomenon. During this phase, other categories (e.g., casual conditions, content, intervening condition, strategies, and consequences) were connected to the core phenomenon. Finally, in *selective coding*, the core category (i.e., the central phenomenon under investigation) was selected and systematically related (or integrated) with other categories. These three phases allowed for the construction of the overarching theoretical model.

Figure 11.2 Emerging Design



Source: Glaser and Strauss (1967).

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Design: Qualitative method using a grounded theory perspective with a systematic design¹

Example for Figure 11.2

Zoffmann, V., & Kirkevold, M. (2007). Relationships and their potential for change developed in difficult type 1 diabetes. *Qualitative Health Research*, 17(5), 625–638.

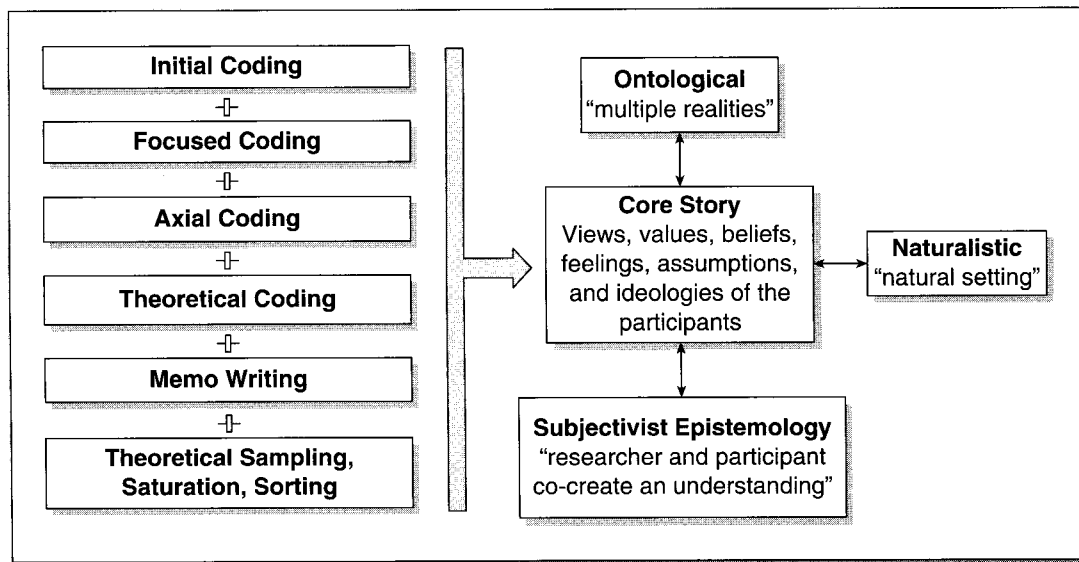
Research Aim: To develop a theory that interprets patient–provider relationships as a framework for acknowledging and exploiting the relational potential for change in difficult diabetes care.

Procedures: Dyads (one patient and one nurse) were formed based on the assignment of nurses to patients in the units. Following the principles of theoretical sampling, researchers used the first case (dyad) to generate a hypothesis. To investigate and compare the processes related to this hypothesis, subsequent patients were theoretically sampled to ensure a variation in levels of self-management resources. As the primary data sources, two patient–nurse conversations were taped from each dyad, one at the beginning and one at the end of the hospital stay. These interviews revealed the experiences, considerations, and feelings of both parties with regard to the hospital stay.

The abductive process of applying constant comparative analysis was performed. First, initial open coding of each interview was conducted. Through a combination of listening and writing, notes were created that provided ideas for the tentative advancement of more abstract codes. Second, critical comparisons were performed on the most solid categories that were supported by transcriptions of the coded data. This process was used to specify the content and further the advancement of lasting categories and subcategories. During the third step, comparisons across data sources were performed to explore and confirm links between concepts and thus pattern out theoretical connections. These initial theoretical constituents were compared in the fourth step (ongoing throughout the process of writing) to connect them to larger elements for further theory building. At each step, there was a return to former steps to test fit, work, relevance, and modifiability.

Design: Qualitative method using a grounded theory perspective with an emerging design

¹Although the authors state a “critical realist analysis” in the title, a systematic design was applied.

Figure 11.3 Constructivist Design

Source: Charmaz (2014).

Example for Figure 11.3

Jones, S. R., & Hill, K. E. (2003). Understanding patterns of commitment: Student motivation for community service involvement. *Journal of Higher Education*, 74(5), 516–539.

Guiding Research Questions: What are students' reasons for participation in community service in high school? What are students' reasons for participation in community service (or not) in college? How do students explain and understand the relationship between high school and college involvement? To what extent do students attribute differences or changes in their motivations as well as to their experiences?

Procedures: Purposive sampling was used for both the identification of college and university participants and the selection of student participants at each institution. The primary strategy for data collection was in-depth, semistructured interviewing. Questions focused on the nature of community service involvement in high school and college, the reasons students attributed to their participation, and the meaning they attached to community service. The researchers were also interested in understanding the

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campus context in which students' decisions about community service participation were enacted. Thus, they examined materials from the community service programs.

All data were analyzed using the *constant comparative method*. The analytic process moves from more concrete codes to abstract themes and categories that are reflective of the meaning that participants attach to their experiences, rather than the generation of objective truth. Thus, the data analysis proceeds in a cyclical manner with the researchers constantly returning to the data with new questions and ideas until a narrative emerges that describes the essence of experience for study participants. This essence of experience is described as the core story.

Design: Qualitative method using a grounded theory perspective with a constructivist design

Reviewing the Content and Testing Your Knowledge

Exercise

Develop a hypothetical research scenario that would necessitate the use of the **Qualitative Method** and the **Grounded Theory Perspective**. The research will be considered nonexperimental.

1. Identify the research scenario, including the general area of focus.
2. Identify the most appropriate approach and then design. Provide a rationale as to why this approach and design would be most appropriate.
3. Develop the appropriate primary research question to be associated with this design.
4. Discuss the sampling strategy and technique to be used.
5. Based on the design, briefly discuss the data collection procedures to be used. Be sure to include the area of focus and targeted sample as part of these procedures.
6. Discuss the themes, theory, and/or phenomenon that would be anticipated to emerge as a result of the examination.
7. Briefly discuss the strengths and limitations associated with this approach and the specific design.

CHAPTER 12

ETHNOGRAPHIC PERSPECTIVE

Ethnography is an approach that was developed to describe cultures; this includes any culture that shares group characteristics such as values, beliefs, or ideas. The ethnographic researcher is interested in understanding another way of life from the point of view of the participants who make up the culture or group being studied. Because this perspective is based on understanding anything associated with human behavior and belief, it is well-suited for the fields of education and the social and behavioral sciences, including more recent areas of study like the research of culture and its relation to the Internet (see Hine, 2015).

Ethnography can be defined as research designed to describe and analyze the social life and culture of a particular social system, based on detailed observations of what people actually do. The researcher is embedded within the culture and takes a firsthand account of the beliefs, motivations, and behaviors of the individuals in the group. The data that are collected are used to (a) document the lives of the participants within the context of the culture, (b) understand the experiences of the individuals within the culture, or (c) interpret the behaviors shaped by the cultural context.

◆ REALIST DESIGN

Van Maanen (1988) stressed three aspects of the realist design: (a) the invisible author (i.e., narrating in third person), (b) thick descriptions of the

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mundane (using a system of standard categories to organize the descriptions), and (c) interpretive “omnipotence” (i.e., allowing the author the final word in presenting the culture). The realist design offers one researcher’s overall perspective of a phenomenon from facts that are meticulously culled down to support a perspective. Thus, although the researcher’s duty is to objectively (without bias) present the facts, ultimately the interpretations of the facts come from the “omnipotent” researcher. In general, Spradley’s (1979, 1980) designs are less “narrative” or “literary” than those of van Maanen (1988) and Geertz (1998).

CRITICAL DESIGN ♦

The critical design allows for the critiquing (i.e., challenging the status quo) of some existing system while maintaining a level of scientific inquiry. It provides a scientific framework for advocacy or a structure for directly examining relationships among cultural features, economic systems, knowledge, society, and political action. Put simply, Madison (2011) and Thomas (1993) both asserted that the critical design is used to describe, analyze, and scrutinize hidden agendas, power centers, and assumptions that inhibit, repress, and constrain. Thus, the real utility of a critical design is the structure it provides for researchers who are interested in explaining some form of ideology or power relations through the transformation of meaning and conceptualization of existing social systems.

CASE STUDY DESIGN ♦

The case study design is often used with the ethnographic perspective; however, it has some distinct differences from traditional ethnography. While traditional ethnography is focused on group behavior, the case study design allows for the investigation of individuals as a whole (Creswell, 2012).¹ This design provides the framework for an in-depth contextual analysis of a finite number of events or conditions and their associations. More specifically, the ethnographic case study allows for the examination of an actual case within some cultural group. The “case” being explored also can be a group bound by time, place, or environment (i.e., a group

¹Creswell (2012) identified many different types of designs within the ethnographic approach, such as confessional, life history, autoethnography, microethnography, feminist, postmodern, and ethnographic novels.

must be considered a unit, which is more than just a homogenous group). Researchers interested in exploring activities of a group, rather than shared patterns of group behavior, should follow this design.

WHEN TO USE ETHNOGRAPHY

- Studying a school, organization, or program in-depth
- Studying what people do
- Studying how things work or run
- Studying "insiders"
- Studying aspects of "culture" (e.g., practices, rituals, lives, interconnections, customs, values, beliefs, everyday life)

We refer the reader to the following books for further details regarding the ethnographic approach:

Fetterman, D. M. (2009). *Ethnography: Step-by-step* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Madison, D. S. (2011). *Critical ethnography: Methods, ethics, and performance* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Makagon, D., & Neumann, M. (2008). *Recording culture*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Van Maanen, J. (1988). *Tales of the field: On writing ethnography*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Example for Figure 12.1

Purser, G. (2009). The dignity of job-seeking men: Boundary work among immigrant day laborers. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, 38(1), 117–139.

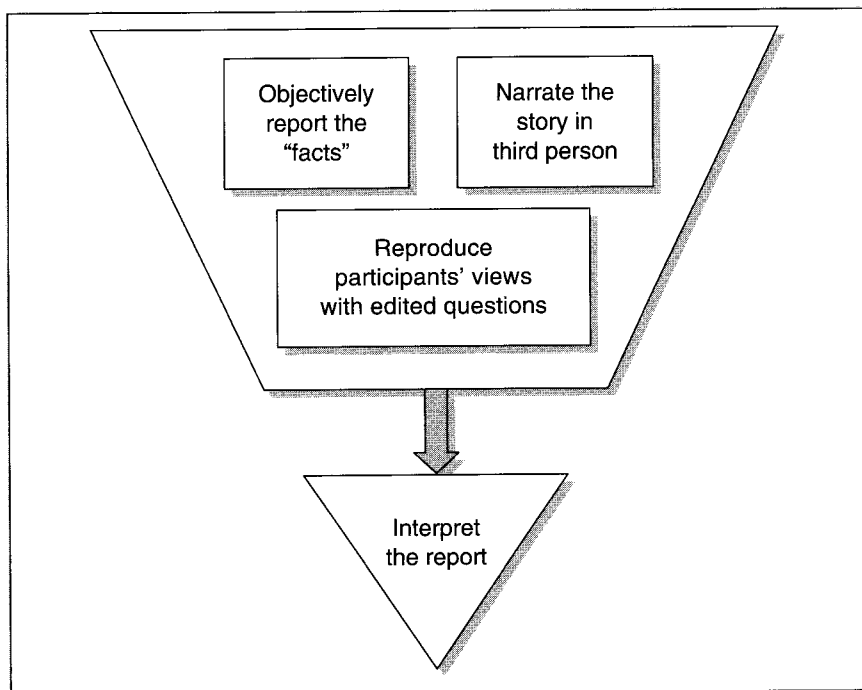
Research Aim: Examine the discourses through which Latino immigrant day laborers make sense of, and find dignity within, their ongoing quest for work.

Procedures: The data collection involved ethnographic fieldwork and interviews with individual day laborers. The researcher conducted a total of 22 in-depth, loosely structured interviews with day laborers, 10 of whom regularly sought work out of the employment center and

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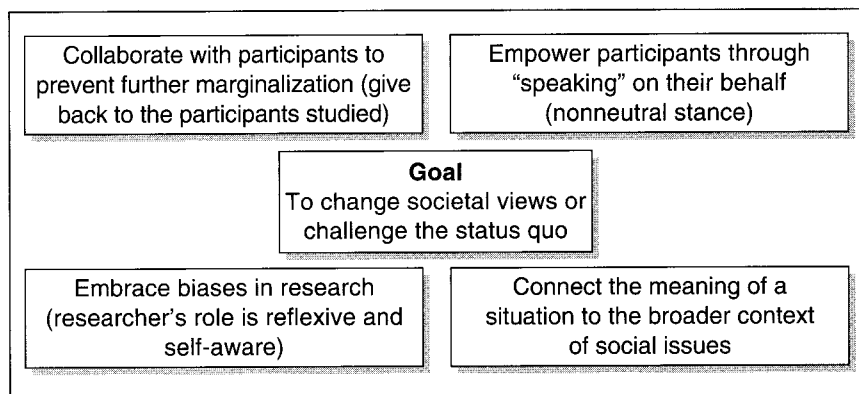
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Figure 12.1 Realist Design

12 of whom regularly sought work on the street. This was followed by a series of open-ended questions that focused on the objective and subjective dimensions of the men's work experiences and job-searching strategies. Substantial attention was devoted to understanding how the men made sense of their precarious position on the margins of the labor market.

This study involved an inductive approach to data analysis. The third-person voice was used, and no personal ideas were included in the report; rather, the facts were presented through the actual words of the participants. Objective data were reported without personal bias or judgment. Ordinary details of each participant's life were included, and standard categories for cultural description were used (e.g., work life and family systems). The final interpretive report allowed the researcher to provide subjective explanations of the data representing the culture being studied.

Design: Qualitative method using an ethnographic perspective with a realist design

Figure 12.2 Critical Design**Example for Figure 12.2**

Varcoe, C., Browne, A. J., Wong, S., & Smye, V. L. (2009). Harms and benefits: Collecting ethnicity data in a clinical context. *Social Science & Medicine*, 68, 1659–1666.

Research Aim: Critically examine the implications of collecting ethnicity data in health care settings.

Procedures: Data were collected in four modes: (a) in-depth interviews with decision-makers and policy leaders affiliated with health authorities, (b) focus groups of community leaders who served on committees of the health authority to represent patients' perspectives concerning health care planning, (c) semistructured interviews with patients seeking health services in either a subacute area or a community health center, and (d) interviews with health care workers who were involved in either administering an ethnic identity question in health care agencies or whose agencies were considering doing so as part of intake data. Patient interviews were focused on their thoughts of their identification of ethnicity in health care settings, past experiences with being asked, and their thoughts on the benefits and concerns.

An interpretive thematic analysis was conducted. The theoretical perspective was guided by an ethical lens. Each transcript and associated field notes were read to get a sense of the whole and then coded thematically. Collaboration with participants occurred throughout the process to optimize the study's benefits and avoid harm. The meaning of the

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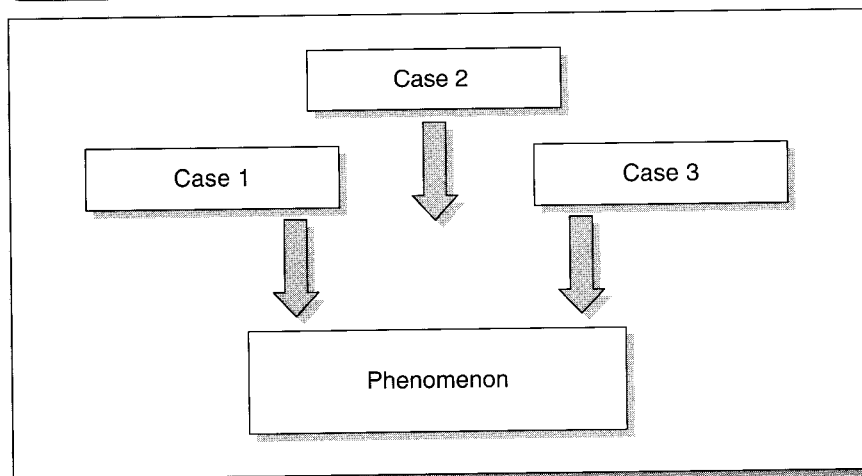
phenomenon under investigation was connected to the broader context of power and the social positions of patients within existing power structures. Themes were compared across interviews and revised, based upon the views and biases of the researcher and participants. The final report advocated on behalf of the participant group. The researchers challenged the status quo assumption that providing quality care in the clinical context requires the collection of ethnicity data. The intent was to change societal standards by a call to action and to address the structural inequities at health care settings.

Design: Qualitative method using an ethnographic perspective with a critical design

Example for Figure 12.3²

Richardson, J. B. (2009). Men do matter: Ethnographic insights on the socially supportive role of the African American uncle in the lives of inner-city African American male youth. *Journal of Family Issues*, 30(8), 1041–1069.

Figure 12.3 Case Study Design



²According to Creswell (2012), this example is a collective case study, with several (there can be more than three) cases that provide insight into a phenomenon. There is also an (a) intrinsic case study design, which explores a single unusual case, and (b) an instrumental case study design, which examines a single case to gain insight into a phenomenon.

Research Question: What is the role of the African American uncle as a form of social support and social capital in the lives of adolescent African American males living in single-female-headed households?

Procedures: The study involved in-depth life-history interviews and ethnographic participant observations of young men and their single mothers over a period of 4 years. The use of ethnography provided exhaustive and rich contextual data. The qualitative inquiry highlights the contextual nature of social life; it explores subjective perceptions and meanings, and it identifies social processes and dynamics. In the three cases studied, the young men in the sample and their mothers were able to clearly identify and explain the socially supportive role that uncles filled as surrogate fathers. In some instances, the uncles themselves articulated their roles as surrogate fathers.

First, a phenomenon (role of the African American uncle as a form of social support) was identified. Next, the appropriate case(s) (individual, activity, event, or process) were chosen that allowed for the examination of the phenomenon. The description and comparisons of three cases helped to provide insight into the role of the African American uncle as a form of social support in the lives of adolescent African American males (i.e., the phenomenon). Multiple forms of data were collected to increase the depth of understanding regarding the phenomenon of interest. The cases were also presented within a larger context (setting, political climate, social and economic status).

Design: Qualitative method using an ethnographic perspective with a case study design

Reviewing the Content and Testing Your Knowledge

Exercise

Develop a hypothetical research scenario that would necessitate the use of the **Qualitative Method** and the **Ethnographic Perspective**. The research will be considered nonexperimental.

1. Identify the research scenario, including the general area of focus.
2. Identify the most appropriate approach and then design. Provide a rationale as to why this approach and design would be most appropriate.

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5. Based on the design, briefly discuss the data collection procedures to be used. Be sure to include the area of focus and targeted sample as part of these procedures.
6. Discuss the themes, theory, and/or phenomenon that would be anticipated to emerge as a result of the examination.
7. Briefly discuss the strengths and limitations associated with this approach and the specific design.

CHAPTER 13

NARRATIVE PERSPECTIVE

The narrative approach involves gathering information, in the form of storytelling by the participant, for the purpose of understanding a phenomenon. Humans are storytelling beings by nature; we lead storied lives, both individually and collectively. Ultimately, the narrative approach is most widely used in the disciplines of psychology and psychiatry and is the study of the multitude of ways humans experience the world. Specifically, this approach involves collaboration between the researcher and participant, as a way to understand phenomena through stories lived and told. The narrative design involves (a) the exploration of a single participant or a small sample of participants, (b) gathering data through the collection of stories, (c) *retelling the stories (restorying)*, and (d) *reviewing the story with the participant to help validate the meaning and subsequent interpretation*. The narrative design can be either biographical or autobiographical.

Dialogic listening skills are essential to the narrative approach; this type of “listening” is used throughout the whole process, as the researcher gathers data through conversations and engaged interchanges of ideas and information with the participant(s). The narrative approach can be conceptualized as descriptive, explanatory, or critical by design and follows the “underlying assumptions that there is neither a single, absolute truth in human reality nor one correct reading or interpretation of a text” (Polkinghorne, 1988, p. 2). There is also a structural approach in the way individual stories are studied (Riessman, 2007).

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Dan McAdams (creating self in narrative) and Jefferson Singer (explanatory potential of the life story) have had a profound influence on the development and use of the narrative approach within the social and behavioral sciences. McAdams, Josselson, and Lieblich's (2006) contributions included (a) the Life Story Interview method, (b) the Guided Autobiography, (c) the Loyola Generativity Scale, and (d) a set of coding manuals to analyze the stories of research participants. Singer's (1997) book *Message in a Bottle* focused on men whose addictions were resistant to the traditional 12-step method and served as an excellent exemplar of the narrative approach. Singer also used the explanatory potential of the life story of individuals within the therapeutic context (see Singer & Bonalume, 2010a and 2010b, for more on autobiographical narrative approaches for case studies in psychotherapy).

DESCRIPTIVE DESIGN ♦

The descriptive design involves the description of any one or more of the following: (a) individual or group narratives of life stories or specific life events, (b) the conditions or contextual factors supporting the story, (c) the relationship between individual stories and the culture the stories are embedded within, and (d) how certain life events impact the participants' story line. Thus, the descriptive design is used to explore the status of some phenomenon and to describe what exists with respect to the individual, group, or condition.

EXPLANATORY DESIGN ♦

The explanatory design is used to provide an account of some phenomenon by means of why something happened. Thus, the explanatory design is used to explore the causes and reasons of phenomena.

CRITICAL DESIGN ♦

Van Maanen (1988), in his book on ethnography, discussed the use of "critical tales." These critical tales are conceptualized as narrative approaches using a critical framework. A critical tale may illuminate individual experiences as

well as larger social, political, symbolic, or economic issues. Thus, the critical design within the narrative approach involves the same structure or framework as the critical design within the ethnographic approach. Ultimately, this design allows for the critiquing of some existing system while maintaining a level of scientific inquiry.

WHEN TO USE NARRATIVE INQUIRY

- Telling stories about stories
- Exploring identity and conflict
- Examining the structure of experience
- Focusing on how people create meaning in their lives
- Exploring the interaction of individual stories with cultural narratives

We refer the reader to the following books for further details regarding the narrative approach:

Clandinin, D. J., & Connelly, F. M. (2004). *Narrative inquiry: Experience and story in qualitative research*. San Francisco, CA: Wiley.

Lieblich, A., Tuval-Mashiach, R., & Zilber, T. (1998). *Narrative research: Reading, analysis, and interpretation*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Riessman, C. K. (2007). *Narrative methods for the human sciences*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Example for Figure 13.1

Lapadat, J. C. (2004). Autobiographical memories of early language and literacy development. *Narrative Inquiry*, 14(1), 113–140.

Research Aim: To explore adults' memories of their own acquisition of language and literacy learning

Procedures: Participants kept a journal in which they made regular entries over the semester, reflecting on their own personal history of learning language and literacy from the preschool years through the end of adolescence. The participants were asked to recall personally significant events, situations, and people that made a difference to their learning, as well as

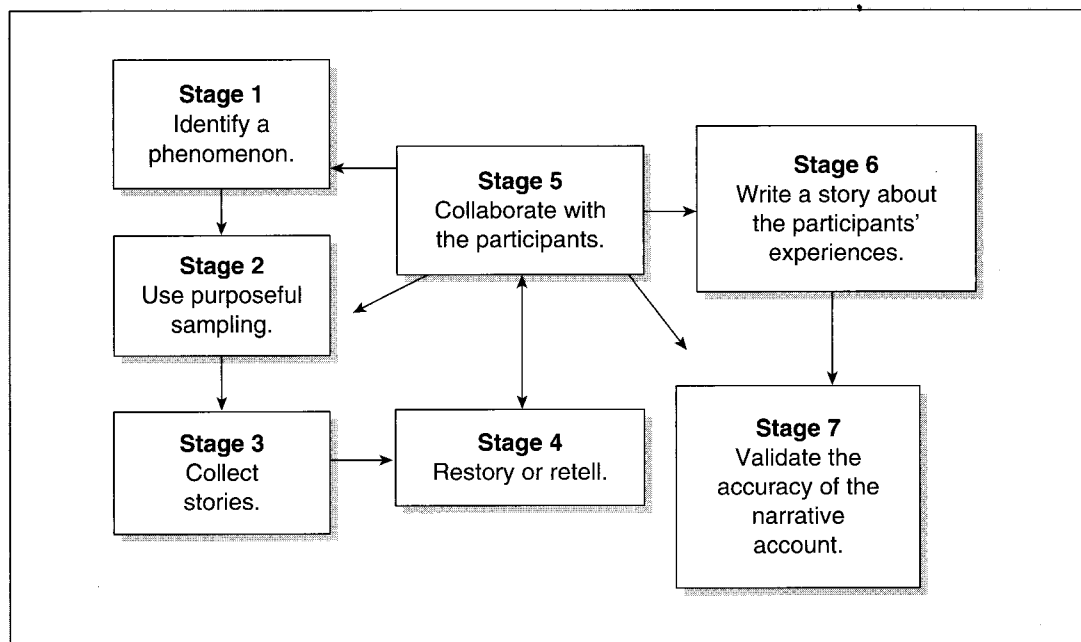
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Note: At Stage 5 of the process, the researcher can revert to any previous stage as indicated by the arrows.

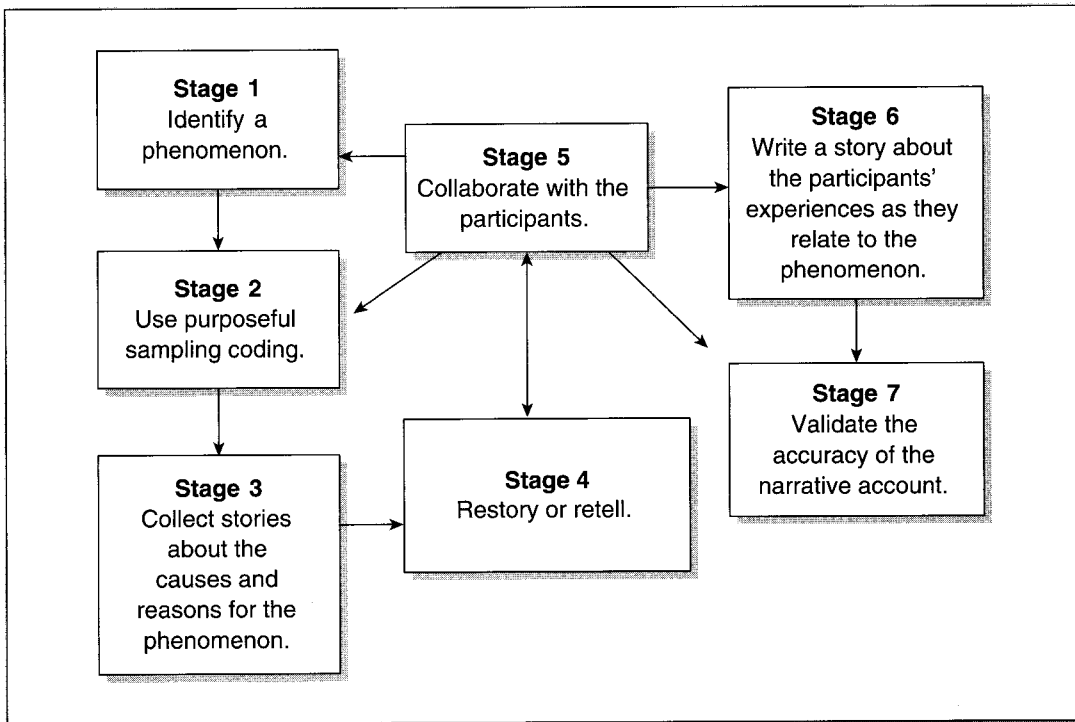
ways in which their learning and use of language made a difference in their lives. The participants were asked to structure entries around particular topics they set for themselves, to avoid holding tightly to a chronological sequence, and to discuss specific examples.

In Stage 1, the researchers chose to explore the acquisition of early language and literacy. Purposeful sampling (Stage 2) was conducted (i.e., adults in a language development seminar). During Stage 3, stories from the participants were collected (e.g., personal history of learning language and literacy). The fourth stage involved the identification of categories (e.g., family and home, peers and friends, school and teachers, books and becoming literate, culture and languages) and then *restorying* by sequencing and organizing the elements of the story identified by the researcher (e.g., poetic transcription). The fifth stage occurred throughout the process, as the researcher collaborated with the participant to ensure the validity of the individual experiences. Stage 6 involved the use of the first person to complete the narrative report. During Stage 7, the researcher

consulted with the participants to ensure the accuracy of the final narrative account.

Design: Qualitative method using a narrative perspective with a descriptive design

Figure 13.2 Explanatory Design



Example for Figure 13.2

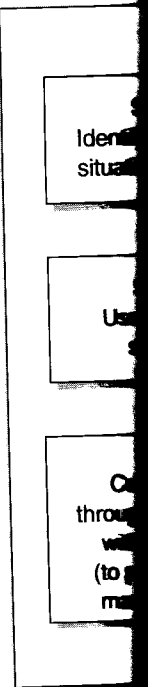
Hirakata, P. (2009). Narratives of dissociation: Insights into the treatment of dissociation in individuals who were sexually abused as children. *Journal of Trauma & Dissociation*, 10(1), 297–314.

Research Aim: To explore the treatment of dissociation and provide support for treatment approaches that are viewed as helpful by clients who engage in dissociative behavior

Procedures: Participants engaged in a single interview (cross-sectional) designed to identify factors that positively or negatively influenced

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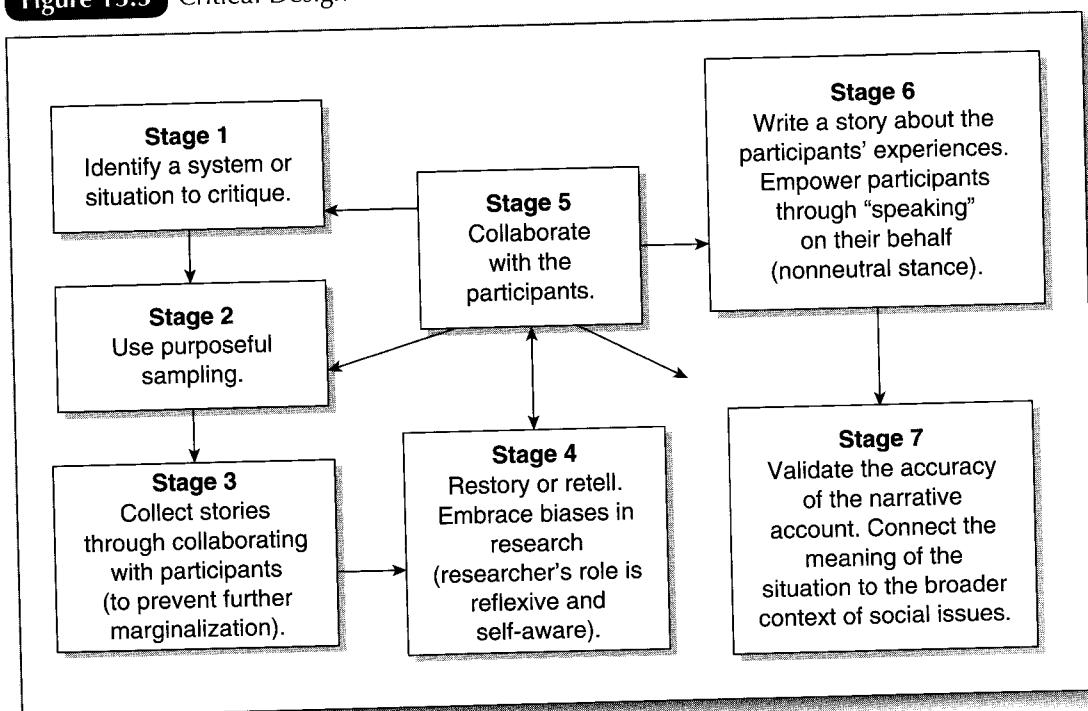
Figure 13.3



therapy and minimized the overall need to dissociate. Interviews were semistructured and included questions such as “How was dissociation addressed in therapy?”, “What did you find helpful?”, and “What did you find not helpful or even harmful?” The interviews were also audiotaped and transcribed, and the data were analyzed using a holistic-content approach (Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach, & Zilber, 1998): Each interview was read for its content in a holistic manner until patterns, or themes, began to emerge. Global impressions were noted by the space dedicated to a certain issue and the repetitive nature that occurred both within and across narratives. Any exceptions or unusual and contradictory features were also recognized. Each participant read and validated his or her individual narrative.

Three major themes emerged from this study: (a) tools and techniques, (b) a nonpathologizing approach, and (c) the therapeutic relationship. These themes were further divided into 16 subthemes. Each subtheme was discussed individually, and excerpts from the participants’ interviews were provided. The findings from this study were explanatory in nature, providing insight into the treatment of dissociation.

Figure 13.3 Critical Design



Design: Qualitative method using a narrative perspective with an explanatory design

Example for Figure 13.3

Berman, H., Mulcachy, G. A., Forchuk, C., Edmunds, K. A., Haldenby, A., & Lopez, R. (2009). Uprooted and displaced: A critical narrative study of homeless, aboriginal, and newcomer girls in Canada. *Issues in Mental Health Nursing, 30*(7), 418–430.

Research Aim: Examine how uprooting and displacement have shaped mental health among three groups: (a) newcomers to Canada (immigrant and refugee girls), (b) homeless girls, and (c) Aboriginal girls.

Procedures: During face-to-face dialogic interviews, the researchers explored the means and strategies of uprooting and displacement and how these experiences affected the participants. Dialogic and reflective techniques were used to allow the respondents to become actively involved in the construction and validation of meaning (Maguire, 1987). An interview guide was used flexibly, with probes to encourage dialogue, critical reflection, and elaboration of responses. The research team was there to establish the context for the interview, offering overall direction and providing affirming feedback. However, the open-ended structure to the narrative interview allowed the participants to direct the flow and focus of the conversation.

All participants were given the choice of being interviewed alone or in a small group consisting of two to four girls. The researchers' rationale for this option was the potential power of group interviews to provide a context in which individuals are able to analyze the struggles they had encountered and the challenges they had faced, to simultaneously begin to collectivize their experiences, and to develop a sense of empowerment as they began to see the possibilities for change. The researchers analyzed the participants' words systematically, in line with the narrative approach.

The researchers were guided by the supposition that the stories told by participants would provide insight into the perceptions about what happened to them, as well as the social, economic, and political meanings of those events. Consistent with the tenets of a critical design, the researchers' goal was to facilitate the development of knowledge in ways that had the potential for emancipation and empowerment.

Design: Qualitative method using a narrative perspective with a critical design

Exercise

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Reviewing the Content and Testing Your Knowledge

Exercise

Develop a hypothetical research scenario that would necessitate the use of the **Qualitative Method** and the **Narrative Perspective**. The research will be considered nonexperimental.

1. Identify the research scenario, including the general area of focus.
2. Identify the most appropriate approach and then design. Provide a rationale as to why this approach and design would be most appropriate.
3. Develop the appropriate primary research question to be associated with this design.
4. Discuss the sampling strategy and technique to be used.
5. Based on the design, briefly discuss the data collection procedures to be used. Be sure to include the area of focus and targeted sample as part of these procedures.
6. Discuss the themes, theory, and/or phenomenon that would be anticipated to emerge as a result of the examination.
7. Briefly discuss the strengths and limitations associated with this approach and the specific design.

CHAPTER 14

PHENOMENOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

Phenomenology, put simply, is the description of an individual's immediate experience. The phenomenological approach was born out of Edmond Husserl's philosophical position that the starting point for knowledge was the self's experience of phenomena, such as one's conscious perceptions and sensations that arise from life experience. From this philosophy emerged the modern-day phenomenological approach to research with the goal of understanding how individuals construct reality. Researchers use the phenomenological approach when they are interested in exploring the meaning, composition, and core of the lived experience of specific phenomena. The researcher explores the conscious experiences of an individual in an attempt to distill these experiences or get at their essence.

◆ EXISTENTIAL DESIGN

The aim is to illuminate the essential general meaning structure of a specific phenomenon, with a focus on grasping the whole meaning of the experience, instead of dividing it into parts. Researchers using the existential design move from the concrete description of the experience of a given participant (co-researcher) to the interpretation of said experience. The participants (co-researchers) are asked for a description of their concrete experiences. The ultimate goal is to comprehend human experience as it is

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actually lived in the “real world” rather than in some artificial environment (von Eckartsberg, 1997).

Basic themes of existential phenomenology are (a) lived experience, (b) modes of being, and (c) ontology (the study of the nature of being, existence, or reality). In fact, the existential phenomenology associated with Heidegger’s philosophy is often referred to as *ontological phenomenology*, as it is primarily concerned with “being.” This differs from transcendental phenomenology, which is most associated with Husserl’s epistemological philosophy (concerned with knowledge).

TRANSCENDENTAL DESIGN ♦

Some key tenets of the transcendental design are (a) intentionality (consciousness is always intentional), (b) eidetic reduction (researcher accesses the consciousness of the participant to get at the pure essence of some phenomenon, thus revealing the essential structure), and (c) constitution of meaning (returning to the world from consciousness). This design is descriptive in nature, as it is through analysis and description of how things are constituted in, and by, consciousness that allows us to understand various phenomena. This design is useful for researchers who are interested in gathering data to grasp the essence of the human experience.

HERMENEUTIC DESIGN ♦

Some key tenets of the hermeneutic design are (a) interpretation, (b) textual meaning, (c) dialogue, (d) pre-understanding, and (e) tradition. The hermeneutic design deviates from the descriptive nature of which the phenomenological approach is most often associated. This design has a strong focus on reflective interpretation, made evident by Heidegger, who asserted that description is inextricably linked to interpretation. Essentially, this design is based on the fundamental theory that all forms of human awareness are interpretive.

CASE STUDY DESIGN ♦

The case study design is also often used with the phenomenological perspective. This design lends itself well to the exploration of meaning of

a lived experience of some phenomenon. This design provides the framework for an in-depth analysis of a finite number of participants. Researchers interested in exploring activities of an individual or small group, rather than the shared patterns of group behavior, should follow this design.

WHEN TO USE PHENOMENOLOGY

- Studying people's experiences
- Studying how people make meaning in their lives
- Studying relationships between what happened and how people have come to understand these events
- Exploring how people experience the essence of a particular phenomenon
- Examining the commonalities across individuals

We refer the reader to the following books for further details regarding the phenomenological approach:

Smith, J. A., Flowers, P., & Larkin, M. (2009). *Interpretive phenomenological analysis: Theory, method, and research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Vagle, M. D. (2014). *Crafting phenomenological research*. Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press.

van Manen, M. (2014). *Phenomenology of practice: Meaning-giving methods in phenomenological research and writing*. Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press.

Example for Figure 14.1

Smith, M. E. (2007). Self-deception among men who are mandated to attend a batterer intervention program. *Perspectives in Psychiatric Care*, 43(4), 193–203.

Research Aim: Gain an understanding of the perceptions of perpetrators of intimate partner violence (IPV) prior to beginning a Batterers' Intervention Program (BIP).

Procedures: Qualitative methods used in this study were conducted according to the existential-phenomenological method outlined by Pollio, Henley, and Thompson (1997). The method of existential phenomenology was used in this study to provide men the opportunity to describe their perceptions concerning the meaning attached to being mandated to attend a BIP.

Figure 14

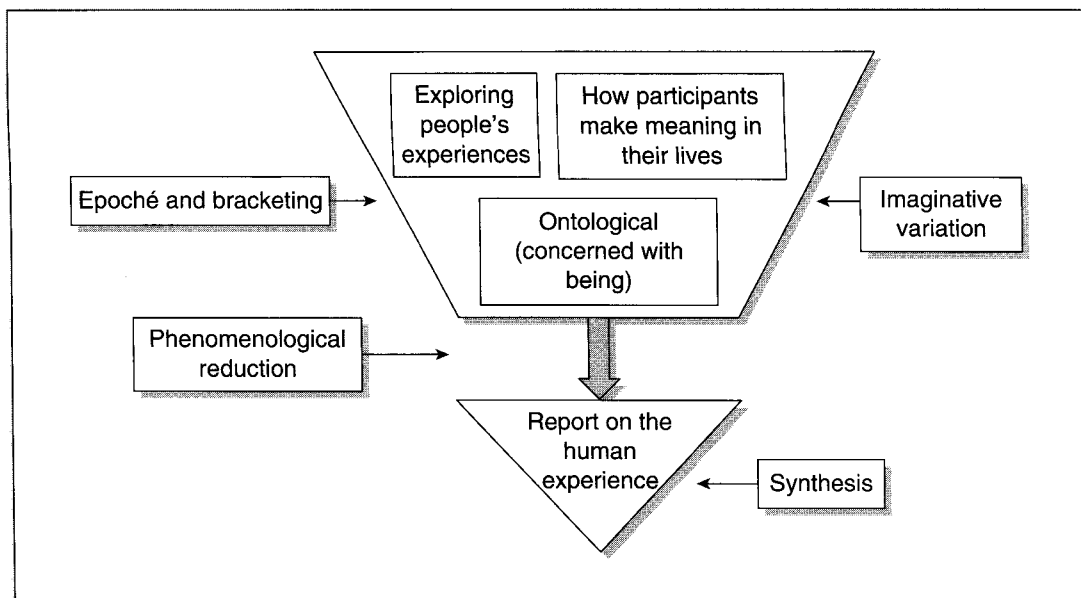
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Figure 14.1 Existential Design

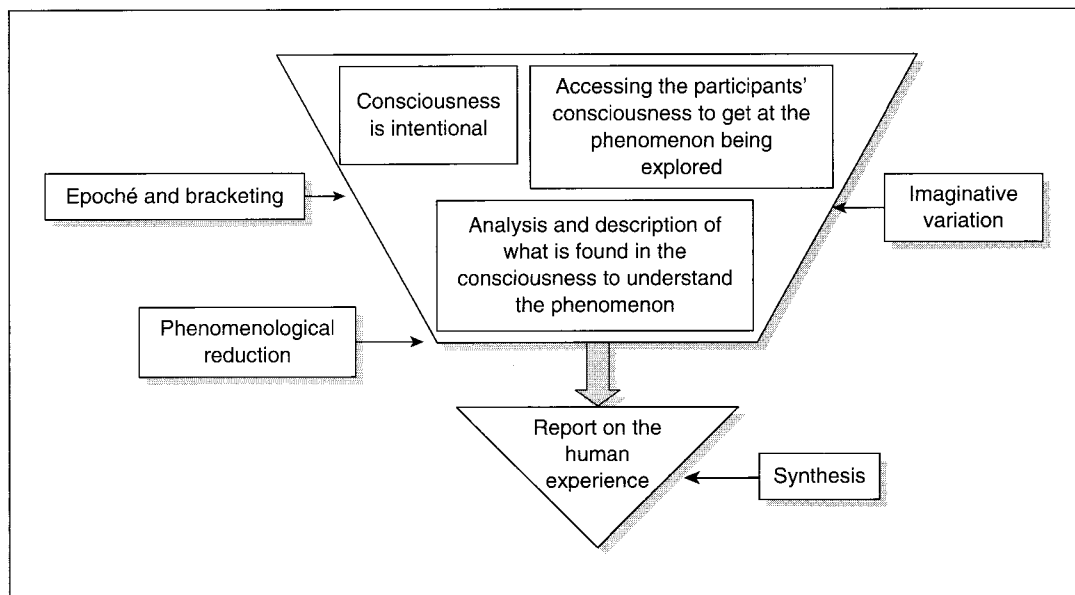
Participants were asked to fill out a demographic questionnaire and then participate in a face-to-face, audiotaped interview. Prior to beginning the study, the first author of Pollio et al. (1997) participated in an individual bracketing interview in order to become more aware of her own biases as a result of her clinical practice with women who experience IPV. Men participated in a face-to-face interview after being mandated to attend a BIP but before attending their first class.

The interviews began with the prompt "Tell me about your experiences that brought you to a batterers' intervention program." Except for the initial question, all questions flowed from the dialogue. Additional questions were limited to areas of clarification and/or elaboration.

The respondents' own words were used to support a given interpretation. Participant transcripts were then related to each other to identify common patterns or global themes. All of the transcripts were read in a group context to reduce researcher bias. Subsequently, an overall thematic description was developed of the meaning the perpetrator attached to attending a BIP.

Design: Qualitative method using a phenomenological perspective with an existential design

Figure 14.2 Transcendental Design



Example for Figure 14.2

Moerer-Urdahl, T., & Creswell, J. W. (2004). Using transcendental phenomenology to explore the “ripple effect” in a leadership mentoring program. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 3(2), 19–35.

Research Aim: To understand the meaning of mentors’ experiences with the ripple effect and their experiences of reinvesting in others.

Procedures: Two central questions in this study address key questions that van Manen (2014) recommended that phenomenologists ask: What were their experiences with the ripple effect? And in what context or situations did they experience it? They were also asked if they considered themselves to be mentors today and, if so, to whom, and if they had been mentored in the past, and by whom.

Detailed telephone interviews were conducted with nine participants, and these interviews were audiotaped, lasting for 25 to 50 minutes. Transcendental phenomenology was chosen as the appropriate methodology for this research as the researchers were searching for an understanding of the meaning of the participants’ experiences. Additionally, the systemic procedures and detailed data analysis steps as outlined by Vagle (2014) are

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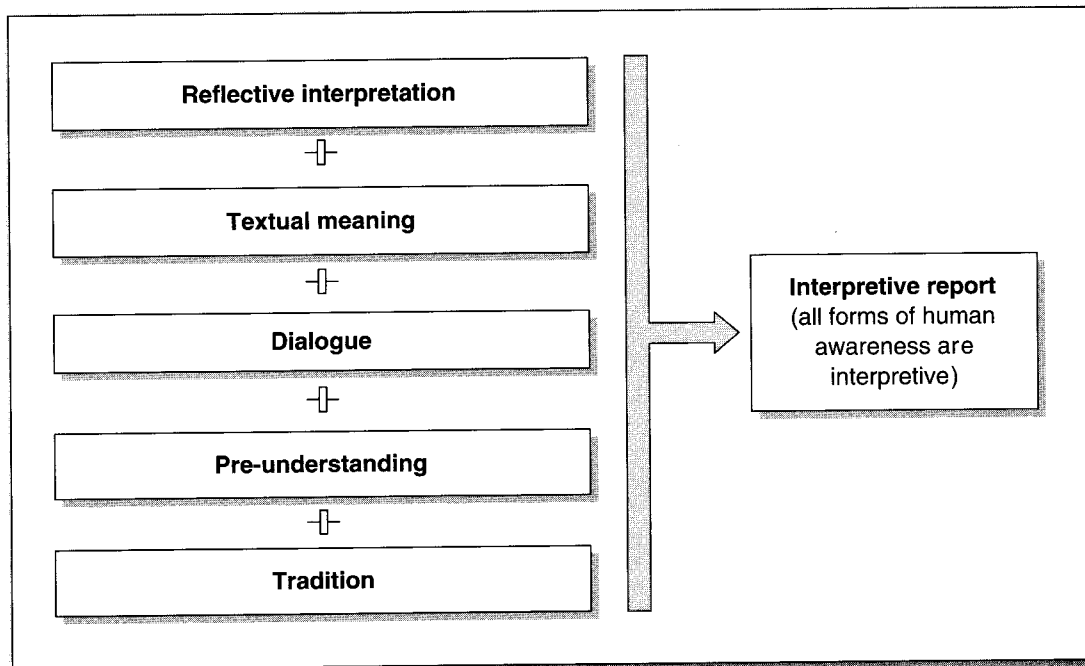
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ideal for assisting less experienced researchers. The researchers set aside prejudgments in a process called *epoché*, a Greek word meaning to refrain from judgment. The researchers described their own experiences with the phenomenon, identified significant statements in the database from participants, and clustered these statements into meaning units and themes (*epoché* and bracketing). Next, the researchers synthesized the themes into a description of the experiences of the individuals (textual and structural descriptions) and then constructed a composite description of the meanings and the essences of the experiences.

Design: Qualitative method using a phenomenological perspective with a transcendental design

Figure 14.3 Hermeneutic Design



Example for Figure 14.3

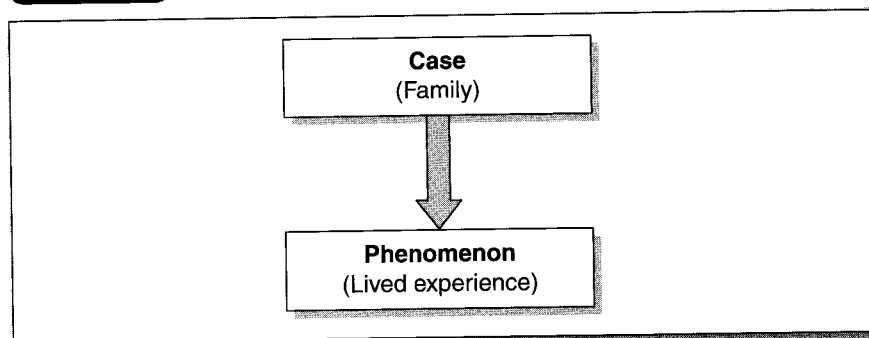
Shin, K. R. (2002). Using hermeneutic phenomenology to elicit a sense of body at mid-life. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 1(2), 39–50.

Research Aim: To seek the essence of women's experience of bodily changes caused by menopause and thereby to provide a conceptual framework for women's health promotion education program and theory development

Procedures: This study was a phenomenological and hermeneutic perspective of Korean women who experienced menopause. After exploring the literature, the researcher reflected on artistic depictions of midlife women and conversations with menopausal women in Korea. Phenomenological conversations were conducted with six menopausal women, including two in-depth, tape-recorded interviews and observations. During the initial meeting with participants, the researcher explained the purpose of the study, and then interviewees gave their informed consent to participate in the study. All participants were guaranteed anonymity. Van Manen's (1990) thematic analysis and line-by-line approach, by which every statement of the participants is thoroughly examined, was used to find what their words or sentences implied about their experiences.

Design: Qualitative method using a phenomenological perspective with a hermeneutic design

Figure 14.4 Case Study Design



Example for Figure 14.4¹

Ryndak, D. L., Storch, J. F., & Hoppey, D. (2008). One family's perspective of their experiences with school and district personnel over time related to

¹According to Creswell (2012), this is an example of an intrinsic case study design, which explores a single unusual case. There is also an instrumental case study design that examines a single case to gain insight into a phenomenon and a collective case study that uses several cases to provide insight into a phenomenon.

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inclusive educational services for a family member with significant disabilities. *International Journal of Whole Schooling*, 4(2), 29-51.

Research Aim: To understand the impact of placement and special education services, especially in relation to receiving services in inclusive general education classes

Procedures: The study used a phenomenological lens to explore the experience of one family (mother, father, son, and a daughter with significant disabilities) as they sought, lived through, and reflected upon placement and services for the daughter with disabilities. The study focused on how the family understood, developed, and socially constructed meanings from the events and interactions that occurred over time as one of the family members moved from receiving special education services and supports in a more restrictive context to receiving special education services and supports in more inclusive contexts.

Phenomenological interviews were conducted three times with each of the daughter's family members (mother, father, and brother). The interviews included open-ended questions to build upon and explore each participant's past and present. Interviews were scheduled 2 weeks apart for each family member so that the researchers had time to inquire in-depth into the family's lived experiences, while at the same time providing space for the family members to share their own unique insights, stories, and experiences. Thus, each participant was able to reconstruct his or her own experience over time and construct meanings of their own experiences. The researchers then viewed these individual experiences collectively in an attempt to understand the meaning and essence of the family member's collective experiences.

After each interview, the researcher shared the transcript with the interviewee and requested that the family member check the transcript for accuracy, making additions and deletions to further clarify his or her experiences and perspectives. The researchers used Wolcott's (1994) approach of description, analysis, and interpretation as a method for making sense of interview data. The constant comparison method of reflecting and exploring the data allowed emerging patterns to collectively come into focus.

Design: Qualitative method using a phenomenological perspective with a case study design