COUNSELING PSYCHOLOGY RESEARCH METHODS: QUALITATIVE APPROACHES

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Qualitative research methods have gained increasing acceptance and popularity in counseling psychology since early calls (e.g., Hoshmand, 1989; Howard, 1983; Neimeyer & Resnikoff, 1982; Polkinghorne, 1984) for methodological pluralism and alternative research approaches. Although for many years counseling psychology literature was characterized by a handful of methodological guides and research articles, the 1990s saw a serious response to those earlier visions of a multiparadigmatic, multimethod body of inquiry. In 1994, the *Journal of Counseling Psychology* published a special section on qualitative research, in which eight studies using variations on grounded theory approaches were published. Polkinghorne's (1994) reaction to these studies foreshadowed future assessments of the state of the qualitative art and science in counseling psychology. Although he commended the authors on a number of points, notably the rigorous processes used by the investigators to analyze the data, he expressed concern about the limitations of data gathered and the absence of theoretical sampling. These concerns persist in counseling psychology qualitative research in the 21st century.

In 2000, Brown and Lent's third edition of the *Handbook of Counseling Psychology* included a chapter on qualitative research methods (Morrow & Smith, 2000), a comprehensive introduction to qualitative research methods that drew from the larger body of qualitative methodological literature, particularly in education. Given the diversity and comprehensiveness of the qualitative writings in education and the location of many counseling

psychology programs in colleges of education, the educational literature remains an important grounding for our work as counseling psychologists. Our aim in this chapter is to address qualitative research in counseling psychology from the larger perspective of qualitative methodology in education and other disciplines to avoid the encapsulation that might result from too narrow an ideological and methodological base. For this reason, we urge qualitative researchers in counseling psychology to embrace a multiparadigmatic and multidesign approach to conducting, writing, and reviewing qualitative work.

Further milestones in qualitative research included numerous textbooks by counseling psychologists as well as published studies. A key text used by many students of qualitative research has been Creswell's (2007) *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approaches,* now in its second edition. In this text, the author used five published qualitative studies to demonstrate the underlying paradigms and designs of five qualitative approaches to inquiry: narrative, phenomenological, grounded theory, ethnography, and case study. Although not all of these approaches are commonly used by counseling psychology researchers, all have relevance and might be considered more broadly in our field. In addition, this is not a comprehensive list of qualitative designs used in counseling psychology because consensual qualitative research (CQR; Hill, Thompson, & Williams, 1997) is one of the most commonly used qualitative approaches, and participatory action research (PAR;

Kidd & Kral, 2005) is receiving increasing attention as counseling psychologists explore more effective ways of pursuing our multicultural and social justice research agendas.

In 2005 and 2007, respectively, the *Journal of Counseling Psychology (JCP)* and *The Counseling Psychologist (TCP)* published special issues on qualitative research. *JCP* (Haverkamp, Morrow, & Ponterotto, 2005) addressed foundational elements of qualitative methodology, including qualitative research paradigms (Ponterotto, 2005a), data collection (Polkinghorne, 2005), ethics (Haverkamp, 2005), and trustworthiness (Morrow, 2005). It also contained articles on various research designs, including grounded theory (Fassinger, 2005), phenomenology (Wertz, 2005), narratology (Hoshmand, 2005), PAR (Kidd & Kral, 2005), CQR (Hill et al., 2005), ethnography (Suzuki, Ahluwalia, Mattis, & Quizon, 2005), and action-project method (Young, Valach, & Domene, 2005). Three mixed-method articles were included in this issue, including a conceptual introduction to mixed methods (Hanson, Creswell, Plano Clark, Petska, & Creswell, 2005), ideographic concept mapping (Goodyear, Tracey, Claiborn, Lichtenberg, & Wampold, 2005), and ethnographic decision tree modeling (Beck, 2005). In addition to the individual articles in this journal issue being useful resources for students, the special issue is readily available and has been used as a text in qualitative methods courses in counseling psychology.

In 2007, two special issues of *TCP* (Carter & Morrow, 2007) were dedicated to the best practices in qualitative methods, with articles that complement the *JCP* special issue. These two *TCP* issues include a "comprehensive textbook . . . at the intersection of counseling psychology and qualitative research" (Fine, 2007, p. 460). In this issue, Morrow (2007) addressed the conceptual foundations of qualitative research, followed by the selection and implementation of qualitative research designs (Creswell, Hanson, Plano Clark, & Morales, 2007). Haverkamp and Young (2007) articulated an approach to conducting the literature review in qualitative research and formulating the rationale for a qualitative study. Next, Suzuki, Ahluwalia, Arora, and Mattis (2007) explored strategies for

qualitative data collection, and Yeh and Inman (2007) identified best practices in qualitative data analysis and interpretation. Ponterotto and Grieger (2007) addressed issues of effectively communicating qualitative research, including a special focus on writing qualitative theses and dissertations. Poulin (2007) rounded out the series with her article on teaching qualitative research, and Fine (2007) offered a critical review in which she acknowledged the tensions between counseling psychology, a traditionally postpositivist discipline, and qualitative research traditions that have been grounded more in constructivist and critical traditions. In our opinion, she correctly framed the terrain of qualitatively oriented counseling psychologists as a "borderland" (Anzaldua, 1987) venture–adventure in which we work to resist the inevitable pull of a dominant research paradigm to conform to its standards while educating and stretching "between 'both shores at once,' inventing a language of translation bridging postpositivism to critical, qualitative work" (Fine, 2007, p. 460).

Over the years, counseling psychologists have conducted qualitative research on a wide variety of topics relevant to our field. Ponterotto (2005b) examined qualitative studies that had been published over a 15-year period in the *Journal of Counseling Psychology*. Hoyt and Bhati (2007) built on Ponterotto's work, focusing more specifically on the degree to which these studies reflected the underlying principles of qualitative research in the larger qualitative arena. More recently, Ponterotto, Kuriakose, and Granovskaya (2011) have conducted an investigation of qualitative studies published in North American counseling journals (*Journal of Counseling Psychology, Journal of Counseling and Development,* and *The Counseling Psychologist*) from 1995 through 2006. The findings of these three studies provide an overview of how qualitative research is conducted in counseling and counseling psychology as well as raise questions about the directions that qualitative researchers in our field are going.

The questions raised by these three studies are anchored in an understanding of research paradigms; thus, in this chapter, we first identify the paradigmatic issues that form the foundation of qualitative inquiry. Building on this framework, we

describe the current status of the genre by reviewing content analyses of qualitative research in counseling and counseling psychology. Next, we turn our attention to qualitative research designs and modes of inquiry that are relevant to counseling psychology, providing an overview of phenomenology, grounded theory, CQR, PAR, and mixed methods. In keeping with counseling psychology's values and priorities regarding diversity, we address multicultural and social justice issues in qualitative research as well as international and cross-cultural qualitative research. We end the chapter with sections on quality and trustworthiness in qualitative research and writing and on publishing qualitative research in counseling psychology.

PARADIGMATIC UNDERPINNINGS OF QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

Quantitative researchers often scratch their heads in confusion when qualitative researchers insist on discussing paradigms. Those new to the qualitative "culture" (Hoyt & Bhati, 2007) may find qualitative researchers' forays into philosophy of science to be unnecessarily heady. Because the predominant paradigm underpinning quantitative methods has traditionally been positivist or postpositivist, it has not been necessary for conventional researchers to discuss their paradigmatic underpinnings. However, qualitative research is characterized by numerous paradigms and research designs, and failure to understand at least some basic issues across these paradigms leads to unnecessary confusion, such as when a reviewer applies standards of one paradigm to research conducted in another. There are many different philosophical and paradigmatic taxonomies, but one that has been cited frequently in the qualitative research literature was defined by Guba and Lincoln (1994) and articulated for counseling psychologists in *JCP* by Ponterotto (2005a). We have taken some liberties in the brief description of paradigms that follows, partly for simplicity's sake as well as to lend further clarity and expansion. Ponterotto's (2005a) *Primer* is required reading for would-be qualitative researchers.

A paradigm may be viewed as an umbrella containing the researcher's views of reality, how knowledge is acquired, the values that guide the research, the methods used to conduct the research, and the language used to communicate the research process and findings. The paradigms articulated by Ponterotto (2005a) include positivism, postpositivism, constructivism–interpretivism, and critical–ideological. In our brief explanation, we have separated interpretivism and constructivism and have added a pragmatic paradigm.

Although early anthropological qualitative research may be said to have been guided by the values of positivism, qualitative research over time and discipline has largely dismissed positivism as a realistic possibility in the qualitative endeavor. Postpositivists, like positivists, adhere to an objective reality but realize that such a reality can be only imperfectly apprehended. Postpositivist researchers value objectivity as well as maintaining a detached role as researchers.

Ponterotto (2005a), like other theorists, combined constructivism and interpretivism. Others have found it useful to distinguish between the two, however. Viewing postpositivism, interpretivism, and constructivism on a continuum from a more detached and objectivist location to one that is more fully engaged and interactive, one would find interpretivists to be less concerned than postpositivists with detachment or true objectivity but reluctant to engage fully in collaborative meaning-making with participants. A common area of interest among interpretivists and constructivists is the meanings that people make of their life experiences. Although postpositivist qualitative researchers in counseling psychology are interested in these meanings as well, their focus tends to be more on the objective stance of the researcher than the meaning-making process. One area of confusion regarding constructivism relates to whether one is focusing on the internal meaning-making process or a process that is socially constructed.

Critical–ideological theories go further and may be grounded in constructivist—especially social constructivist—perspectives. However, critical-ideological theories are unabashedly political. That is, the goal of such paradigms is to undermine the status quo, using the research process to question power structures in society as well as within the

research relationship itself. Typically the researcher–participant interaction is highly interactional and dialogic, and researchers and participants work together for emancipatory ideals.

Denzin and Lincoln (2000) referred to the qualitative researcher as a *bricoleur,* or one who makes use of all the tools at hand to get the job done. Using this model, the "researcher draws on a variety of philosophical positions and methodological tools to accomplish overall research goals" (Ponterotto, 2005b, p. 10). In keeping with this model, a pragmatic approach to paradigm issues may provide maximum flexibility to the researcher, although Ponterotto warned that "if not done carefully, anchoring research in multiple paradigms can serve as cross-purposes and is akin to mixing apples and oranges" (pp. 10–11). Pragmatism centralizes the research question rather than philosophical or methodological issues, and it focuses on what works best to accomplish the research goals (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003). A pragmatist paradigm is particularly useful in mixed-method (qualitative–quantitative) studies.

As will become evident, certain research designs appear to be a perfect fit with certain paradigms. It will also become clear, however, that there are appropriate times to ground a particular study and its design in a paradigm that is not traditionally associated with that approach. We recommend that researchers become very familiar with the paradigms and designs they wish to use before attempting too ambitious a *bricolage.* This overview of paradigms is necessarily incomplete given the constraints of space, but it will provide the reader with a working understanding to facilitate comprehension of the goals and findings of the three content analyses described in the next section.

Content Analyses of Published Qualitative Research in Counseling and Counseling Psychology

Ponterotto's (2005b) examination of 49 qualitative and mixed-method studies revealed interesting findings about the status of qualitative research published in *JCP* between 1989 and 2003. To begin, he found that of the 49 studies, 21 could be classified as coming from a constructivist paradigm (for a description of

paradigms and their importance to qualitative research, see Ponterotto, 2005a), nine were postpositivist, 17 were postpositivist–constructivist, and two were constructivist–postpositivist. None fell within a critical–ideological paradigm. Ponterotto found a wide variety of research designs represented across these studies, the most frequently used being CQR, grounded theory, and phenomenology. Numbers of participants ranged from five to 26, with face-to-face interviews accounting for the primary data-gathering strategy. These interviews ranged from 30 minutes to 4 hours, with CQR interviews being the shortest. Other data sources included telephone interviews, psychotherapy transcripts, and written responses to open-ended questions. From 1989 to 1993, *JCP* did not publish any qualitative studies. In 1994, the total number of qualitative articles jumped to eight, all of which appeared in the special issue described above. Then, between 1994 and 2003, the number of qualitative articles ranged from two to five per year. Thus, despite increasing numbers of conceptual and methodological articles and chapters in counseling and counseling psychology, along with several qualitative texts, the number of studies actually published in the journal was small. It should be noted, however, that *JCP* was the leader in psychology journals publishing qualitative studies during that time.

Hoyt and Bhati (2007) expanded on Ponterotto's (2005b) work by examining *JCP* qualitative articles during the same period, using a critical analysis to analyze the extent to which qualitative research in *JCP* reflected the underlying values and principles of the larger qualitative genre. Characterizing the qualitative–quantitative paradigms as different cultures, each with its own "socially transmitted collection of knowledge, habits, and skills" (de Waal, 2001, as cited in Hoyt & Bhati, 2007, p. 202), the authors pointed to the defining features of qualitative inquiry according to Morrow and Smith (2000). These included the focus of inquiry (idiographic, in which the focus is on individual uniqueness vs. the nomothetic focus of quantitative research that values representativeness and generalizability), the research setting (extensive, intensive time in the natural setting of participants), and the researcher's role (the researcher, as the primary instrument of the research, engages in an intensive self-reflective

process to examine her or his assumptions and biases and use them appropriately in the investigation). In addition, qualitative research should be judged by standards that emerge from the qualitative genre as well as from the guiding paradigm of the research. Therefore, the imposition of quantitative concepts such as reliability, validity, and generalizability on qualitative research would be as inappropriate as criticizing a quantitative study for not uncovering the deeper meanings clients make of their experiences.

Hoyt and Bhati (2007) conducted a content analysis of the same studies examined by Ponterotto (2005b), coding for attributes that related to the research focus, research setting, and researcher's role as well as for the presentation of results, to understand the extent to which these studies reflected the goals of qualitative research. Their findings revealed some important patterns in the ways qualitative research was conducted over this 15-year period. In contrast to the qualitative principles surrounding the importance of a high level of acquaintance and a collaborative relationship between researchers and participants, the authors found a trend indicating that most of the researchers conducting data analysis (frequently termed *coders* or *auditors* in the literature) had little or no contact with research participants. The modal length of interview was 60 min, and this normally took place in a single interview, in contrast with Polkinghorne's (2005) recommendation that an adequate interview spans at least three meetings to develop rapport and gain in-depth understanding of the participant's experience. The vast majority of researchers (80%) had either no direct contact with participants at all or conducted interviews in artificial settings as opposed to participants' natural environments. A small majority of studies (58%) provided some information about the self-reflective processes of the primary researchers, although the focus was on controlling subjectivity rather than using that subjectivity as an integral part of the researcher–participant relationship and to enhance the quality of the findings as is more prevalent in the larger qualitative research community. Hoyt and Bhati found that there was generally consistency in following the qualitative principle of using the words of participants to support

interpretations made by researchers in studies in *JCP* during this period. An important finding of Hoyt and Bhati's examination of change over time was that there was decreasing fidelity between qualitative principles and published qualitative studies in *JCP* over the span of their analysis. This raises significant questions about the direction of qualitative research in counseling psychology in relation to the larger qualitative genre.

The third study in this series (Ponterotto, Kuriakose, & Granovskaya, 2011), still in progress, intended to learn to what degree "actual qualitative research production matched the mounting conceptual calls for expanded methodologies" (p. 5). This study extended and updated Ponterotto's (2005b) study by expanding the scope of journals to include not only *JCP* but *TCP* and the *Journal of Counseling and Development* (*JCD*) as well over a more recent time frame (1995–2006). For each study, the authors examined the underlying research paradigm, the research design or inquiry approach, procedures for gathering data, participant selection, and the topic of the research. Ponterotto et al. (2011) concluded that over the time span investigated, the field is moving from a predominantly postpositivist, quantitative stance to one that embraces broader paradigmatic and methodological diversity. The most common paradigm underlying qualitative research in the field was constructivism, followed by a combined postpositivist–constructivist paradigm in which postpositivism was the stronger grounding, then constructivist–postpositivist, and finally postpositivist. No evidence was found for an underlying ideological–critical paradigm or a pragmatic approach.

Qualitative Research Designs and Modes of Inquiry

As suggested throughout this chapter, there are numerous approaches to qualitative research. We have identified just a handful of these approaches to give readers an overview of those qualitative research designs or modes of inquiry that have either been most used in counseling psychology or hold particular promise given the values of our discipline. These are phenomenology, grounded theory, CQR, PAR, and mixed method. Excellent resources, already referred to and elaborated in this

chapter, are available as how-to guides to conducting research using these approaches; thus, the focus in this chapter will be an update on these designs with particular applicability to counseling psychology in the second decade of the 21st century.

Phenomenology. Perhaps the most complex of qualitative research designs, phenomenology is, foremost, a philosophical tradition with strong links to psychology, particularly existential psychology (Wertz, 2005). Although the philosophical underpinnings are beyond the scope of this chapter, researchers interested in conducting phenomenological research would do well to immerse themselves in the history and philosophy of phenomenology. We view phenomenology as a philosophy, a subparadigm of interpretivism (with an important distinction noted below), and a research design or mode of inquiry.

Wertz (2005) described four basic principles of phenomenology. The first principle is related to the psychological phenomenological attitude, which is that "scientific knowledge begins with a fresh and unbiased description of its subject matter" (p. 167). Husserl (1913/1962) advocated two approaches to ensure this stance, called *epochés*. The first epoché requires the researcher to *bracket*, or set aside, all scientific knowledge about the phenomenon, "suspend[ing] received science, put[ting] it out of play" (Wertz, 2005, p. 168), to have a fresh perspective on the phenomenon. The second epoché brackets the researcher's own "naive" understandings of the phenomenon. The researcher's self-reflection allows the researcher to understand her or his own perspective as well as to develop an empathic understanding of the world of the participants.

The second underlying principle of phenomenology, according to Wertz (2005), is the *intuition of essences* or the *eidetic reduction* of the phenomenon. The researcher engages in a process of examining the phenomenon from every possible angle to understand what are the underlying essences or invariant characteristics of the phenomenon. According to Creswell (2007), "the basic purpose of phenomenology is to reduce individual experiences with a phenomenon to a description of the universal essence" (p. 58). This essence is discovered through a process referred to by Giorgi (1997) as *imaginative variation,*

in which the researcher uses intuition or imagination (viewed here as a rigorous inquiry process) to systematically subject the phenomenon to as many variations as possible to "distinguish essential features from those that are accidental or incidental" (Wertz, 2005, p. 168).

The third principle of phenomenological qualitative research, according to Wertz (2005), is *intentionality and intentional analysis*. Intentionality implies that human consciousness is not separate from the object of its awareness. This concept challenges the traditional Cartesian subject–object dichotomy. Giorgi (1997) asserted that there can be no subject without an object and vice versa.

Finally, Wertz (2005) identified the *life-world* or *lived world* as the fourth principle of phenomenology. This conceptually extends intentionality by viewing the human being as a self, with a unique perspective, imbedded with others in the world (Giorgi, 1997).

Qualitative phenomenological research methods. Grounded in the foregoing principles, the purpose of a phenomenological study is to glean from the data (predominantly interviews) the essence of participants' subjective experiences of the phenomenon of interest. Giorgi (1997) emphasized that phenomenological research aims not to interpret the data, construct meanings, or develop theory, but purely to describe that essence. Moustakas's (1994) approach to psychological phenomenological research emphasizes the core principles of phenomenology in that it makes use of epoché (bracketing) and focuses on descriptions, rather than interpretations, of participants' experiences. We recommend a synthesis of the research methods and strategies suggested by Giorgi (1997), Moustakas (1994), and Wertz (2005). The following procedures characterize a phenomenological study.

■ Identify the phenomenon of interest and articulate the research question or problem. Topics and problems that are most appropriate to a phenomenological approach are those in which a number of people have common or shared experiences of a phenomenon. In counseling psychology, such topics might include client or supervisee experiences of counseling or supervision (e.g.,

Worthen & McNeill, 1996); university counseling center clients' experiences of a campus crisis; or academic climate for graduate students of color.

■ Examine one's own knowledge, beliefs, experiences, feelings, biases, and assumptions about the phenomenon. Bringing these perspectives to light helps the researcher to bracket them, providing a cleaner canvas upon which to paint the descriptions of participants' experiences. This examination, epoché, and bracketing should occur throughout the study and writing of the results. Moustakas (1994) recommended that researchers write up their own experiences and the context in which they occurred as part of the results of the study.

■ Identify the individuals who have experienced the phenomenon or whose lives "involve a revelatory relationship with the subject matter under investigation" (Wertz, 2005, p. 171).

■ Gather data. The main tool for gathering data in a phenomenological study is the in-depth individual interview. However, researchers have also used verbal or written descriptions from the participant's experience, drawings, group discussions, and even descriptions offered by others who have observed the person who has had the experience (Wertz, 2005). Phenomenological interviews tend to be characterized by a small number of global questions to elicit rich descriptions from participants.

■ Conduct a phenomenological data analysis. The researcher immerses her- or himself in the data transcripts, highlighting meaning units (sections of text that illustrate participants' experiences of the phenomenon), and then groups these units into clusters of meaning that become themes. Themes and significant statements from the text are then used to write a description of participants' experiences and the context or setting in which the participants had those experiences (Creswell, 2007).

■ Write a "composite description" that presents "the 'essence' of the phenomenon" (Creswell, 2007, p. 159).

The philosophical underpinnings of phenomenology are continually evolving, as are the procedures

and methods used by phenomenological researchers. It is important that would-be phenomenological researchers give serious study to the history and philosophy of phenomenology as well as become well acquainted with the wide variety of phenomenological research approaches before embarking on a phenomenological investigation. Wertz (2005) suggested that phenomenology was particularly appropriate to counseling psychology research because it engages the "study of subjectivity and the full human person," is able to "capture the richness and complexity of psychological life as it is concretely lived," and brings us "close to the naturally occurring struggles and triumphs of persons" (p. 176).

Grounded theory.   Grounded theory has been a favorite qualitative research design among counseling psychologists over time; in addition, it is "probably the most commonly used qualitative method, surpassing ethnography, and it is used internationally" (Morse et al., 2009, p. 9). Because of its emphasis on examining processes, grounded theory is particularly suited to counseling psychology research on therapy process. Sociologists Glaser and Strauss (1967) developed the first systematic approach to grounded theory, also known as the constant comparative method. This approach was further developed by Glaser (1978), Strauss (1987), Corbin and Strauss (1990), and Strauss and Corbin (1990). Glaser brought a postpositivist perspective to this endeavor and gave to grounded theory "dispassionate empiricism, rigorous codified methods, emphasis on emergent discoveries, and its somewhat ambiguous specialized language that echoes quantitative methods" (Charmaz, 2006, p. 7). Strauss's roots were in the Chicago School of Sociology's pragmatist approach, and he "brought notions of human agency, emergent processes, social and subjective meanings, problem-solving practices, and the open-ended study of action to grounded theory" (Charmaz, 2006, p. 7). His pragmatic perspective also supported a more constructivist approach embodied in symbolic interactionism, in which "society, reality, and self are constructed through interaction and thus rely on language and communication . . . and addresses how people create, enact, and change meanings and actions" (Charmaz, 2006, p. 7). Glaser's and

Strauss's point of convergence was in their interest in "fundamental social or social psychological processes within a social setting or a particular experience" (Charmaz, 2006, p. 7). Over time, Glaser's and Strauss's (the latter along with Corbin) paths diverged considerably, resulting in Glaser publicly criticizing Strauss for abandoning the inductive, discovery-oriented approach that formed the heart of the method and claiming that the procedures proposed by Strauss and Corbin "force data and analysis into preconceived categories" (Charmaz, 2006, p. 8), a problem that the first author of this chapter has encountered in her work. Nonetheless, Strauss and Corbin's approach remains an important resource for graduate students worldwide (Charmaz, 2006). Grounded theory has been used congruently within both postpositivist and constructivist paradigms, making it an ideal mode of inquiry for counseling psychologists who favor either paradigm.

Charmaz (2006) studied with and was mentored by both Glaser and Strauss and has brought together the divergent traditions into a constructivist grounded theory. She has preserved the values of early grounded theory and many of the practices that contribute to theoretical sensitivity on the part of the researcher while outlining a clear and usable framework for conducting and analyzing a grounded theory study. Because of the need by graduate students and novice qualitative researchers to have a research method that provides structure while permitting paradigmatic flexibility, Charmaz's approach is increasingly attractive to counseling psychology researchers, teachers, and students. Counseling psychology qualitative methodologists (Creswell, 2007; Fassinger, 2005) have grounded their writing on a synthesis of the Glaser–Strauss–Corbin work and that of Charmaz. Just as we recommend that phenomenologists steep themselves in phenomenological history, philosophy, and methodology before embarking on a phenomenological study, it is essential that grounded theory researchers become familiar with the main body of literature on grounded theory by Glaser and Strauss (separately and together), Strauss and Corbin, and Charmaz as well as newer work on the development of grounded theory that is described later in this chapter (Morse et al., 2009). Although space does not permit us to

expand further than these resources, we also recommend Clarke's (2005) work on situational analysis, an innovative extension of grounded theory using mapping.

Conducting grounded theory research. As both Charmaz (2000) and Fassinger (2005) have written, much of the information available about grounded theory relates to data analysis. Indeed, we too have observed a tendency among some counseling psychology researchers to describe their work as a grounded theory study on the basis of having conducted open, axial, and selective coding (the steps in grounded theory data analysis proposed by Strauss & Corbin, 1990). To the credit of these researchers, and as Polkinghorne (1994) observed, grounded theory studies in counseling psychology are characterized by rigorous data analysis procedures. Many of the core grounded theory processes of data gathering and ensuring trustworthiness of the study are missing in some of this work, however. Two important components of grounded theory research are theoretical memos and constant comparison. Throughout data collection and analysis, the researcher makes preliminary and ongoing analytic notes about interviews, codes, and other ideas that surface during the course of the research. In addition, grounded theory researchers make use of the *constant comparative method*, during which the researcher continually moves from comparing data to other data in the early stages, data to emerging codes, codes to codes, codes to categories, and back again. This process ensures thorough immersion in the data as well as developing an increasingly complex understanding of the data and development of theory.

Grounded theory means that the researcher constructs a theoretical understanding of human processes that is grounded in the data (Charmaz, 2006). Thus, researchers approach the setting with an attitude of wanting to learn about the participants and their context. Although grounded theorists may disagree about whether to be engaged in the literature before conducting a grounded theory study, all agree on the importance of entering the field with an open mind, setting aside preconceptions and assumptions as much as possible.

In grounded theory research, data analysis begins immediately upon gathering early data. We

"separate, sort, and synthesize these [early] data through qualitative coding" (Charmaz, 2006, p. 2). The primary reason for early data analysis is that the research design must be flexible and emergent (Morrow & Smith, 2000), and early analysis will point the researcher in new directions to gather the data that will provide the fullest, richest understanding possible. Thus, the researcher does not just gather data and then analyze them; she or he develops a plan for initial data gathering that is intentionally flexible and that may lead in unexpected directions. This is known as *theoretical sampling,* in which the researcher uses the emerging analysis to identify what is not yet known. Starting at the most basic, concrete level of data, the researcher constructs increasing levels of abstraction that will move toward an explanatory theory (Charmaz, 2006).

Although there are varied approaches to analyzing qualitative data, Charmaz (2006) has provided an approach that is quite accessible to new grounded theory researchers but also, along with work by Clarke (2005), Morse et al. (2009), and others, moves grounded theory into the 21st century and into its "second generation" (Morse et al., 2009). Grounded theory analysis is characterized by a process of initial coding, focused coding, axial coding, and theoretical coding. Initial coding stays very close to the data and may be conducted word-by-word, line-by-line, meaning unit–by–meaning unit, or incident-to-incident. Codes are typically short, simple, and precise and remain as close to the words of participants as possible. In focused coding, the researcher uses her or his emerging analytic understandings of the data to bring together the most significant or frequently occurring early codes to form categories. In axial coding (Strauss & Corbin, 1990), the researcher defines the properties and dimensions of each category; this phase of coding is described very clearly by Fassinger (2005). Finally, theoretical coding specifies the relationships among categories and forms the basis for articulating the theory. It is at this level that researchers should be watchful not to adopt specific theoretical schemas (e.g., from Strauss & Corbin, 1990) into which to force their data. This final theoretical step should emerge naturally from those that preceded it.

In many grounded theory investigations in counseling psychology (as well as in other disciplines), "theory" might better be labeled a conceptual model. Charmaz (2006) articulated the confusion surrounding the idea of "theory" in grounded theory. Theory, from a positivist perspective, looks for causes and explanations, emphasizes generalizability and universality, and holds prediction as its goal. In contrast, "interpretive theory calls for the imaginative understanding of the studied phenomenon. This type of theory assumes emergent, multiple realities; indeterminacy; facts and values as linked; truth as provisional; and social life as processual" (Charmaz, 2006, p. 126). It is this latter approach to theory that is at the heart of grounded theory construction. Charmaz (2006) goes further to distinguish between objectivist grounded theory, which originates in a positivist–postpositivist paradigm and "attends to data as real in and of themselves and does not attend to the processes of their production" (p. 131), and constructivist grounded theory, which "places priority on the phenomena of the study and sees both data and analysis as created from shared experiences and relationships with participants" (p. 130). Some of the misunderstandings in the editorial review process or in the dissertation defense stem from the confusion of these two paradigmatic, methodological, and theoretical positions. That is, counseling psychology is still a predominantly postpositivist discipline; thus objectivist standards of research are automatically applied to qualitative research regardless of its underlying paradigm. Charmaz (2006) articulated the movement from a postpositivist to a contemporary, constructivist frame when she wrote, "Neither data nor theories are discovered. Rather, we are part of the world we study and the data we collect. We *construct* our grounded theories through our past and present involvements and interactions with people, perspectives, and research practices" (p. 10).

Consensual qualitative research. CQR (Hill et al., 1997), one of the most-used qualitative research designs in counseling psychology (along with phenomenology and grounded theory), is the only qualitative approach developed directly from within counseling psychology. Having tried a number of approaches to conducting qualitative research, the

authors were frustrated by the vagueness of many modes of inquiry and the difficulty in understanding and implementing the methods. They synthesized aspects of phenomenological, grounded theory, and comprehensive process analysis to "integrate the best features of existing methods and also be rigorous and easy to learn" (Hill et al., 2005, p. 196). Ponterotto et al. (2011) classified CQR within the combined postpositivist–constructivist paradigm. The primary source of data in CQR has traditionally been open-ended, semistructured individual interviews. Some distinguishing characteristics of the method are the use of judges and independent auditors, a consensus process of data analysis by team members, and an analytic process that identifies domains, core ideas, and cross-analyses (Hill et al., 1997, 2005). These authors also recommended that researchers engage in a self-reflective process in which they identify their expectations and biases, making them public "so that readers can evaluate the findings with this knowledge in mind" (Hill et al., 2005, p. 197). They also advised that research team members discuss with each other their biases during the research process to ensure that the analysis is not negatively affected. CQR is conducted by a research team, typically made up of psychologists and graduate students. Emphasis is placed on thoroughly training team members who are new to the method; and the authors recommended attending to issues of unequal power in research teams (Hill et al., 2005).

Conducting CQR. Hill et al. (1997) suggested selecting eight to 15 participants, sampled randomly from a homogeneous population. Originally, the authors recommended developing detailed interview protocols, with several questions and additional probes. Later, reporting that researchers over time had asked an average of 12 questions (mode = 15), they suggested that interview questions be limited to eight to 10 questions for a 1-hour interview, noting that too many questions led to "'thin' questionnaire-like data rather than a rich understanding of individuals' experiences" (Hill et al., 2005, p. 199).

The consensus process of CQR is very well articulated and developed. It "relies on mutual respect, equal involvement, and shared power" (Hill et al., 1997, p. 523) and attempts to balance the need for arriving at

a common understanding of the data while still respecting individual viewpoints and worldviews. Team members are encouraged to discuss differences of opinion and the associated feelings openly to enhance the consensus process.

Data analysis begins by deriving a "start list" of domains from the literature, the data, or both. Hill et al. (2005) suggested that a start list derived from the data would reduce preconceived ideas that might arise from the literature. These domains are subsequently used to code the data. Moving to the next level of abstraction, core ideas are constructed that express the words of participants in language that is "concise, clear, and comparable across cases" (Hill et al., 2005, p. 200). Finally, cross-analysis is conducted, in which core ideas are examined across cases and clustered into categories, and frequencies are identified for the core ideas across the sample. Auditors provide detailed feedback throughout the analytic process. Hill et al. suggested that internal auditors might be better able to grasp the complexity but may be biased by their interaction with the data and the team; they recommended at least one external auditor to prevent this problem.

More recently, Hill et al. (2005) have applied CQR to case studies (CQR-C; Jackson, Chui, & Hill, 2006) and to simple qualitative data (e.g., responses to open-ended questions at the end of a survey; consensual qualitative research—modified [CQR-M]; Spangler, Liu, & Hill, 2006). In CQR-C, recordings of counseling sessions make up the primary data. The development of domains is preceded by defining therapeutic events that relate to the phenomenon of interest (Jackson, Chui, & Hill, 2006). This approach emphasizes triangulation, or the use of additional data sources beyond recorded sessions, such as interviewing the counselor and client. The team meets to discuss varying members' interpretations of the data, followed by constructing a case conceptualization. This construction begins with individual team members presenting their conceptualizations, followed by team members querying the presenter. Team members then develop short revised conceptualizations, and the consensus process is used to identify the most pertinent material and develop a consolidated model. CQR-M offers a systematic way to analyze brief responses to

open-ended questions often included as part of a survey instrument (Spangler, Liu, & Hill, 2006). In CQR-M, domains and categories emerge from the data. Cross-analysis is not used because of the limited amount of data received from each participant, and auditors are not viewed as necessary.

As with previously described research designs, it is essential that those wishing to conduct CQR ground themselves in the methodological literature. Until recently, information on conducting CQR was limited to two comprehensive journal articles. Hill (2011) has recently published an edited book that will be of value to CQR researchers.

Participatory action research.   Action research has been documented in the social sciences and education since the early 20th century (Lewin, 1946). The past several decades have seen many transformations of action research that span political and ideological continua. Recently, Fine (2007) and Smith, Chambers, and Bratini (2009) have called on researchers in counseling psychology to take this vision to the next level by deconstructing traditional approaches to research. This call includes an expansion of our "methodological imagination" to include collaborative, power-sharing, and decolonizing strategies, such as conducting PAR. In this section, we provide resources for building a case for PAR within the field of counseling psychology as a tool for social justice and healing of oppression. Then we will offer advice for graduate students, early career professionals, and experienced quantitative and qualitative researchers who are interested in pursuing this approach to research.

Building a case for PAR.   Although currently situated within the context of individual mental health processes, counseling psychology has been moving in a direction toward social justice. In 1991, after more than a decade of multicultural research and practice in psychology, Pedersen declared multiculturalism a "fourth force" in counseling and psychology. Following this declaration has been a flurry of new research in this area as well as a shift from individual awareness of diversity and multicultural issues to a systemic understanding of oppression, privilege, and social justice (Speight & Vera, 2004; Vera & Speight, 2003). However, although

counseling psychology has made a shift toward investigating social justice phenomena, the field has yet to critically analyze power dynamics and social justice concerns *within* the research process. If counseling psychology wants to remain relevant in our understandings of power, privilege, and oppression, then we must turn our attention toward the rapidly changing world of research and the global push toward and acceptance of PAR (Brydon-Miller, 2008; Kindon, Pain, & Kesby, 2007).

PAR is a practical way to go beyond studying social justice topics and infuse social justice action and values of democratic participation into the research design process. To be clear, PAR is not a research design but rather an approach or a worldview to doing research *with* rather than *on* individuals and communities. Fals-Borda and Rahman (1991) wrote, "[PAR] is the implicitly empowering process in which a group of people become aware of the nature of their disenfranchisement, the mechanics through which inequity is perpetuated, and their ability to change their circumstances" (p. 2).

The researcher–researched relationship is critically analyzed and transformed from a top-down power relationship to one that is founded on democratic values and power sharing. The role of researcher is transformed from the traditional notions of the academic researcher who holds power in terms of the design, implementation, interpretation, and write-up of the research, to a model in which traditional research participants are now considered coresearchers and whose input and participation is required throughout the entire research process (Kidd & Kral, 2005). Additionally, there is an underlying belief in the capacity of community members to generate knowledge that adds to the existing literature, to create and take direct action on the basis of their findings, and to reflect on the wisdom of that knowledge through a continual process of *plan–act–observe–reflect* (Herr & Anderson, 2005).

Making a beginning with PAR.   PAR is gaining in popularity and validation as a respected and forward-thinking research process, and at the same time, there are few counseling psychologists engaging in and writing about PAR. Thus, it may be challenging for graduate students and professionals to access mentors and training in PAR even though

they may identify PAR as their preferred approach to social justice research. In addition, PAR requires more time and energy devoted throughout the entire process and may initially turn off graduate students and advisors from pursuing this type of research because of time constraints around a dissertation project as well as a publish-or-perish environment for academics working toward tenure. Although we do not encourage the continuation of the publish-or-perish environment, we understand that many of us are currently residing within this structural environment and may need assistance in how to conduct PAR within this type of institution.

First, PAR requires us to go beyond the confines of psychology and to begin to think of ourselves as interdisciplinary researchers as we familiarize ourselves with various fields' writings on this social justice approach to research (see Bishop, 2005; Fine et al., 2003; Kemmis & McTaggart, 2005; Lykes, Coquillon, & Rabenstein, 2010; Prilleltensky & Nelson, 2002). Many authors and activists can serve as our initial mentors as we immerse ourselves in this knowledge base and begin to *unlearn* the traditional power dynamics of researcher–participant relations. This also includes educating ourselves on the theoretical foundations of PAR (see Freire, 2003; Lewin, 1946; Martín-Baró, 1994; Memmi, 1965; Norsworthy & Khuankaew, 2006; Smith, Chambers, & Bratini, 2009; Tuhiwai Smith, 1999).

Gathering knowledge from multiple fields' perspectives, underpinnings, and various intersections (e.g., history, education, nursing, community psychology) allows for a deeper and more coherent understanding of PAR. In our review of PAR literature, we noticed many nonfiction and philosophical writings woven into PAR articles to increase the capacity for critical consciousness-raising and for connecting psychology to other disciplines (see hooks, 2009; Mohanty, 2006; Starhawk, 1997). For example, Fine (2007) has encouraged a methodological "border crossing" for research in counseling psychology based on metaphors from Gloria Anzaldua's *Borderlands/la frontera* (1987). Fine supported her article with evidence of *psychopolitical validity* (epistemic subtype; Prilleltensky, 2003) as she engaged in this interdisciplinary dialogue and argued for an integrated theory of power that

includes both psychological and political perspectives. Additionally, she has added to the knowledge base by using rich, thick description and creating dialogue between and across disciplines that are writing about and practicing social justice. Fine established this dialogue in her writing, but we can extend this metaphor to our own communities by creating a PAR discussion group that includes people steeped in various fields and knowledge bases coming together to form a powerful and collaborative think tank.

Timing a PAR project so that a student can graduate or publish in a timely manner is also important, and we provide an example of working through this challenge. The first and third authors (advisor and student, respectively) of this chapter wanted to launch a PAR project together in their own community on the basis of responses from community members' needs and concerns. Instead of waiting for the student to get to the dissertation phase of her graduate work, they launched the PAR project in the student's 1st year of the graduate program. Abrams thus had completed her predissertation research project (in some graduate programs, this is called the *master's thesis project* or the *early research project*) by the time of her entry into the field, along with the relationship-building processes that occur during the beginning phases of a PAR project.

At the commencement of Abrams's dissertation research, this PAR project will have already been under way for more than 2 years, and the community member coresearchers will be deep within the cycle of plan–act–observe–reflect (Herr & Anderson, 2005). Also, because PAR projects look so different from one another, there are always opportunities to write and publish various aspects, joys, and challenges of the work in which a community of researchers is engaged. Thus, each PAR project can elicit many publications in both academic and community literature bases. In fact, the documentation and dissemination of the project may be a social action project in itself and contribute greatly to our understanding of how community-based projects may empower and provide healing to individuals living within those communities. We recommend that a good place to start is for advisors and students to read together the brief but informative and

practical book, *The Action Research Dissertation* (Herr & Anderson, 2005).

Finally, PAR may be important in the training of graduate students for increasing multicultural competence and social justice advocacy through the actual practice of building relationships in communities that are based in power sharing, collaboration, mutuality, and solidarity. Students can learn the values of social justice through interdisciplinary readings and dialogues as well as through the experience of engaging with people in a community and in the transformation of social processes and structures. Professionals, community members, and students can learn together how to empower themselves, share their power, and attend to issues of power dynamics in ways that are growth-promoting and healing rather than destructive and oppressive. By attending to these dynamics, students also have the opportunity to actively practice aspirational ethics and work through ethical dilemmas that arise, which may aid in their preparation to be ethical researchers, teachers, and clinicians.

PAR is an approach to research that actively promotes liberation and social justice through the development of social consciousness; the planning and implementation of social action projects; and activities of relationship building, power sharing, collaboration, and reflexivity of not just the content of the research but also the processes. It is our hope that more counseling psychologists take up this forward-thinking approach to social justice work in their activism and writing as well as in the training of graduate students.

Mixed methods. Within both qualitative and quantitative paradigms, *triangulation* is used to enhance the credibility of a study by bringing different lenses to the study of the topic at hand. In qualitative research, triangulation may be achieved by using multiple sources of data, multiple investigators, various theories, or multiple methods (Denzin, 1978). Traditionally, ethnography and case studies have employed both qualitative and quantitative strategies; so, although considered qualitative approaches, these methods often are, in fact, mixed-method approaches. Mixed-method (qualitative–quantitative) research can provide both the depth

and richness of meaning that are possible using qualitative research as well as broader, more generalizable findings from quantitative research. Creswell, Plano Clark, Gutmann, and Hanson (2003) defined mixed-method research as

> the collection or analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data in a single study in which the data are collected concurrently or sequentially, are given a priority, and involve the integration of the data at one or more stages in the process of research. (p. 212)

In addition to triangulation, Greene, Caracelli, and Graham (1989) articulated reasons for conducting mixed-method research, including complementarity (where findings from one method expand on or elaborate the other), development (results from one analytical strand are used to inform or develop the other), initiation (looking for contradictions and paradoxes when results from the two methods are compared), and expansion (where the range and breadth of a study is expanded by using multiple analytical elements for different phases of the research). Other reasons for using mixed methods include achieving a better understanding of a phenomenon by combining quantitative and qualitative findings, using qualitative research to identify constructs that may then be tested qualitatively, using quantitative findings to help identify appropriate participants for a subsequent qualitative investigation, and gathering information about members of marginalized or under-represented groups (Hanson et al., 2005).

The mixed-method researcher has numerous decisions to make and challenges to face. The first involves making decisions about the paradigm or theoretical lens that will undergird the study (Hanson et al., 2005). Paradigm debates abound as to whether it is appropriate to mix paradigms, which may be necessary in a mixed-method study. As noted, Tashakkori and Teddlie (2003) advocated a pragmatist approach to paradigms, particularly when using mixed methods. A second task of the mixed-method researcher is to make decisions about the priority placed on the different methods (whether qualitative and quantitative approaches

will be relatively equal in weight or unequal) and issues of timing (whether the qualitative and quantitative data collection will occur concurrently or sequentially; Creswell et al., 2003). Finally, the researcher must carefully plan how she or he will integrate the qualitative and quantitative data.

Several typologies of mixed-method research designs are used across disciplines. One approach, developed by Creswell et al. (2003), articulates six types of designs, three sequential and three concurrent. Within each, the three designs vary according to their paradigmatic bases and whether there is an advocacy–social justice approach associated with the design, whether the priority given to qualitative and quantitative components is equal, when data are analyzed and integrated, and which procedural notations are used to illustrate the approach (Hanson et al., 2005).

Hanson et al. (2005) stressed the importance of clearly stating the research purpose and questions as well as explaining the rationale for using mixed methods. Also, because it is challenging to master both qualitative and quantitative methods, they recommend conducting research in teams, where the strengths of different researchers can be maximized. Finally, they suggested that mixed-method researchers be explicit about indicating mixed-method designs in the titles of their manuscripts and use the developing nomenclature to build a common understanding of mixed-method research.

In addition to the research designs described in this chapter, there are many more, including ethnography, case study, narrative research, and others. We encourage qualitative researchers to explore these designs to find approaches that best fit their research questions to continue to become a more methodologically diverse discipline. This may be particularly important given counseling psychology's multicultural and social justice agendas.

Multicultural and Social Justice Issues in Qualitative Research in Counseling Psychology

Intrinsic to qualitative research is the goal of giving voice to the experience of participants and allowing the complexities of their lives to unfold. This is consistent with culturally sensitive research, which centralizes the cultural context of participants (Choudhuri, 2003, 2005) and aims to dismantle Eurocentric and privileged paradigms. Tillman (2002) insightfully explained, "Culture can be conceptualized and defined differently depending on one's worldview and one's particular needs as a researcher and scholar" (p. 3). As counseling psychology reawakens to a social justice agenda (Speight & Vera, 2008), the definition of culture shifts and is much more dynamic and contextualized. Culture with a social justice frame is nestled within the concepts of power, privilege, and access to resources. Without adequate multicultural competency, however, the researcher may encounter numerous roadblocks and run the risk of an ethical violation.

Counseling psychologists are held accountable by the American Psychological Association's (APA) code of ethics to conduct research within their areas of competence (APA, 2010). Using the principle of *nonmaleficence* (do no harm) as a baseline, critical decision points in multicultural qualitative research can be identified within the study's design (e.g., development of the research question(s), participant recruitment, data collection, data analysis, and the presentation of the results). Haverkamp (2005) eloquently cautioned, "What makes research 'ethical' is not a characteristic of the design or procedures, but of our individual decisions, actions, relationships, and commitments" (p. 147). To conduct ethical multicultural qualitative research, researchers must be mindful of design-related decisions and how we are relating to the individuals and communities under study. This is the first act of social justice in the quest to repair cultural mistrust of researchers resulting from historical injustices committed in the name of research (Schulz, Caldwell, & Foster, 2003).

The APA "Guidelines on Multicultural Education, Training, Research, Practice, and Organizational Change for Psychologists" (APA, 2003) address the first relevant decision point in multicultural qualitative research, which is the development of the research question(s). Qualitative research questions should be examined for inherent biases that frame the study with a deficit perspective (Egharevba, 2001). For example, Villalpando's (2003) longitudinal, multimethod study of students

of color on college campuses could have been framed from a deficit perspective had he asked why students of color segregate themselves from the predominately White student body. This type of question would have been in line with the theory of *racial balkanization* (Duster, 1995), which presumes that students of color hanging out together on college campuses are engaging in self-segregation. Instead, using a Latino/a critical race theory paradigm, Villalpando (2003) explored how Chicano/a student peer groups influence each other's "socially conscious values," subsequent career choices, and service to the community.

Participant recruitment is a second decision point. Sampling and recruitment strategies often require that the researcher be clear about the parameters for participation. Demographic characteristics such as racial–ethnic identification, sexual orientation, age, religion, and immigration status can be sensitive issues (Choudhuri, 2005). Using language to describe the study and requirements for inclusion that are jargon free and nonpatronizing is critical. This is a situation in which having an insider's perspective, a research team, or consultants can be very useful. DeBlaere, Brewster, Sarkees, and Moradi (2010) provided a thorough review of the complexity of self-identification for lesbian, gay, and bisexual (LGB) people of color, which reflects the intersectionality of sexual orientation, race and ethnicity, and gender. The authors suggested that researchers become aware of the variety of descriptions across cultures when communicating about self-identification during recruitment. Another example of an issue with recruitment involves immigration-related generational status. Self-identification as a first-generation, 1.5-generation (Kim, Brenner, Liang, & Asay, 2003), or second-generation immigrant can be complicated by a childhood of frequent transnational migration. Also, asking participants to reveal citizenship status without careful consideration of historical context and consequences of answering such a question is an exertion—and possible misuse—of the researcher's power and privilege.

The third decision point involves issues related to data collection. Keeping in mind Haverkamp's (2005) focus on relationship with participants, before entering a community, understanding the cultural norms and the way these norms can shift will prevent missteps by the researcher. These errors may be due to a lack of knowledge or experience with a community, but also could be due to a misguided sense of the insider's perspective. For example, an unmarried, third-generation, Mexican American qualitative researcher may have very little in common with a Latina mother who recently immigrated from Venezuela. Instead, an Ethiopian male qualitative researcher who recently immigrated to the United States with his family might have a better understanding of the participant's experience. Thus, rather than assuming racial, ethnic, or gender matching will facilitate the relational connection, the researcher should consider markers most salient in participants' lives (i.e., family and immigration status).

Developing interview questions that effectively tap into the participants' experiences requires careful thought. Bowleg's (2008) work about the methodological challenges of *intersectionality* research emphasizes the importance of asking good questions. In her research with Black lesbian women, she avoided the "additive approach (Black + Lesbian + Woman)" (p. 314), and instead focused on intersectionality by asking questions about participants' experiences as Black lesbian women, rather than asking questions with the phrase "race, gender, *and/or* sexual orientation" (p. 316). Godreau (2008) also tackled the power of language by examining the contextual nature of linguistic shifts of racial terminology in Puerto Rico. She explained that "slippery semantics" occur within a conversation when individuals use "multiple racial terms to describe the same individual, the consistent use of binary black/white terminology, or the use of the same racial term to describe different 'types of phenotypes' during a single narrative event" (Godreau, 2008, p. 7). The social negotiation of other- and self-identification is an example of the multicultural complexity that a qualitative researcher must consider when developing the criteria for inclusion as well as during data collection.

Family interviews are another possible method of data collection. Berghauser (2009) shared the difficulties and benefits of this method in her report of the phenomenological experience of challenges and

resiliency in same-sex parented families. She conducted interviews with all of the family members at the same time and later reflected on the power of the interview process:

> In several of these interviews, words and facial expressions suggested that this format had opened new conversations among family members, and encouraged the questioning of certain ideas and values held by the family. Since maintaining high levels of daily activity was significant for all of the families; simply sitting as a family and talking about what that means seemed to cement and affirm them as a unique family unit. More plainly, from a social constructionist view, telling others outside the family system about your family would appear to make it all more real and acknowledged. (p. 125)

She also urged researchers conducting family interviews to "acknowledge the privilege of being part of their shared intimacy" (Berghauser, 2009, p. 124).

The final decision point involves data analysis and (re)presentation of participants' stories. Because the researcher is the instrument of data collection, this process requires continuous examination of the researcher's worldview. A major concern in multicultural qualitative research is misinterpreting participants' narratives and, as a result, perpetuating stereotypes. One method for avoiding this scenario is to use a collaborative approach and ask participants to be coresearchers in the analytic process (Morrow & Smith, 1995). With the goal of accurate interpretations, Lyons and Bike (2010) reiterated the value of member checks and added that researchers are fulfilling a "moral responsibility to participants" (p. 422) by doing so. Bilingual researchers who conduct interviews in the participants' native languages may consider leaving participant transcripts in the original language, even conducting the analysis in the participant's language before translating the results into the language of the final audience. Lyons and Bike also suggested supporting interpretations with an abundance of participant quotes. These quotes may appear first in the participant's natural language,

followed by translation to the language of publication. This not only (re)presents the participants' voices, but privileges their words and worldview within the results.

As multicultural qualitative research increasingly gains attention within counseling psychology, the needs of researchers evolve as well. The conflicts between ethical dilemmas and sound qualitative methods (e.g., in-depth interviews) create the need for continued review of the practice of multicultural qualitative research. Martín-Baró (1994) furthered this assertion by suggesting that psychological researchers

> examine our theoretical assumptions, not so much from the standpoint of their intrinsic logic as from their historical logic; that is, in terms of whether they work and are truly effective in the here and now. But on the other hand, it forces us to cast off the veil of lies we move about in, and to look at the truth of our social existence without the ideological crutches of our routine work or of professional inertia. (p. 120)

This statement challenges seasoned qualitative researchers to seek flexibility in shifting methods and paradigms to be congruent with the community under study. Martín-Baró (1994) spoke of professional inertia, which can be applied to multicultural qualitative research. This inertia may be due to a lack of training and exposure to diverse methodologies, or it may be due to professional pressure. We are obliged to examine when we feel safe with a particular methodological approach rather than considering the fit with the community to be studied; otherwise, the voices of the research participants may be lost in this state of inertia, and we may cause more harm than good by presenting their "voices" in inaccurate ways or alienating them from the research process.

International Issues in Qualitative Research in Counseling Psychology

Although the counseling professions as well as the broader field of psychology have been involved in international activities for more than a century,

there has been a recent flurry of international activity in counseling psychology that has included (among other projects) the creation of an international section of Division 17 of APA, an international counseling psychology conference, and a new handbook on cross-cultural counseling that includes authors from around the world (for more information, see Gerstein, Heppner, Ægisdottir, Leung, & Norsworthy, 2009). Although this renewed interest in international psychology is exciting and full of promising collaborations, there are also important challenges to consider when engaging in cross-cultural research. In this section, we briefly problematize the exportation of U.S. research methodologies and processes to other countries and cultures. Then we propose international qualitative research practices that value cooperation, nonexploitation, and mutuality and that work toward social change.

Challenges to consider in cross-cultural research. Trimble and Fisher (2006) recounted the history of exploitation of indigenous and international communities in research. They wrote,

> Over the decades, well-intended researchers found their way to Indian and native communities, consorted with tribal leaders and their informants, conducted their research, snapped countless photos, recorded sacred songs, and documented rituals and ceremonies, many of which were forbidden to be witnessed by outsiders; then they left, in many instances never to be heard from again. (p. xvi)

Although this form of data mining is no longer acceptable in anthropology communities, it is still widely practiced in other fields of international research, including psychology. In their chapter on bringing social justice practices to international counseling psychology activities, Norsworthy and Khuankaew (2006) featured "voices from Asia" (p. 423), or stories from people living in Asia who had recently experienced exploitation and oppression from Western professionals coming to their country to "help" but who arrived with only a

Westerner-as-expert framework for helping. The stance of researcher-as-expert is taught and practiced in counseling psychology graduate programs across the United States. Because of the U.S. position of power and privilege in the global village, this attitude is at best not helpful and at worst harmful when engaging in cross-cultural work and relationships. Beyond assuming the general role of the expert, there are additional ethical dilemmas and challenges in exporting U.S. psychology models across borders of cultures and countries. Norsworthy, Heppner, Ægisdottir, Gerstein, and Pedersen (2009) wrote, "We have maintained that the exportation of U.S. psychology and counseling can become an instrument of psychological colonization, particularly in relation to the exportation of U.S. counseling models to non-Western contexts" (p. 78).[1]

There are also methodological challenges to consider in conducting cross-cultural qualitative research. Ægisdottir, Gerstein, Leung, Kwan, and Lonner (2009) described three issues of equivalence across cultures that include *conceptual, functional,* and *linguistic.* In other words, conceptual understandings, functions and operations of the research constructs, and the ways in which these concepts are formed and expressed (written, oral, or performance) may not translate as we expect them to across cultures. For example, the word *gender* in the United States has markedly different historical, social, and political contexts attached to it than to the relatively new word, *gender,* in Thailand (Norsworthy & Khuankaew, 2006). Thus, a well-intentioned U.S. researcher conducting a qualitative interview study about *gender* in Chiang Mai, Thailand, may unknowingly bring U.S. conceptions, functions, and linguistics to the design, implementation, and interpretation of the research. This not only produces wholly inaccurate research but also continues the reign of U.S. imperialism by defining the Thai reality of *gender* through the lens of U.S. history, politics, and social processes.

Possibilities for cross-cultural research. In qualitative research, the concept of *thick description*

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[1]Note that in this chapter, we use the term *Western* as it is used by people in South and Southeast Asia to describe people living in Global North countries such as Canada, the United States, and those in Western Europe.

(Geertz, 1973) is prized and considered a method to which to aspire. Ægisdottir et al. (2009) recommended that counseling psychology stands to learn much about thick description in cross-cultural research from the field of anthropology. They wrote,

> Not surprisingly, anthropologists acquire much more revealing and valid information through extended periods of time in the field. This is in sharp contrast to cross-cultural counseling researchers, who often spend a limited time in the field and instead rely on interviews and survey methodology to collect data (pp. 102–103)

They recommended various methods and techniques to use in cross-cultural qualitative research, such as participant observation, unstructured interviews, free listing, and the cultural consensus model by Romney, Weller, and Batchelder (1986).

According to Norsworthy et al. (2009), U.S. counseling psychologists can begin to make a new name for psychology in the international arena in various ways. A first step includes educating oneself about the history of colonialism, U.S. imperialism, and xenophobia as well as liberation, indigenous, feminist, and critical theories. Additionally, they recommended engaging in research that includes participatory action models, power sharing, and collaboration throughout the research process. This may mean unlearning traditional modes of research from a postpositivist paradigm and wrestling with new conceptions of researcher power dynamics and relationships between researcher, participant, and coresearcher. Norsworthy and Khuankaew (2006) shared the importance of cross-cultural counseling psychologists partnering with local communities rather than going directly to the academic institutions in other countries. Additionally, they wrote, "Qualitative methodologies aimed at centering and amplifying the experiences and voices of the research and practice communities as authorities over their own lives serve as liberatory vehicles for groups that have been historically and/or globally devalued and silenced" (p. 439). Finally, Horne and Mathews (2004, 2006) outlined a model of international consultation for counseling psychologists that can be relevant to qualitative researchers who are interested

in preparing themselves for cross-cultural work. This model includes setting a context for collaboration, researcher self-evaluation of biases and values, engagement in power sharing, privileging participant–coresearcher needs and goals, an awareness of the impact of research on participants–coresearchers, a social justice–action component, and a collaborative evaluation process and follow-up contact.

Finally, for those interested in pursuing socially just cross-cultural research, we provide examplars of this challenging yet promising international work. In Norsworthy and Khuankaew (2004), the authors walked through their capacity-building workshop model for working with women who have experienced gender-based violence in Southeast Asia. Lykes and Moane (2009) provided a compelling argument for the use of liberation and feminist psychologies when engaging in research, consultation, or practice in the global village. In fact, the entire Volume 19 of the journal *Feminism and Psychology* includes articles written from around the globe on using liberatory, feminist, and participatory research and consultation practices. Norsworthy and Khuankaew (2006) detailed the joys and challenges along the journey of their own working relationship and friendship across global North–South borders. Last, but certainly not least, Part II of the *International Handbook of Cross-cultural Counseling* (Gerstein et al., 2009) provides outstanding chapters written by counseling professionals, healers, and helpers from various regions of the world. These articles offer examples of grassroots advocacy and social justice movements as well as the historical, social, and political contexts of the counseling, consultation, and helping professions established in those regions.

Quality and Trustworthiness in Qualitative Research

Trustworthiness is the term frequently used by qualitative researchers to describe the "rigor" or "credibility" of a qualitative study. Issues of what constitutes trustworthiness in a qualitative study are complicated by the paradigms that underpin the research. Because most quantitative research is conducted from a postpositivist paradigm, a common language expressing the standards for quality has developed over time so that quantitative researchers need not

articulate their paradigm nor explain constructs such as validity, reliability, and generalizability. Qualitative researchers, however, have some common standards and practices across paradigms as well as some that are paradigm-specific (Morrow, 2005). Although it is beyond the scope of this chapter to address particular paradigm-specific standards of trustworthiness, it is important that researchers, dissertation committee members, and reviewers understand the differences among paradigms and apply appropriate standards. Researchers will do well to assess the journals in which they hope to publish to select paradigms that are acceptable to those journals.

Morrow (2005) articulated four overarching criteria for trustworthiness that transcend specific paradigms. The first criterion, social validity, relates closely to the social value of the research we conduct as counseling psychologists who are striving for multicultural competence and who are committed to social justice. The second addresses how researchers deal with subjectivity and reflexivity. Although the purposes of self-reflection vary across paradigms (from bracketing to engaging one's subjectivity), this process is an essential component of trustworthiness in qualitative research. The third component is adequacy of data. Researchers vary in their estimates about how many participants constitute a good study, and concepts such as redundancy of data or theoretical saturation are good guidelines for researchers. The goal of a qualitative study is to have findings that are rich and complex; sufficient data are essential to achieve this goal. Adequacy of interpretation goes hand-in-hand with adequacy of data and involves immersion in the data, a systematic and well-thought-out analytic strategy, and writing that offers a balance of the researcher's interpretation and participants' supporting quotes. Thick description, consisting of not only rich, full, descriptions but also of the context of the research and participants' lives, is an indispensable component of adequate interpretation and of trustworthiness.

WRITING AND PUBLISHING QUALITATIVE RESEARCH IN COUNSELING PSYCHOLOGY

Compared with other social science disciplines whose roots are in positivism–postpositivism,

counseling psychology is a hospitable venue for qualitative researchers to conduct, write, and publish qualitative research. Although we certainly have a way to go to be fully embracing of qualitative research (Ponterotto & Grieger, 2007), both of our major publishing outlets, *TCP* and *JCP,* welcome rigorously conducted and well-written qualitative work. Morrow (2005) and Ponterotto and Grieger (2007) made a number of recommendations for writing and publishing qualitative research. Ponterotto and Grieger argued that the foundation of successful writing and publishing is sufficient training in qualitative methods. Although only a small minority of counseling psychology programs provide this training, the authors recommended pursuing training at conferences as well as taking advantages of the rich variety of qualitative resources available. They also outlined four phases of development for the novice researcher to attain mastery. They further emphasized the importance of having knowledge of philosophy of science, research paradigms, and a variety of research methods.

Many facets of good writing are common to both quantitative and qualitative research approaches. Ponterotto and Grieger (2007) and Elliott, Fischer, and Rennie (1999) suggested seven guidelines to increase publishability of qualitative research. These included owning one's perspective as the researcher, describing research participants in depth and detail, grounding the results in examples, detailing procedures for establishing trustworthiness, presenting results in a coherent manner, specifying whether the goals of the research are general or specific, and resonating with the audience. Ponterotto and Grieger described thick description as "the linchpin of qualitative writing" (p. 416). They further emphasized knowing one's audience and gave guidelines for targeting specific journals and books for publication. They included a special section for graduate students on conducting qualitative research.

A number of valuable resources will assist the qualitative researcher in achieving her or his writing goals. Morrow (2005), in an appendix to her article on trustworthiness, provided an outline for qualitative research proposals that expands on APA Style by including sections unique to qualitative research. Ponterotto and Grieger (2007) gave excellent

recommendations for writing qualitative journal articles. In addition, *JCP* (2010) has published *Guidelines for Reviewing Manuscripts for the* Journal of Counseling Psychology, which integrates guidelines that have been developed for reviewing qualitative research. These guidelines are a valuable tool for writing manuscripts for publication for any professional journal.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter, we have identified the current status of qualitative research in counseling psychology. As Ponterotto (2005b, 2005c) and Hoyt and Bhati (2007) suggested, we have made strides in our discipline, but we still have room to grow if we are to respond to the multiple calls for methodological diversity. In particular, graduate training programs should assess their responsibility for adequately educating students in qualitative methods, given that both of our discipline's journals welcome and publish qualitative research. Just as training programs insist that their graduates (including the majority of counseling psychology students who will go on to be practitioners) become intelligent consumers of research, it is imperative that with the increasing numbers of qualitative studies in our field, our students become conversant in qualitative methodologies.

At present, counseling psychology demonstrates some diversity in the paradigms and research designs that are published in our journals. There is a paucity of qualitative research, however, on the basis of critical–ideological paradigms or that use methods such as PAR. This is likely because these paradigms and methods run counter to the predominantly postpositivist, quantitative orientation of our field. Despite the gains that we have made to broaden our research horizons, it may be that those qualitative approaches that are most compatible with the dominant model are more acceptable to the mainstream of counseling psychology. Counseling psychologists are, indeed, conducting qualitative research on the basis of critical–ideological paradigms, particularly in the areas of multiculturalism and social justice. They are also conducting PAR that is published in journals outside of our specific

discipline. It would be helpful to raise questions about institutional barriers (e.g., funding sources; implications for graduation, tenure, and promotion; openness of our journals to alternative paradigms and methods) to publishing in counseling psychology outlets. It is likely that younger, social justice–oriented counseling psychologists who are pursuing alternative approaches lack the institutional power to affect more powerful faculty, funders, and editorial boards. Thus, more conventional qualitative—and quantitative—researchers bear the responsibility to work as allies to open the doors to genuine methodological diversity.

Another barrier to the inclusion of PAR in our methodological repertoire is the likelihood that institutional structures do not reward this more longitudinal approach to research. Qualitative research, in general, takes more time to conduct than does quantitative research; and it requires more space to adequately publish results. PAR, specifically, requires even more time and resources, as entry into the field and building trust in oppressed communities often engage the researcher in a long and challenging journey. Participating with a community in social action is no short-term fix. Counseling psychology researchers have the opportunity to address institutional norms that limit the scope of meaningful research. In addition, we can join with practitioner–activists in the community to conduct community-based research.

Finally, given our commitments to multiculturalism and social justice, we should assess the limitations of our paradigms and designs in responding to the needs of underrepresented, marginalized, and oppressed peoples. Most notably, the predominance of single, short, individual interviews ignores the relational values of many cultural groups. Such interviews may highlight the unequal power held by academic researchers. Despite Polkinghorne's (2005) strong recommendation that interviewers should have at least three meetings with research participants, the pressures of time to graduation and publishing expectations may make researchers shortsighted about creative alternatives to the single-session interview. In addition to multiple-session interviews, focus groups should become a norm for interviewing members of marginalized groups

because such groups help to minimize the power of the researcher while providing validation and support for participants. These strategies may help to shift the focus from mere rapport building to building meaningful and empowering research relationships.

In this chapter, we have briefly addressed issues of quality and trustworthiness in qualitative research and noted the importance of applying appropriate standards to qualitative studies from different paradigms. We suggest that education in philosophy of science and scientific paradigms be incorporated into doctoral programs, with an application component so that doctoral trainees can begin to understand the relevance of paradigmatic clarity. Furthermore, we urge research committee members and journal manuscript reviewers to become familiar with the paradigms undergirding qualitative research and to apply appropriate standards in the review process.

Overall, counseling psychology is a leader in psychology as a whole in embracing qualitative research into its scientific repertoire. We believe this reflects our openness as a discipline to diversities of all kinds. It is our hope that counseling psychology will avoid becoming parochial in its approach to alternative paradigms and methods and also that qualitative researchers will reach out beyond disciplinary boundaries to take part in the larger evolution of qualitative research.

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