QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

4E

QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

Edited by

DAVID SILVERMAN

⑤SAGE

ONE
Introducing Qualitative Research

David Silverman

This book provides a guide to the latest developments in qualitative research written by internationally recognized authors in their field. It sets out to overcome several erroneous assumptions about our field that may confuse the beginning researcher:

- that doing research is purely a matter of learning a few techniques and hence that research methods are atheoretical
- that qualitative research (QR) is in competition with quantitative research
- that QR is just about understanding people's 'experiences'
- that anything goes in QR (i.e. QR is not rigorous).

I have selected authors who disagree with many of these assumptions. Most of them agree with me that:

- QR is a theoretically driven enterprise
- QR complements quantitative research in particular by entering into the 'black box' of how social phenomena are constituted in real time
- QR is as much about social practices as about experience
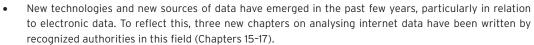- QR is, or should be, a credible, rigorous enterprise.

This edition offers a newly updated introduction to such cutting edge issues, written by leading scholars in our field. Chapters from the third edition have been revised and updated by their distinguished authors. In addition, reflecting the changing face of qualitative research, the book has been transformed in the following ways:

- New technologies and new sources of data have emerged in the past few years, particularly in relation to electronic data. To reflect this, three new chapters on analysing internet data have been written by recognized authorities in this field (Chapters 15–17).
- Eight new authors, outstanding scholars in their field, have written brilliant original chapters (Chapters 10, 15–17 and 24).
- An exciting new chapter has been written to reflect the important issue of how ethnographers engage in the 'field' (Chapter 9 on 'reflexivity').
- Chapter 25 now discusses the validity of all kinds of qualitative research.
- Chapter 26 on 'writing' now includes a discussion of online publishing.
- To ensure even greater reader-friendliness, each chapter now includes summary boxes throughout. Each chapter ends with a discussion of future prospects, study questions and an annotated list of recommended reading and internet links.
- In recognition of their importance, chapters on ethics and the practical application of qualitative research are now placed immediately after this Introduction.

Like earlier editions, this text is supported by a number of assumptions set out below:

1. The centrality of the relationship between analytic perspectives and methodological issues and the consequent requirement to go beyond a purely 'cookbook' version of research methods.
2. The need to broaden our conception of qualitative research beyond issues of subjective 'meaning' and towards issues of language, representation and social organization.
3. The desire to search for ways of building links between social science traditions rather than dwelling in 'armed camps' fighting internal battles.
4. The belief that a social science, which takes seriously the attempt to sort fact from fancy, remains a valid enterprise.
5. The assumption that we no longer need to regard qualitative research as provisional or never based on initial hypotheses. This is because qualitative studies have already assembled a usable, cumulative body of knowledge.
6. The commitment to a dialogue between social science and the community based on a recognition of their different starting points rather than upon a facile acceptance of topics defined by what are taken to be 'social problems'.

Each of these assumptions is, implicitly or explicitly, highly contested within contemporary qualitative research. This is largely, I believe, because such research has become a terrain on which diverse schools of social theory have fought their mock battles. Ultimately, the assumptions set out here try to move the terrain of our field towards an analysis of the everyday resources which we use in making our observations. This point, which is implicit in many of these contributions, is set out in detail in *A Very Short, Fairly Interesting, Reasonably Cheap Book about Qualitative Research* (Silverman, 2011).

Of course, avoiding such battles, while being committed to a cumulative social science, is far more likely to make our trade appear relevant to the wider community. As we look outwards rather than inwards, with confidence rather than despair, the way is open for a fruitful dialogue between social scientists, organizations, professionals and community groups.

Moreover, it is worth noting that we present ourselves not only to the wider community but also to the students we teach. Like my two other books, *Doing Qualitative Research*

(2013) and *Interpreting Qualitative Data* (2015), *Qualitative Research* derives from 30 years of teaching methodology courses and supervising research projects at both undergraduate and graduate levels. That experience has reinforced the wisdom of the old maxim that true learning is based upon doing. In practice, this means that I approach taught courses as workshops in which students are given skills to analyse data and so to learn the craft of our trade. Like many contemporary teachers, I believe that assessments of students' progress are properly done through data exercises rather than the conventional essay in which students are invited to offer wooden accounts of what other people have written.

It follows that I have little time for the conventional trajectory of the PhD in which students spend their first year 'reviewing the literature', gather data in year two and then panic in year three about how they can analyse their data. Instead, my students begin their data analysis in year one – sometimes in week one. In that way, they may well have 'cracked' the basic problem in their research in that first year and so can spend their remaining years pursuing the worthy but relatively non-problematic tasks of ploughing through their data following an already established method.

My hope is that this book will be used by students who are not yet familiar with the approaches involved, their theoretical underpinnings and their research practice. Worked through examples of research studies and study questions make the arguments accessible. Moreover, the chapters are not written in standard edited collection style as chapters addressed to the contributors' peers but inaccessible to a student audience. This means that the presentation is didactic but not 'cookbook' in style.

The particular contribution of this reader lies in its assembly of a very well-known, international team of researchers who share my commitment to rigorous, analytically derived but non-polarized qualitative research. Nine US-based researchers join 15 from the UK, two from Switzerland and Denmark, and one each from France, Sweden, Poland, Italy, Norway, Finland and Australia. While the majority of the contributors are sociologists, psychology, feminist studies, health, education, communication, social work, media studies, socio-legal studies and linguistics are also represented. In any event, I believe that all contributors have succeeded in making their presentations accessible to a multidisciplinary audience.

Each author has written a chapter which reflects on the analysis of each of the kinds of data discussed in *Interpreting Qualitative Data*: observations, texts, talk, visual and digital data, focus groups and interviews. Each uses particular examples of data analysis to advance analytic arguments. Rather than denying their own analytic position in favour of some woolly centre ground, my authors have clearly set out the assumptions from which they proceed while remaining open to the diverse interests of their diverse audiences.

One audience for our research may be policy-makers, practitioners, clients or research subjects. The first section of this book positions qualitative research within the wider community. Michael Bloor's chapter deals with a topic that concerns most qualitative researchers: the ability of our research to contribute to addressing social problems. Bloor argues that our focus on everyday activities makes it particularly relevant in helping practitioners to think about their working practices. He demonstrates his argument by detailed

discussions of case studies which he conducted of male prostitutes in Glasgow and of the health of sailors. Both sets of studies illustrate Bloor's point about the ways in which rigorous qualitative research can have relevance for service provision, even if, at least in Britain, it is unlikely to have much impact upon policy debates at the governmental level. Finally, Bloor reviews (and rejects) the argument that social scientists should not be practitioners' helpers.

The next chapter by Anne Ryen addresses how ethical issues arise within qualitative research. As she shows, ethics involves many more interesting matters than the tedious business of form-filling in order to satisfy ethical review committees about 'informed consent', 'confidentiality' and 'trust'. Our search for 'rich' data can mean that we organize long stays in the 'field'. Ryen uses her data from research on Asian businesses in East Africa to illustrate and discuss the complexity of research ethics in ethnography. Working in the field involves emergent ethical dilemmas which are different from survey research and cannot be sorted out at the outset. This means that the underlying biomedical model of most guidelines with their 'audit culture' may unduly simplify the social world as understood by qualitative researchers. Instead, we must unpick difficult issues involved in the ethics and politics of matters like rapport, intrusion and harm. As she concludes: 'Qualitative research calls for moral responsibility in a field scattered with dilemmas not for quick pre-fixed answers'.

Following Ryen's reminder of the importance of the researcher–researched relationship, the three chapters in Part II on interviews and focus groups show us that both respondents and social scientists actively construct meaning in each other's talk. Jody Miller and Barry Glassner address the issue of finding 'reality' in interview accounts. I argue in *Interpreting Qualitative Data* that the desire of many researchers to treat interview data as more or less straightforward 'pictures' of an external reality can fail to understand how that 'reality' is being represented in words. Miller and Glassner set out a position which seeks to move beyond this argument about the 'inside' and the 'outside' of interview accounts. They draw upon their research on gender inequality in youth gangs and on violence against African American young women in urban neighbourhoods. Based upon this research, they argue that interview accounts may fruitfully be treated as situated elements in adolescents' social worlds, drawing upon and revising and reframing the cultural stories available in those worlds. For Miller and Glassner, the focus of interview research should be fixed upon what stories are told and how and where they are produced.

In their chapter, James Holstein and Jaber Gubrium show us how a focus on story and narrative structure demands that we recognize that both interview data and interview analysis are active occasions in which meanings are produced. This means that we ought to view research 'subjects' not as stable entities but as actively constructed through their answers. Indeed, in Holstein and Gubrium's telling phrase, both interviewee and interviewer are 'practitioners of everyday life' who 'animate' the interview. As they put it: '*all* interviews are active, despite attempts to regiment, standardize, and neutralize the interview process'. Thus the issue that should confront qualitative researchers is not whether interview accounts are 'distorted' but the interpretive practices present within each interview.

They then invite us to locate the interpretive practices which generate the 'hows' and the 'whats' of experience as aspects of reality that are constructed in collaboration with the interviewer to produce a 'narrative drama'.

Sue Wilkinson's chapter on focus groups carries forward Holstein and Gubrium's concern with how we construct the social world with our respondents. Using illuminating extracts from her own data on breast cancer patients, Wilkinson reveals the complicated interpretive activities between members of focus groups as they try to make sense of each other (and the researcher). This close attention to the details of data is contrasted with how most focus group (and interview) research is usually conducted. Wilkinson's concern with theoretically driven, detailed data analysis stands apart from the dominant tendency to treat focus group talk as a straightforward means of accessing some independent 'reality'. Above all, Wilkinson shows us that content analysis and a concentration on the mechanics of how to run a focus group are no substitute for theoretically informed and detailed data analysis of talk-in-action. Like all the contributors to this volume, Wilkinson underlines the fact that we must never overlook the active interpretive skills of our research subjects.

The three chapters on ethnography seek to rescue observational work from the pitfalls of mere 'description' and lazy coding and move towards exciting methodological and analytic directions for observational research. In Chapter 7, Giampietro Gobo and Lukas Marciniak show how observation is the basic tool of ethnographers. They provide a useful history of ethnographic studies brought up to date by contemporary participative and critical ethnographies. They demonstrate why, if we want to understand behaviour and interaction, it is not enough to ask questions. We must also observe the routines and practices of social actors. And we can do this reliably and consistently. Moreover, as they note, ethnography, like any other methodology, is not simply an instrument of data collection. It is born at a particular moment in the history of society and embodies certain of its cultural features. Gobo's concept of the 'observation society' focuses upon why ethnography has come into fashion.

Thomas Eberle and Christoph Maeder's chapter gives us more specific insights into how ethnographers go about studying organizations. As they argue, abstract organization theory is not a necessary starting point for research and there is a continuum between theory- and data-guided ethnographic studies. Their chapter contains some illuminating case studies which demonstrate the methodological strengths of observing routine practices within organizations. They conclude with a helpful account of practical considerations in doing organizational ethnography such as field access and participation, data collection and data analysis, informant and field relations, reporting back, ethical questions and finally writing up.

If ethnography is not merely a timeless technique but positioned in time and place, how can it be credible? As Marie Buscatto asks: 'how can we guarantee that researchers do not become travellers, journalists or autobiographical novelists while at the same time ensuring that they are not constrained to practise ill-adapted procedures and investigation methods following an inept positive method?'. She shows that a recognition of the observer's involvement in the field she studies is (or should be) a commonplace of all research. Her

chapter on reflexivity calls for a balance between 'involvement' and 'detachment'. She helpfully sets out three principles of ethnographic detachment using cogent examples from her research on female jazz singers and musicians and an insurance company.

Part IV on 'texts' shows how the analysis of texts and documents can fruitfully work within a diverse set of analytic traditions. Both chapters in Part IV contest the majority view of documentary data in sociology and qualitative research that documents are detached from social action As Katarina Jacobsson remarks: 'ethnographic methods can advance our knowledge of a setting through its documents as well as help the researcher to grasp a document in its setting'. Her chapter shows how observing what people do with documents is just as important as analysing document content. She uses several fascinating case studies to demonstrate how we can study the ways in which documents are produced and used in particular social and economic contexts.

Unlike the stultifying theoretical level of some introductions to this topic, Prior has written a delightful, accessible chapter which develops Jacobsson's arguments about what happens when people 'do things with documents'. Avoiding references to a knowing 'subject', Prior shows us how we can instead focus on the ways in which a text instructs us to see the world. Using examples as diverse as a statistical summary of prevalence rates of mental illness and airline pilots' pre-take-off check lists, he reveals a thought-provoking toolbox that we can use when working with textual material.

Part V is concerned with audio data. Jonathan Potter discusses 'discursive psychology', more commonly known as discourse analysis (DA), as a way of analysing naturally occurring talk. Potter shows the manner in which DA allows us to address how versions of reality are produced to seem objective and separate from the speaker. Using examples drawn from television interviews with Princess Diana and Salman Rushdie and talk from a relationship counselling session, he demonstrates how we can analyse the ways in which speakers disavow a 'stake' in their actions.

For Potter, DA focuses on rhetorical organization in the context of sequential organization. Conversation analysis (CA) is concerned squarely with sequential organization. John Heritage's chapter presents an accessible introduction to how conversation analytic methods can be used in the analysis of everyday interaction. He clearly presents the assumptions and basic principles of CA. From a methodological point of view, Heritage then helpfully sets out the nuts and bolts of doing CA. Using extracts of talk, he shows us how he goes about deciding whether a conversational practice is distinctive, how to locate it in a sequence and then how to determine its role or function. He concludes with a powerful reply to critics who maintain that CA cannot deal with the social context of talk.

In the twenty-first century, however, the internet is as much a place for interaction as face-to-face talk. As the chapters in Part VI reveal, the internet is now perhaps the prime site where words and pictures circulate. Annette Markham and Simona Stavrova's chapter develops this insight and, in so doing, offers readers an invaluable guide to interpreting such data. They point out that the internet not only collapses distance, it also can disrupt the way

in which time is relevant to interaction since it can accommodate both asynchronous and synchronous communication between individuals and groups. In this way, social and physical presence are not necessarily connected, and time is a malleable variable of interactions. Markham and Stavrova show the importance of distinguishing research studies which simply use the internet as a tool to gather data (e.g. online interviews) from studies of internet practices and social media networks as phenomena in their own right (e.g. the mechanics of online dating or chatrooms). Following this latter option, we learn, as in the other chapters on texts, how participants actively construct meaning.

Nalita James and Hugh Busher next provide a helpful account of the mechanics of online interviews. They unpick the differences between such interviews which can be textual or visual, asynchronous or synchronous, one-to-one or group. Particularly useful to beginners is their discussion of how to build research relationships to facilitate online interviewing and how researchers can address the particular ethical considerations that can arise when we interview online.

Of course, understanding the mechanics and ethics of gathering data is only half the battle. In some senses, it is much more important to know how to *analyse* your data. Joanne Meredith's chapter addresses this very issue, exploring how to use the specific analytic frames of conversation analysis and discursive psychology (DP) for the analysis of online data. Her chapter begins with a lively address of one data extract and later uses many examples from online forum and instant messaging data to demonstrate the power of these frames to illuminate how participants construct meaning in the context of the opportunities and limits of particular online technologies.

But CA and DP are not the only analytic frames available for analysing online data. The next chapter by Johann W. Unger, Ruth Wodak and Majid KhosraviNik outlines the approach of critical discourse studies (CDS) and suggests how it may be applied to social media data. They helpfully explain what makes digitally mediated data different and interesting for researchers who adopt a critical perspective to social phenomena. Students will also find useful their description of how eight methodological steps from one approach to CDS (the discourse-historical approach) can be applied to social media data. Their case study analysing protest movements (Arab Spring, Occupy) illuminates their discussion.

Unger, Wodak and KhosraviNik's case study nicely leads into Part VII on visual data. Michael Emmison begins by analysing the shift towards involving participants in the generation and analysis of visual data. This leads on to his argument that visual researchers have worked with inadequate theories. For instance, most tend to identify visual data with such artefacts as photographs and, to a lesser extent, cartoons and advertisements. Although such work can be interesting, it is, in a sense, two-dimensional. If we recognize that the visual is also spatial, a whole new set of three-dimensional objects emerge. By looking at how people use objects in the world around them (from streetmaps to the layout of a room or urban street to the design of a hospital), we can study the material embodiment of culture.

Emmison cites Christian Heath's use of video technology to capture interactional conduct as one way of looking at three-dimensional data in fine detail. Like Emmison, Heath differentiates the wide-ranging interest in the 'visual' in sociology and cognate disciplines, from research that uses video recordings to analyse conduct and interaction in everyday, naturalistic settings. Beginning with a clear account of CA's focus on sequential organization, Heath shows how CA can be used to study visual conduct and how the physical properties of human environments are made relevant within the course of social interaction. He argues that the most significant contribution of video-based research has been to our understanding of work and organization through what has become known as 'workplace studies'. Heath uses fascinating audio-visual data from an auction to analyse its unfolding interactional order. Heath also provides highly practical information for students about field relations when using video and how best to record and transcribe such data. He concludes by showing the relevance of these insights to studies of the workplace, including human–computer interaction.

The next section on qualitative data analysis deals with the more 'nuts and bolts' issues of doing qualitative research. Tim Rapley clearly and informally reveals what he calls the 'pragmatics' of qualitative data analysis. As Rapley shows, the hard work begins when we try to explore and explain 'what is "underlying" or "broader" (in our data) or to "distil" essence, meaning, norms, orders, patterns, rules, structures, etc. (the level of concepts and themes)'. Rapley goes on to offer invaluable advice about how to do good qualitative data analysis, emphasizing the importance of detailed readings, reviewing and refining your categories and using your provisional analysis to inform how you collect, transcribe and analyse data when you return to the field. As Rapley argues, good qualitative research is about 'living in the detail'. However, like any good research, we must not rush to offer generalizations but actively seek out contrary cases.

Like Rapley, Kathy Charmaz and Antony Bryant seek to remove the veil from what they call 'the almost magical emergence of theories and concepts from data'. They elucidate the elements of grounded theory (GT) and show what, in their view, has been right and wrong about criticisms of the GT approach. They then go on to demonstrate how grounded theory already contains underused strategies that increase both its methodological power and the credibility of its data analysis. They focus on how GT's key basic strategies engage researchers with their data and emerging analyses. They show how GT can be used to enhance methodological rigour, theoretical promise and the power of the subsequent analysis. Like Rapley, they helpfully explain the nitty-gritty of data analysis from doing line-by-line initial coding, writing memos and conducting theoretical sampling. Using illustrations from their own data analysis, they demonstrate what a 'constructivist' GT methodology can look like in practice, showing how we can achieve analytic and theoretical credibility.

In her chapter on narrative inquiry (NI), Catherine Riessman continues this hands-on, student-friendly approach to the pragmatics of data analysis. Her aim is to distinguish such work from GT and from other methods of analysing interview data. For Riessman, NI, like

oral history, is concerned with case-centred research. Hence the leap to broader theories or generalizations is slowed down or even avoided in favour of the interrogation of particular instances, sequences of action, the way participants negotiate language and narrative genres in conversations, and other unique aspects of a 'case'. For Riessman, NI involves resisting what she calls the 'seductive power' of stories. Instead, it asks: why was the story told *that* way? How do narrators position themselves in their stories? What other readings are possible, beyond what the narrator may have intended? Using a long interview, Riessman shows how we can answer these questions by examining the way a segment of data is organized and the local context, including the questioner/listener, setting and position of an utterance in the broader stream of the conversation. Her argument that the research interview is a collaborative conversation ties in nicely with Holstein and Gubrium's earlier chapter on interview data.

As every student is taught, elegant data analysis presupposes a well-defined research topic, based on a review of earlier studies. Mary Dixon-Woods asks how we can make our literature reviews more robust. She distinguishes *aggregative syntheses* which focus on summarizing data from *interpretive syntheses* which involve processes similar to primary qualitative research, in which the concern is with *generating* concepts that have maximum explanatory value. Dixon-Woods clearly evaluates the extent to which the conventional systematic review template is appropriate to the synthesis of qualitative research studies. As she argues, a key question concerns the extent to which conventional systematic review methodology, with its frequent focus on estimating the effectiveness of a particular intervention on average, can be consistent with the aspirations of those aiming to produce more interpretive forms of overview of bodies of research evidence.

From the point of view of the research student, there remains the problem that we can spend so much time on literature reviews that we have too little time to gather and analyse our data. As I suggest in *Doing Qualitative Research*, one quick solution to this problem is to work with secondary data. Libby Bishop helpfully discusses the ethics of using such data and distinguishes the different ways these can be used in research design and methodological development, through re-analysis and re-purposing, to learning and teaching. She shows that the chief reservation expressed about secondary analysis of qualitative data is that secondary analysts will not have the kind of detailed contextual knowledge about the circumstances of data collection possessed by the primary researcher. Bishop argues that this rests in part on an unexamined stereotype of the way analysis of quantitative data sets proceeds. Deriving insights from data does not depend solely on being close to the data, but on judiciously balancing close observation with analytical distance. Moreover, for some research questions, archived data may be analysed with methods and for purposes that do not require in-depth knowledge of context. She supports her argument with case studies of school leavers' essays, migration and parenting, and oral history interviews which show the degree to which general methodological debates are relevant to this form of research practice. Once one gets involved with a data set it is often possible to show the value of secondary analysis without falling into the pitfalls imagined by the critics. She

concludes that she used 'to have to search hard to find high quality examples of reuse; now there are so many I cannot keep up with all the new publications'.

Like Bishop and Dixon-Woods, Anssi Peräkylä is concerned with the credibility of qualitative research. He is particularly interested in how qualitative research can offer reliable and valid descriptions of its data. Following Heritage's chapter, Peräkylä illustrates his argument with CA research. As I argue in Chapter 3 of *A Very Short, Fairly Interesting, Reasonably Cheap Book about Qualitative Research*, paying attention to sequences of data, rather than apparently striking instances, is a hallmark of all good qualitative research rather than something confined to CA. Recognizing that CA is a specialist field, in this newly revised chapter, Peräkylä extends his argument to qualitative research as a whole. Validity questions are discussed in terms of the comparative method and conventional 'deviant case analysis' as well as specifically CA methods, such as validation through 'next turn'. He also demonstrates one way of generalizing from case studies and discusses the uses and limits of quantitative techniques in qualitative research.

Ultimately, good qualitative data analysis is expressed in how well we write. Amir Marvasti argues that novice researchers need to learn the basic skills or craft of writing. In qualitative research, there is no such thing as a format for 'the standard scientific paper'. Marvasti shows that different genres are available to us and describes the stylistic choices available and their advantages and limitations. He also comments upon the strategic choices authors have to consider as they try to publish their work and make it accessible to various audiences. He suggests that a 'perfect paper' is one that strikes a balance between craft skills, genre and intended audience. In this new version of his chapter, Marvasti helpfully outlines the possibilities of online publishing.

Not all of the contributors to this volume are in agreement about every issue. Nonetheless, I believe that my authors share enough in common to make this a coherent volume. Many, I suspect, would agree with most of the six points listed earlier in this chapter. With more certainty, I would claim that we share a fairly common sense of what constitutes 'good' qualitative research. For instance, even though we come from different intellectual traditions, I would be surprised if we were to have any fundamental disagreement about, say, the assessment of an article submitted to us for refereeing. This common sense of what we are 'looking for' derives, I believe, from our common commitment to qualitative research as a theoretically based and rigorous methodology, responsive to ethical considerations and to our various audiences.

I would like to express my gratitude to my contributors for tolerating my schoolmasterly messages about deadlines and for the brilliant work they did in offering suggestions on each other's draft chapters. I thank my Sage Editor, Mila Steele, for her helpful suggestions about this volume. As always, my thanks are also due to Gillian for putting up with me, to Sara Cordell for keeping my back in working order, and to my friends at the Nursery End, Lord's, and at the SCG for giving me northern and Antipodean summers to which I can look forward.

YOUR GUIDE TO *QUALITATIVE RESEARCH*

Textbooks work best when their authors aim at the needs of particular groups of students. This guide explains the audience that *Qualitative Research* is aimed at and distinguishes it from my other three textbooks.

I recognize that academic books are not usually read in the same way as novels. For instance, although you may want to resist the temptation to skip to the final chapter of a whodunnit, no such prohibitions are sensible when using a textbook. So, for example, if you are currently having troubles with your data analysis, in this book you may want to begin by reading Tim Rapley's chapter. Each chapter is more or less self-contained and so there should be no problems in zig-zagging through the book in this way.

Zig-zagging also makes sense because qualitative research rarely follows a smooth trajectory from hypothesis to findings. Consequently, most readers will want to move backwards and forwards through the book as the occasion arises. Alternatively, you may find it useful to skim read the book in advance and then work through certain chapters in greater detail to correspond with different stages of your research.

As already noted, all the chapters found here have helpful student-oriented features. However, in my view, certain chapters stand out as particularly relevant to a student audience. So, if you are a novice, you might want to begin by reading Ryen's chapter on research ethics, Gobo's chapter on ethnography, Holstein and Gubrium on interviews, Emmison on visual data, Markham and Stavrova on internet research, Rapley on data analysis and Marvasti on writing.

As an edited book, this is ideal for bright final year students, as well as people beginning masters and doctoral programmes. The most comprehensive qualitative research book available, it is the perfect all-in-one companion for any student embarking on a qualitative research course or project. It introduces students to the big picture of qualitative research, teaching both the 'why' and the 'how to' of getting started, selecting a method and conducting research and data analysis. It is written by world experts of the highest calibre, upfront about their analytic positions, but distilled into an accessible language and format for beginning researchers who will soon be tackling their own research study, whether at an undergraduate or postgraduate level. The particular added value of *Qualitative Research* is that it gives you an entrée into qualitative methods from leading experts in the field who address the needs of students who need to brush up their research skills prior to their own research projects.

By contrast, *Interpreting Qualitative Data* is aimed squarely at undergraduate students, teaching the basic nuts and bolts of different qualitative methods. It offers practical ways to analyse different kinds of qualitative data and shows how to make that analysis credible, ethical and relevant to the outside world.

Doing Qualitative Research is an essential step-by-step guide to carrying out a research study and writing it up effectively, aimed particularly at MA and PhD students. Its unique

appeal is that it is based upon multiple examples of actual student projects with helpful advice in each case. It is organized around the steps you will take to complete your research project, starting with research design and leading you through how to collect and analyse your data to writing it all up. This is the book that will guide you from start to finish on your own research project.

By contrast with my other three books, my *A Very Short, Fairly Interesting, Reasonably Cheap Book about Qualitative Research* is aimed at students with enquiring minds at every stage of their studies. Unlike the balanced arguments of a textbook, it is a polemic which, depending upon your position, may stimulate or enrage you.

References

Silverman, D. (2011) *A Very Short, Fairly Interesting, Reasonably Cheap Book about Qualitative Research* (2nd edn). London: Sage.

Silverman, D. (2013) *Doing Qualitative Research* (4th edn). London: Sage

Silverman, D. (2015) *Interpreting Qualitative Data: Methods for Analysing Talk, Text and Interaction* (5th edn). London: Sage.