

Infusing Qualitative Traditions in Counseling Research Designs

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Research traditions serve as a blueprint or guide for a variety of design decisions throughout qualitative inquiry. This article presents 6 qualitative research traditions: grounded theory, phenomenology, consensual qualitative research, ethnography, narratology, and participatory action research. For each tradition, the authors describe its purpose and key characteristics, outline commonly associated fieldwork activities, describe analytic approaches within the tradition, and then discuss strengths and challenges of the approach.

In clinical work, counselors approach clients with a set of core assumptions about the practice of counseling—or theoretical orientation—and apply this accordingly throughout the duration of counseling in consideration of various client, setting, and treatment factors. Similar to how counselors rely on a theoretical orientation to guide professional practice, counseling researchers use research traditions to navigate qualitative research design decisions. Moreover, Kline (2008) asserted that selecting a research tradition congruent with one's research orientation and study purpose, and infusing it in all phases of qualitative inquiry, is a criterion for trustworthiness (i.e., coherence). Given its importance in framing the design and maximizing rigor of qualitative inquiry, the purpose of this article is to provide an overview of major qualitative research traditions and illustrate how they are infused into various qualitative research design components.

First, it is important to briefly discuss the concept of research paradigm. While the terms research paradigm and research tradition are used often interchangeably in the literature, we conceptualize them as interdependent and essential components of the counseling researcher's orientation for qualitative inquiry. Hays and Singh (2011) noted that research paradigms are belief systems based on core philosophies of science (i.e., ontology, epistemology, axiology, rhetoric, and methodology), and research traditions are methodological approaches and design strategies that are influenced by paradigms. Collectively, they serve as a foundational guide or blueprint that highlights the counseling researcher's assumptions, values, and activities related to the scientific pursuit for a particular research topic.

Common research paradigms include positivism, post-positivism, social constructivism, critical theory, feminism, and queer theory. Scholars operating under each paradigm attribute differential value to the nature of reality or truth of a phenomenon (ontology), knowledge construction (epistemology), infusion of researcher values in design and attention to the research relationship (axiology), role of researcher and participant voice in research process and data presentation

(rhetoric), and considerations for scientific rigor (methodology). As attention to qualitative approaches increased across a variety of disciplines, the notion that scientific inquiry should attend to the context in which individuals live and experience phenomena became more apparent because findings from positivistic approaches were often not applicable to marginalized and underresearched groups (Patton, 2002; Ponterotto, 2005). Thus, qualitative research today tends to be predominated by four particular paradigms: social constructivism, critical theory, feminism, and queer theory. Because of space limitations, we recommend readers review Patton (2002), Ponterotto (2005), and Guba and Lincoln (2005) for excellent, detailed discussions of these paradigms.

Qualitative Research Traditions

In this section, we present six qualitative research traditions: grounded theory, phenomenology, consensual qualitative research (CQR), ethnography, narratology, and participatory action research (PAR). Although there are 15 or more research traditions used in counseling and education (see Creswell, 2007; Hays & Singh, 2011; Patton, 2002), counseling scholars have presented studies using these six qualitative traditions consistently or identified them as emerging in the profession. For each tradition, we describe its purpose and key characteristics, outline commonly associated fieldwork activities, describe analytic approaches within the tradition, and then discuss strengths and challenges of the approach. (Table 1 displays research design components of each research tradition.) We use a common research topic throughout the article—substance use among adolescents—to illustrate similarities and distinguishing features for the traditions.

Grounded Theory

Grounded theory is one of the most influential research traditions in education and the social sciences today (Patton, 2002). The purpose of grounded theory is to generate data that are based or grounded in participant experiences and

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TABLE 1

Qualitative Research Traditions and Design Considerations

Paradigmatic Assumptions	Research Goals	Methodology	Data Analysis	Essential Trustworthiness Strategies	Data Presentation
Grounded Theory					
Primarily post-positivistic (Corbin & Strauss, 2008), with increased attention to social constructivism (see Charmaz, 2006). Truth is contextual, approximated, and refined with additional examination, arguing a need for theory consensus for shared knowledge and greater applicability.	To generate and validate theory for a particular phenomenon. Research questions are constructed to identify processes and patterns to construct a model.	Uses a variety of purposive sampling methods and moves toward theoretical sampling as theory is defined and verified (i.e., saturation is achieved). Sample sizes may range from 20 to 60 individuals (Creswell, 2007). Relies primarily on interviewing and observation methods.	Immerse self in transcripts; identify large domains (open codes) to create a codebook; use constant comparison to refine codebook; identify relationships among codes (axial coding); identify causal conditions, intervening conditions, and consequences; use selective coding to further refine theory; look for central idea, variation, and saturation of the data; and construct a visual portrayal of the theory (see Hays & Singh, 2011).	Triangulation of data sources, prolonged engagement, persistent observation, thick description.	Present axial and selective codes. Present model that depicts causal and intervening conditions and consequences.
Phenomenology					
Primarily constructivist. Multiple realities exist and data thoroughly reflect participant perspectives and are contextually relevant.	To describe the meaning or essence of participant experience of a phenomenon. Research questions solicit direct and conscious participant experiences.	Uses a variety of sampling methods, with recommended sample sizes of 5–25 (Polkinghorne, 1989). Primarily interviews, although supplemented by observations, documents, and visual media.	Bracket assumptions, identify nonrepetitive and nonoverlapping statements in interview transcripts (horizontalization), and create textual and structural descriptions of the experience.	Member checking, triangulation of data sources, thick description.	Present a list or model of constructs that relate to textual and structural descriptions.
Consensual Qualitative Research					
Combination of postpositivist and constructivist. Researchers report in third person commonalities among participants, value the researcher–participant mutual influence on one another.	To develop consensus among researchers and participants regarding participant experience of a phenomenon and its general applicability. Research questions evaluate participant experience and broader theoretical processes and constructs.	Uses a variety of purposeful random sampling methods, with 8–15 individuals participating in one or two interviews (8–10 questions per interview).	Identify domains and core ideas and perform cross-analysis (general, typical, variant, and rare categories).	Member checking, triangulation of data sources, triangulation of researchers, use of auditor, stability checks.	Examine and report researcher bias and consensus process. Data may be presented with quantitative data. The report should at least outline general and typical categories and include quotes or core ideas to illustrate each domain. A chart or other visual model of the relationships among categories across domains is also useful, with at least 3 cases to establish a relationship.
Ethnography					
Primarily constructivist.	To identify social patterns and norms for a culture-sharing group. Research questions focus on individuals, processes, events, and outcomes of a particular site.	Uses a variety of purposive sampling methods, with homogeneous and maximum variation sampling particularly useful. Sample size range in accordance with size of culture-sharing group.	Describe the components of the group, identify cultural patterns and compare to those of other cultural groups, and interpret the culture-sharing group.	Prolonged engagement, persistent observation, thick description.	Provide a cultural narrative that includes participants' situated meanings.

(Continued)

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Qualitative Research Traditions and Design Considerations

Paradigmatic Assumptions	Research Goals	Methodology	Data Analysis	Essential Trustworthiness Strategies	Data Presentation
Narratology					
Constructivist (Gergen & Davis, 1985; Shotter & Gergen, 1989).	To further understanding of human experience through narrative conceptions of phenomena or identity.	Uses a variety of purposive sampling methods. Primarily interview data can be supplemented by observations, documents, and visual media.	Emphasis on securing rich collection of the narrative. Researchers organize data in light of the storied meaning, creating textural and structural depiction of the experiences exemplified by the narrative.	"Pragmatic validity" (Hoshmand, 2005: truth value is contingent on both narrator and audience perceiving utility, member checking, triangulation of data sources, thick description of narrative.	Research report can be story form or "framed thematically within a theory generating project" (Hoshmand, 2005, p. 184).
Participatory Action Research					
Primarily constructivist, critical theory, and feminist.	To empower participants and transform settings and apply findings to real-world problems. Research questions are solution-oriented for a specific problem within a specific context.	Although a variety of purposive sampling methods are suitable, comprehensive sampling is ideal.	Researchers critically reflect on their power and how power is used throughout the research process.	Member checking, prolonged engagement, persistent observation, and reflexivity.	Present directly applicable findings to key stakeholders and create change.

Note. Data sources = participants.

perspectives with the ultimate goal of theory development. Counseling researchers seek to describe and explain for a particular phenomenon the sequences, processes, conditions, and actions (i.e., a theoretical framework or model; Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Grounded theorists use primarily an inductive approach, constructing and synthesizing categories to move from simple to more complex understandings of a phenomenon; however, there are variations in how much previous literature guides design throughout the research process (see Charmaz, 2006; Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Glaser, 1978).

Counseling researchers using grounded theory engage in fieldwork activities that allow them to remain close to the data and intentional in exploring, describing, predicting, and explaining phenomena for local (for a particular context/setting) or grand (across multiple contexts/settings) theories. Researchers initiate data collection with purposive samples and generate hypotheses for a construct that are tested through additional rounds of data collection using participants who can provide rich accounts for particular theoretical constructs (i.e., theoretical sampling). By engaging in simultaneous and increasingly theory-driven data collection and analysis—even in initial fieldwork—counseling researchers work toward uncovering a core category or central idea that can both unite constructs and account for variation of a phenomenon (Corbin & Strauss, 2008).

Through interviews and observations, counseling researchers identify general domains provided mainly by participants (open codes) and develop an initial codebook that is revised

using a constant comparison method. Constant comparison is a cyclical process of collecting and analyzing data in search of convergent and divergent categories, using coding structures from previous rounds of analysis to inform future data analysis. As additional data are collected to refine the codebook, axial codes, or open codes that are collapsed into larger categories based on relationships among them, are identified. Next, selective codes are created to capture patterns and sequences among axial codes. As coding proceeds from open coding to selective coding, counseling researchers look for causal conditions (factors influencing a phenomenon), intervening conditions (ways participants respond to causal conditions), and consequences (results of intervening conditions for participants). Saturation of data, where there are no new data to build or refute a particular theory, typically occurs at the axial coding phase (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Hays & Singh, 2011).

An example of the use of grounded theory is the exploration of the recovery process for adolescents who abuse prescription medications. A counseling researcher would conduct interviews and observations of clients at a particular agency (or across counseling settings to develop a more transferable theory), soliciting information about their substance use; cognitive and affective states before, during, and after use; contextual factors that may relate to use; and counseling interventions in which they participated. Throughout data collection and analysis, a counseling researcher would develop and verify a theory to describe and explore a central idea or

phenomenon (substance use) and its variations for adolescents. Additionally, the researcher would assess for causal conditions (e.g., family dynamics, substance use history, peer substance use, mental health concerns), intervening conditions (e.g., participant responses to counseling, changes in family and peer relationships), and consequences (e.g., substance use).

In sum, grounded theory as an approach has a high degree of structure that emphasizes collecting large amounts of data, typically in the form of interviews and observations (Hays & Singh, 2011). It also focuses on the interplay of researcher and data that influences theory development and verification (Charmaz, 2006; Corbin & Strauss, 2008). A major challenge, however, is the tension among grounded theorists related to what constitutes true grounded theory. Contemporary theorists (Charmaz, 2006; Corbin & Strauss, 2008) assert that prior literature and researcher bias should be included in how a theory is developed and verified. Glaser (1978), however, argued that allowing researcher subjectivity and previous literature to influence theory development dilutes the groundedness of the approach. Other challenges with this approach include the time- and labor-intensive nature associated with collecting and analyzing large amounts of data as well as articulating the degree of transferability and the contexts to which theories can be applied (Hays & Singh, 2011).

Phenomenology

Whereas grounded theory intends to saturate data to generate theory, the sole purpose of phenomenology is to describe the depth and meaning of participants' lived experiences. Specifically, phenomenologists seek to understand the individual and collective internal experience for a phenomenon of interest and how participants intentionally and consciously think about their experience (Wertz, 2005), valuing subjective experience and the connection between self and world (Hays & Singh, 2011).

Counseling researchers identify a phenomenon of interest and then refrain from adding their own judgment about a phenomenon (i.e., *epoche*), approaching it with a fresh perspective and bracketing their assumptions. They seek to understand the phenomenon through the eyes of those who have direct, immediate experience with it. Through interviewing, researchers attempt first to understand the *Lebenswelt* or life-world of a participant and then search for collective perspectives across participants (Wertz, 2005). As they move back and forth through data, researchers seek the essence as well as variations of the experience or phenomenon being investigated (Moustakas, 1994).

Moustakas (1994) identified four key steps to phenomenological data analysis. First, researchers bracket their experiences, as described above. Second, for each interview transcript in a process known as horizontalization, they identify all nonrepetitive and nonoverlapping statements relevant to the experience under investigation (i.e., invariant meaning units). Next, researchers relate and cluster invariant meaning

units to describe the textures (meaning and depth) of the experience, in what is referred to as textural description. Finally, similar to axial coding in grounded theory (Hays & Singh, 2011), researchers seek multiple meanings and tensions in the textural description and create a structural description. Researchers may choose to develop a list or visual model to represent participants' experiences, creating a composite textural-structural description (Moustakas, 1994).

A phenomenological study that applies the adolescent substance use research example is investigating the phenomenon of abusing alcohol. A counseling researcher could bracket his or her own assumptions of or experiences with alcohol use and then interview adolescents who have direct experience with alcohol abuse. As interviews are conducted, a researcher would seek in-depth information with an overarching goal of identifying individual and shared experiences with alcohol abuse. Identified invariant meaning units might be physiological effects, various triggers, and affect throughout use. A researcher would then collapse and thicken describe units in a meaningful manner (textural description) and seek variations in participant experiences for the units (structural description). Finally, a researcher would present a detailed description of alcohol abuse across participants.

Phenomenology is a tradition congruent with counseling because assessing detailed information about client experiences is a natural part of professional practice. Additionally, it has strong philosophical underpinnings and is an ideal approach for understanding individuals' common experiences of a phenomenon. There are two challenges with phenomenology. First, researchers need to carefully select participants who have direct experience with the phenomenon rather than simply those who have perspectives on the experience. Second, they may have difficulty bracketing experiences and deciding how and to what extent these assumptions are introduced to the study (Creswell, 2007).

Consensual Qualitative Research

Consensual qualitative research (CQR) incorporates aspects of grounded theory, phenomenology, and other traditions. Hill and her colleagues (Hill et al., 2005; Hill, Thompson, & Williams, 1997) developed CQR to feature participant perspectives for an experience while including several methods to increase applicability. Consensus is the distinguishing feature of CQR; consensus involves consistency of data across participants and judges (researchers) and the use of a collaborative process and shared power within a research team as well as between the research team and participants. Hill et al. (2005) identified four key components of CQR: open-ended questions in semistructured interviews; judges to arrive at consensus throughout the data analysis process; at least one auditor to evaluate all data analysis stages; and the use of domains, core ideas, and cross-analyses as data analysis steps.

In CQR, counseling researchers develop either set or rotating research teams to conduct semistructured interviews with

participants deemed knowledgeable about a phenomenon or experience (Hill et al., 2005). Research team members independently segment interview data into categories or domains and identify core ideas (i.e., data descriptions or summaries within domains); members then reach consensus on the domains and core ideas. The third step involves cross-analysis, whereby team members independently, and then with consensus, identify frequencies of domains or categories across participants. Frequency labels include the following: general (all or all but one case), typical (more than half of the cases up to the cutoff for general), variant (at least two cases up to the cutoff of typical), and rare (used for sample sizes greater than 15, 2–3 cases). Finally, an auditor checks the raw data to determine the accuracy of domains, core ideas, and frequency counts and provides feedback at every data analysis stage (Hill et al., 2005).

For the example regarding adolescent substance use, a study using CQR might involve exploring the effectiveness of group counseling for adolescents with a variety of substance use concerns. A counseling research team may be interested in developing a treatment manual to use for future groups and perceive the adolescents in a particular group, then, as coresearchers or experts in effective treatment. Through semistructured interviews, members of a set research team of four solicit information about participants' perspectives on the group as well as reported successes and challenges related to substance use since attending group counseling. Domains might include relapse incidences, group cohesion, group counseling challenges, counseling techniques, and the counseling relationship; a core idea for counseling techniques (domain) would include a summary of techniques participants identify as helpful (i.e., fleshed-out domain). Cross-analysis might reveal a general category of homework review (i.e., core category of counseling techniques). An auditor would review data files and meeting notes after team members reached consensus at each step of data analysis. Finally, researchers would present general and typical categories related to group counseling for adolescents with substance use problems.

CQR offers an approach that values collaboration and data consistency because counseling researchers identify participant experience to inform theory and allow for greater applicability. An advantage of CQR is that it provides the researcher a thorough description of phenomenon and allows for theory development (so it is ideal when a study calls for investigating theory and furthering understanding of phenomenon). Researchers emphasize shared power throughout the research process to help assist with researcher bias and build stronger research relationships. For those who do not prefer frequency analysis of qualitative data, CQR may create some epistemological tensions during data analysis (Hays & Singh, 2011).

Ethnography

Ethnography is cited as qualitative inquiry's earliest tradition. It involves examining social, behavioral, and linguistic norms

and patterns of a culture-sharing group (Creswell, 2007) or cultural expressions of process and experience (Hays & Singh, 2011). With its roots in anthropology, early ethnographic research offered firsthand accounts of a culture-sharing group, obtained through prolonged engagement and presented in monographs. As other disciplines integrated the tradition, ethnographies transitioned to examine "slice of life" daily activities and social relations within urban areas as well as group socialization processes (Hays & Singh, 2011).

The major activities in ethnography involve intensive fieldwork for a particular case (i.e., whole culture-sharing group), and these groups are quite diverse and can range from a small group of school counselors or clients to a whole geographic region. After identifying the cultural group and gaining entry through gatekeepers and stakeholders, researchers become immersed in the group. Counseling researchers conducting ethnographic research engage in fieldwork that includes participant observation and prolonged engagement to gather information about the cultural identities and shared patterns among participants (Creswell, 2007; Patton, 2002).

As the researchers immerse themselves in the group, they identify broad categories and patterns that define the case, collapsing data throughout data collection to "tell a story" of the group. Wolcott (1994) identified three key aspects of ethnographic analysis: (a) description, or the use of a chronological or other systematic "order" to describe a cultural group by describing the processes, events, activities, and individuals within the case; (b) analysis, or the written and visual sorting process to identify cultural patterns within the case as well as in comparison to others; and (c) interpretation of a culture-sharing group. During these steps, counseling researchers examine situated meanings, or ways individuals make meaning of events within their group, as well as compare data from various chronological stages of data collection and various settings for the group (Creswell, 2007).

A study using the ethnographic tradition might be examining adolescent substance use for a particular neighborhood. Counseling researchers may build relationships over time with key stakeholders in the neighborhood (e.g., adolescents), and through sampling methods such as opportunistic and snowball sampling (see Patton, 2002), they may observe and interview individuals for shared patterns and experiences. The final report would present a description of the behaviors, attitudes, contextual factors, and situated meanings of adolescents who use substances within a particular neighborhood.

In addition to ethnography's extensive focus on culture, social patterns, and collaborative relationships with participants, it may also be a good approach to conceptualize, build hypotheses, and test outcome data for groups typically marginalized in society (Hays & Singh, 2011). To complete a rigorous ethnography, however, counseling researchers should use an anthropological lens to view data and have an understanding of systems and be mindful of the extensive nature of data collection and its impact on time and other resources.

Additionally, given the extensive nature of data collection, there is a possibility that counseling researchers could “go native” (become overly enmeshed in the system—perhaps a special concern for counselors trained to maintain appropriate boundaries with the “other”). Thus, counseling researchers are to be continually aware of their impact on the system they are studying (Creswell, 2007).

Narratology

The goal of qualitative research using a narratological tradition is to understand the human experience through interpreting narrative forms of qualitative research data. Other qualitative research traditions may use narrative data but not approach the research from a narrative perspective. In narratology, the meaning comes from the story: Form as the structure of the narrative is central to the meaning. Hoshmand (2005) posited that narratology is a mode of qualitative inquiry informed by narrative theory as opposed to other qualitative methodologies that may explore narrative data but not from a narrative perspective. Thus, narratology is both an endeavor to extrapolate meaning from a “story” (as with personal or collective narratives; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000) and an attempt to understand and present qualitative data on human experience through presentation as a cohesive, explanatory narrative (Polkinghorne, 2005).

Several additional considerations characterize narratology, including the view of time, action, and transactional views of narrative. A narratological mode of qualitative inquiry uses temporal order and/or expresses causal connections in its structural form. Social, political, historical, and cultural contexts of narratives are important because they relate to motives and plots in expressing overall meaning of the data (Hoshmand, 2005). Furthermore, narrative analysis provides a method for examining meaning from within the context of the story as well as in the “how” of the story and the “to whom.” Cortazzi (1993) wrote, “Since narration is all about performance—the staging of a presentation of self—what matters is not whether it has been told before but whether it has been heard before” (p. 40). One final characteristic of narratology as an approach in counseling research is that it mirrors a major element of counseling: the relaying of a client’s experience in the form of story to convey meaning.

In addition to using a variety of sampling methods, narratologists use multiple sources of qualitative data. These include observations, document/visual data, participant interviews (Polkinghorne, 2005), and letters and family stories, as well as additional sources of “field text” (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). In narratology, qualitative data are analyzed in terms of how they contribute to the meaning and exposition of the narrative.

Riessman (1993) described narrative analysis as the process of organizing transcribed texts into three elements: orientation, complicating action, and resolution/coda. *Orientation* is dialogue that discusses or establishes the context of the narrative (e.g., the time or age in the person’s life). *Complicating action* is the central tension or plot of the story. The *resolution/*

coda is the conclusion of the story. Through attention to form, structure, and language, a researcher can sort discourse in a way that illustrates the story. Word choice and nonverbal communication, including pauses, volume, and pacing, not only help to convey the details of the experience but are points of data used to help determine where an element of dialogue belongs in reference to the story (Riessman, 1993).

Also, Clandinin and Connelly (2000) described four directions for focus in narrative inquiry: inward, outward, backward, and forward. *Inward* refers to the intrapersonal experience of the storyteller, the feelings, moral dispositions, motivation, aesthetic reactions, and so on. *Outward* describes the environment and context of the narrative. *Backward* and *forward* refer to the time orientation of the narrative (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Focusing on these directions in analyzing data can help create a multidimensional net to capture the story.

An example of a study using narratology might be examining an adolescent participant’s experience of recovery from drug addiction. Data sources could include a semistructured interview as well as the participant’s journal, blogs, artwork, and any other personal expressions related to the person’s experience. Interviews with significant individuals in the participant’s life might also illustrate a complete contextual understanding of the narrative. In reviewing the data and embedded narrative, the counseling researcher would attend to the relationship between context and story structure. In data analysis, the counseling researcher would examine intrapersonal and contextual information, tension within the story, and the narrative’s conclusion.

Just as the counseling profession comes to know clients through their stories, so can most areas of counseling research be informed through narrative inquiry. Narratology offers similar strengths to other aforementioned qualitative research approaches. One additional challenge is regarding the denouement of a narrative. Unlike grounded theory, in which saturation can signal an end to data collection, researchers must be especially careful in extrapolating the plot and end of a story. The attention to form poses an important consideration for qualitative researchers (Lincoln, 1997), and researchers using narrative approaches are challenged to accurately reflect the story form of their investigation.

Participatory Action Research

The final research tradition we present is participatory action research (PAR). The general goals of PAR are emancipation and transformation; these goals and respective PAR activities yield readily applied findings to real-world problems. Similar to CQR, counseling researchers critically reflect in PAR on how power plays a role in the research process; however, it extends its focus to how power in research process and outcome can be a change agent. Researchers use PAR to generate culturally relevant models or theories that guide the development of specific interventions and practices (Nastasi, Moore, & Varjas, 2004). Nastasi et al. identified six elements

of PAR: reflecting on existing theory, research, and practice; learning the culture; forming partnerships; identifying goals and problems; engaging in formative research; and developing a culturally specific theory or model. Throughout the research process, researchers collaborate with participants directly affected by the research.

Before initiating a PAR study, counseling researchers are required to engage in critical reflection, in which they examine how power could be influential for systemic and social change for specific research processes and outcomes. Data collection methods such as semistructured interviews, artifacts and archival data, focus group interviews, and participant observation are used. Counseling researchers select methods that are practically relevant and emphasize collaboration (Hays & Singh, 2011).

Data analysis within the PAR tradition focuses on action and change, remains relevant to the stakeholders within a setting, and emphasizes outcome and process. Self-reflection and collaboration with participants are integral components of data analysis. Data analysis typically involves dialogue and reflection sessions, in which participants can discuss experiences they are having in the research process and speak with one another and the researchers about the actions they plan to take (McTaggart, 1997).

A PAR study example might be investigating the experiences of substance-abusing homeless adolescents residing in shelters. A counseling researcher would reflect on personal attitudes and experiences with homelessness and substance abuse (before and during the study) because the researcher would also review important literature and professional practices associated with interventions and advocacy for the research topic under investigation. Through ongoing interviews and observations with participants, a counseling researcher or research team would collaborate with adolescents and engage in shared decision making throughout data collection, analysis, and how findings are shared to create change. A potential outcome could be presenting findings to counselors, administrators, and policy makers to improve counseling and other services for homeless adolescents.

PAR is a useful qualitative research methodology for counseling, as counselors are paying greater attention to social justice issues and promoting social change in their communities and in their clients' lives. The emphasis on shared power and decision making throughout the PAR research process may allow for stronger research partnerships and ultimately more trustworthy data. A key challenge of PAR is that counseling researchers may encounter significant resistance to change, or conflicting views of what change is needed, from gatekeepers, key informants, and stakeholders in a setting. Furthermore, counseling researchers need to ensure that individuals involved in the research process adequately represent persons who are affected by its findings.

Conclusion

Research traditions in qualitative inquiry are theoretical frameworks or research orientations that counseling researchers

weave into all phases of the research process. We presented six prominent traditions in counseling research and highlighted their characteristics as well as their data collection, analysis, and other aspects of research processes, outcomes, and reporting procedures. Additionally, we highlighted each tradition's strengths and challenges. Our hope is that this parsimonious overview of these six traditions will help inform readers of this journal as research from these perspectives becomes more common within the field of counseling.

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