30 Essential Skills for the Qualitative Researcher (2nd ed.) by John Creswell and Johanna Creswell Báez

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Reviewed by: Cheryl N. Poth, University of Alberta, Canada and Michelle Searle, Queen's University, Canada

Introducing 30 Essential Skills for Qualitative Researchers (2nd ed.)

If you are wondering where you can read about the importance and scope of skills required for qualitative research, we highly recommend this second edition (first edition published 2016). John Creswell is well known as a prolific contributor of more than 30 user-friendly research methods books. This text is like a detailed map offering practical how-to advice that facilitates the progressive development of the thinking and skills required for qualitative research. With a new coauthor, Johanna Creswell Báez, who brings a social work perspective, this second edition delivers a credible guide for embarking on or continuing a learning journey in qualitative research. This text stands out for its conversational tone and even the most experienced researchers will discover new insights they can quickly adopt and will want to share with others.

Describing the Research Skills in This Book

Each of the 30 skills are succinctly described in separate chapters organized into seven parts that together offer comprehensive guidance relating what it means to engage in systematic qualitative inquiry. Each chapter describes the skill’s importance, background literature, practical applications, summary, and an activity alongside a list of further resources.

Part I: Understanding the Landscape of Qualitative Research

At the heart of chapters 1 to 5 are the skills underpinning what it means to think and engage as a qualitative researcher. Authors offer specific strategies for applying creativity in devising projects, titles, and abstracts. Uniquely, one chapter recognizes the emotional undertaking experienced by qualitative researchers and another offers helpful tips for working with committees and advisors.

Part II: Considering Preliminary Elements

The four chapters consider the preliminary elements in conceptualizing qualitative research. Authors discuss using philosophy and theory, anticipating ethical issues, organizing the literature, and viewing the structure of a thesis or dissertation. We find literature mapping is a noteworthy strategy for organizing literature on a topic (see p. 54) and have already incorporated this into our supervising and instructing practices.
**Part III: Introducing a Qualitative Study**

If this text is a map, chapters 10 to 12 provide essential routes for creating titles, abstracts, introductions, and research questions. We applaud focusing an entire chapter on titles as well as the emphasis on an engaging opening sentence for a study and the five key elements to writing a good introduction. The extensive use of illustrative examples throughout the chapters provide helpful guidance and the sample scripts for titles (see p. 81) and purpose statements (see p. 98) provide essential improvement guidance.

**Part IV: Collecting Qualitative Data**

Chapters 13 to 17 focus on data collecting skills including the overall process, observations, and interviews. With their prevalence in qualitative research, it is not surprising that these were chosen as essential skills. The final two topics, collecting data with marginalized populations and being culturally aware in global qualitative research, are particularly timely and worthy of even more detail.

**Part V: Analyzing and Validating Data**

Chapters 18 to 23 detail essential features for analyzing and validating data. The authors introduce the analytic processes and potential for using software in a manner that addresses assumptions without being prescriptive. In chapter 22, the authors do not shy away from the use of validity in a way that might surprise some quantitative and mixed methods researchers. We caution, though, that positioning intercoder agreement at the end may seem out of place.

**Part VI: Writing and Publishing Qualitative Research**

The emphasis in chapters 24 to 29 describes writing in a scholarly way, a qualitative way, writing with reflexivity, and offering ways to write for various audiences. There are also pertinent considerations for writing a strong conclusion and ultimately publishing a qualitative journal article. We appreciate the description of an article’s conclusion as a “jumping off” point for further research and the important task of researchers explaining their study’s limitations.

**Part VII: Evaluating a Study and Using Qualitative Designs**

The text wraps up with essential skills for selecting quality criteria (chapter 29) and a qualitative design (chapter 30). These provide a frame for thinking holistically about the skills, knowledge, and practices to researchers need to consider as they engage in a qualitative research process. While we would like the ideas to have been included earlier in the book, they nonetheless offer important considerations.

**Value for Mixed Methods Learners, Instructors, and Researchers**

The second edition of *30 essential skills for qualitative research* is an indispensable resource for novice and experienced researchers alike. Mixed methods researchers will benefit from this nuanced examination of essential skills as a way to recognize how thinking across diverse methodologies contributes to ethical and credible research. With so many excellent qualities, we are reluctant to offer much critique and simply offer three suggestions. First, given the usefulness of familiarity with quality criteria and designs for qualitative researchers, moving the two
chapters from Part VII to Part II might make intuitive sense. Second, categorizing the data collecting chapters (Part IV) by observation and interactions with participants might be useful to expand beyond observations and interviews to be more inclusive of contemporary data collection sources such as through social media, arts-based methods, and visual methodologies. Finally, an overarching discussion within each chapter or part might be a useful addition to help researchers map out their next steps to help develop specific skills.

This text is fundamental reading for mixed methods researchers to hone their qualitative skills. These skills are important because by enhancing the outcomes and descriptions of rigor in qualitative research, we also enhance the credibility of mixed methods research (Fábregues et al., 2021; Levitt et al., 2018). As Fetters et al. (2021) recently advocated, we have a responsibility as a field to a better, more equitable world and we believe qualitative research has an important part to play to represent experiences and perspectives (among many other contributions) within mixed methods research. We recommend this book to our students as an accessible introduction to qualitative research. It is unique in its encompassing orientation which embraces of all modes, types, and approaches to qualitative inquiry which is essential for realizing future mixed methods research innovations.

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ORCID iD
Cheryl N. Poth https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7217-7599

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