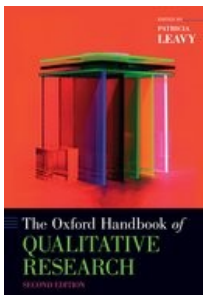

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CHAPTER

32 Writing Up Qualitative Research

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Abstract

This chapter provides guidelines for writing journal articles based on qualitative approaches. The guidelines are part of the tradition of the Chicago school of sociology and the author's experience as a writer and reviewer. The guidelines include understanding experiences in context, immersion, interpretations grounded in accounts of informants' lived experiences, and research as action oriented. The chapter also covers writing articles that report findings based on ethnographies, autoethnographies, performances, poetry, and photography and other graphic media.

Keywords: writing, qualitative research, qualitative methods, ethnography, journal articles

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HOW researchers write up results for journal publications depends on the purposes of the research and the methodologies they use. Some topics are standard, such as statements about methods and methodologies, but how to represent other topics, like related research and theory, reflexivity, and informants' accounts, may vary. For example, articles based on ethnographic research may be structured differently from writing up research whose purpose is theory development. Journal editors and reviewers often are familiar with variations in style of write-ups, but when they are not, they may ask for modifications that violate the methodological principles of the research. A common reviewer request is for percentages, which have little meaning in almost all forms of qualitative research because the purpose of the research is to identify patterns of meanings and not distributions of variables. For example, Irvine's (2013) ethnography of the meanings of pets to homeless people shows a variety of meanings without giving the number of participants from which she drew.

Authors sometimes move easily through the review process, but most often they do not, not only because reviewers might not "get it," but also because authors have left out, underemphasized, or been less than clear about aspects of their research that reviewers and editors believe are important. Working with editors and reviewers frequently results in improved articles.

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The purpose of this chapter is to provide guidelines for writing journal articles based on qualitative approaches. My intended audience is composed of researchers, reviewers for journals, and journal editors. Reviewers for funding agencies may also find this chapter useful. I use the terms *journal article* and *research report* as synonyms, even though some journal articles are not reports of research. I have derived the guidelines from ideas associated with the Chicago school of sociology and my experience as an author and reviewer. Although the Chicago school was, as Becker (1999) wrote, "open to various ways of doing sociology" (p. 10), the ideas in this chapter are part of the tradition, but they are not representative of the entire tradition. Furthermore, the ideas are not fixed but are open ended because they evolve over time. I have followed the principles of the Chicago school of sociology throughout my career, augmented by updates to these ideas, experiments with other traditions, and the sense I make of my own experiences as researcher, author, and reviewer.

p. 986 The ideas on which I draw include understanding experiences in context, immersion, interpretations grounded in accounts of informants' lived experiences, and research as action oriented (Bulmer, 1984; Faris, 1967; Gilgun, 1999c, 2005a, 2012a, 2013b). To follow these principles, researchers do in-depth studies that take into account the multiple contextual factors that influence meanings and interpretations, seek multiple points of view, and often use multiple methods such as interviews, observations, and document analysis. Researchers do this style of research not only because what they learn is interesting, but also because they want to do useful research, that is, research that leads to social actions and even transformations in policies, programs, and interventions. Authors and reviewers pay attention to these principles. Authors convey them in their write-ups, and reviewers look for them as they develop their appraisals.

Excellent writing up of qualitative research matches these principles. In other words, write-ups convey lived experience within multiple contexts, multiple points of view, and analyses that deepen understandings. In addition, if the research is applied, then authors write about how findings may contribute to quality of life. Qualitative researchers from other traditions may follow similar or different guidelines in their write-ups, and I sometimes note other styles of write-ups. Often these variations are related to terminology and not procedures. The reach of the Chicago school of sociology is wide and deep.

Following these guidelines does not guarantee an easy review process, but this article will be helpful to researchers as they plan and craft their articles and as they respond to reviewers' and editors' comments. After more than 35 years of publishing research based on qualitative approaches, almost as many years as a reviewer, and the editing of three collections of qualitative research reports (Gilgun, Daly, & Handel, 1992; Gilgun & Sands, 2012; Gilgun & Sussman, 1996), I am positioned to offer helpful guidelines, not only to authors but also to reviewers and journal editors.

I begin this chapter with a discussion of general principles and then cover the content of typical sections of research reports. Some of the general material fits into various sections of reports, such as methods and findings. In those cases, I do not repeat material already covered and assume that my writing is clear enough that readers know how the general material fits into particular sections of articles.

Although most of this chapter addresses the writing of conventional research reports, I also cover writing articles that report findings through ethnographies, autoethnographies, performances, poetry, and photography and other graphic media. Ethnographies are based on researchers' immersion in the field, where they do extensive observations, interviews, and often document analysis (see Block, 2012). Geertz's (1973) notion of *thick description* is associated with ethnographies. Thick description is characterized by research reports that show the matrix of meanings that researchers identify and attempt to represent in their reports. Autoethnographies are in-depth reflective accounts of individual lives that the narrators themselves write (Ellis, 2009). Ethnographies and autoethnographies involve reflections on meanings, contexts, and other wider influences on individual lives. They are studies of intersections of individual lives

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and wider cultural themes and practices. Reports of these types of research can look different from conventional research reports in that they appear less formal; the usual sections of methods, literature review, findings, and analysis may have different names; and the sections may be in places that fit the logical flow of the research and not the typical structure of introductory material, methods, results, and discussion. Despite these superficial differences, researchers who write these kinds of articles seek to
p. 987 deepen understandings and hope to move audiences to action through conveying ↳ lived experience in context and through multiple points of view. They also typically seek transformations of persons and societies. Links between these forms of research and Chicago school traditions are self-evident.

Some General Principles

Research reports that have these characteristics depend on the quality of the data on which the reports are based, the quality of the analysis, and the skills of researchers in conveying the analysis concisely and with "grab" (Glaser, 1978), which means writing that is vivid and memorable (Gilgun, 2005b). Grab brings findings to life. With grab, human experiences jump off the page. Priority is given to the voices of research participants, whom I call informants, with citations and the wisdom of other researchers providing important contextual information. The voices and analyses of researchers do not dominate (Gilgun, 2005c), except in some articles whose purpose is theory development or the presentation of a theory. Researcher analyses often are important, especially in putting forth social action recommendations that stem from the experiences of informants.

A well-done report shows consistency between research traditions and the writing up of research. For example, reflexivity statements, writing with grab, and copious excerpts from field notes, interviews, and documents of various sorts are consistent with phenomenological approaches whose emphasis is on lived experience and interpretations that informants make of their experiences. Researchers new to qualitative research, however, often mix their traditions without realizing it, which works when the traditions are compatible. When the traditions are not compatible, the write-ups can be confusing and even contradictory (Gilgun, 2005d). Some authors may write in distanced, third-person styles while attempting to convey informants' lived experiences. These scholars may, therefore, have difficulty getting their articles accepted. Hopefully, this chapter will facilitate the writing of research reports that show consistency across their many parts and save scholars from rejections of work over which they have taken much care.

Details on These General Principles

In this section, I provide more detail on writing up qualitative research. I begin with a discussion of the need for high-quality data, high-quality analysis, and grab. I then move on to the details of the report, such as the place of prior research and theory, contents of methods sections, organization of findings, and the balance between descriptive material and authors' interpretations. Dilemmas abound. Writing up qualitative research is not for the faint of heart.

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High-Quality Data

Since qualitative researchers seek to understand the subjective experiences of research informants in various contexts, high-quality data result in large part from the degree that researchers practice immersion and the degree that both researchers and informants ↳ develop rapport and engage with each other. Through active engagement, informants share their experiences with the kind of detail that brings their experiences to life. How to develop rapport is beyond the scope of this article, but openness and acceptance of whatever informants say are fundamental to engagement. Interviewers do not have to agree with the values that informants' accounts convey, as when I interview murderers and rapists (Gilgun, 2008), but we do maintain a neutrality that allows the dialogue to continue (Gilgun & Anderson, 2013). The content of interviews is not about us and our preferences, but about understanding informants.

Prolonged engagement can result in quality data. In interview research, prolonged engagement allows for informants' multiple perspectives to emerge, including inconsistencies, contradictions, ambiguities, and ambivalences. In addition, prolonged engagement facilitates the kind of trust needed for informants to share personal, sensitive information in detail, which are the kinds of data that qualitative researchers seek. Prolonged engagement also gives researchers time to reflect on what they are learning and experiencing through the interviews. This provides opportunities to develop new understandings and test new understandings through subsequent research. Their understandings thus deepen and broaden. Informants, too, can reflect, reconsider, and deepen the accounts they share.

Prolonged engagement means in-depth interviews, typically multiple interviews of more than an hour each. As mentioned earlier, time between interviews allows researchers and informants to reflect on the previous interview and prepare for the next. Researchers can do background reading, discuss emerging ideas with others, and formulate pertinent new questions. Informants may retrieve long-forgotten memories and interpretations through interviews. If they have only one interview, they have no opportunity to share with researchers the material that arises after the single interview is concluded.

There are exceptions to multiple interviews as necessary for immersion and high-quality data. When researchers have expertise in interviewing and when the topic is focused, one interview of between 90 minutes and 2 hours could provide some depth. Even under these conditions, however, more than one interview is ideal. I did a study that involved one 90-minute interview with perpetrators of child sexual abuse to understand the circumstances under which their abusive behaviors became known to law enforcement. Thus, the interview was focused. The interviewees were volunteers who had talked about the topic many times in the course of their involvement in sex abuse treatment programs. They shared their stories with depth and breadth. I, too, was well-prepared. By then, I had had about 25 years of experience interviewing people about personal, sensitive topics. The informants provided accounts not only because the topic was focused, but also because they were willing to share and I was willing to listen and to ask questions about their sexually abusive behaviors. With one interview, however, I knew relatively little about their social histories and general worldviews. Thus, I did not have the specifics necessary to place their accounts in context. The material they provided remained valuable and resulted in one publication (Sharma & Gilgun, 2008) and others in planning stages. I prefer two or more interviews because of the importance of contextual data.

In observational studies, prolonged engagement means that researchers do multiple observations over time to obtain the nuances and details that compose human actions. Observational studies often have interview components and may have document analysis as well. In document analysis, prolonged engagement means researchers base their analyses on an ample storehouse of documents and do not just flit in and out of the documents. ↳ The quality of document analysis depends on whether the analysis shows multiple perspectives, patterns, and variations within patterns. Ethnographies have these characteristics. Block's

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(2012) ethnographic research on AIDS orphans in Lesotho, Africa, is an example of a well-done ethnography.

Sample Size

In principle, the size of the sample and the depth of the interview affect whether researchers can claim immersion. The more depth and breadth each case in a study has, the smaller the sample size can be. For example, researchers can engage in immersion through a single in-depth case study when they do multiple interviews and if multiple facets of the case are examined. Case studies are investigations of single units. The case can be composed of an individual, a couple, a family, a group, a nation, or a region. Single case studies are useful in the illustration, development, and testing of theories, as well as in in-depth descriptions.

The more focused the questions, the larger the sample will be. A study on long-term marriage would require a minimum of two or three interviews because the topic is complicated. The sample would include at least 10 participants and up to 20 or 30, depending on the number of interviews, to account for some of the many patterns that are likely to emerge in a study of a topic this complex. In the one-interview study I did of how sexual abuse came to the notice of law enforcement, one interview was adequate because of the tight focus of the question. Yet, I used a sample size of 32 to maximize the possibility of identifying a variety of patterns, which the study accomplished. As mentioned, the one interview, however, did not allow me to contextualize the stories the informants told. Fortunately, I have another large sample that involved multiple, in-depth interviews in which informants discussed multiple contexts over time. This other study was helpful to me in understanding the accounts from the single-interview study.

Recruitment can be difficult. When it is, researchers may not be able to obtain an adequate sample. For example, a sample of 7 participants engaging in a single 60- to 90-minute interview may not provide enough data on which to base a credible analysis. In a similar vein, articles based on a single or even a few focus groups may not provide enough depth to be informative. Some depth is possible if, in a single-interview study of fewer than 15 or 20 interviewees, researchers meet with informants a second time to go over what researchers understand about informants' accounts. This sometimes is called *member checking*, and it provides additional data on which to base the analysis. In summary, the more depth and breadth to a study, the smaller the sample size can be—even as small as 1 or 2—depending on the questions and the complexity of the cases.

Quality of the Analysis

A quality analysis begins with initial planning of the research and continues until the article is accepted for publication. An excellent research report has *transparency*, meaning the write-up is clear in what researchers did, how they did it, and why. I often tell students they can do almost anything reasonable and ethical, as long as they make a clear account in the write-up.

p. 990 During planning, some researchers identify those concepts that they can use as sensitizing concepts once in the field. Transparency about the sources of sensitizing concepts characterizes well-done reports. The sources are literature reviews and reflexivity statements. Most researchers, however, have only a limited awareness of the importance of being clear about the sources of sensitizing concepts and other notions that become part of research coding schemes. Sensitizing concepts are notions that researchers identify before beginning their research and that help researchers notice and name social processes that they might not have noticed otherwise (Blumer, 1986). Other researchers wait until data analysis to begin to identify concepts that they may use as codes and that may also become core concepts that organize findings. Either approach is acceptable and depends on purpose and methodologies.

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During data collection, researchers reflect on what they are learning, typically talk to other researchers about their emerging understandings, and read relevant research and theory to enlarge and deepen their understandings. Researchers also keep field notes, which are a form of reflection. Based on their various reflections, researchers can reformulate interview and research questions and formulate new ones, do within—and across—case comparisons while in the field, and develop new insights into the meanings of the material.

Also, while in the field, researchers identify promising patterns of meanings and identify tentative core concepts, sometimes called *categories*, which are ideas that organize the copious material that they amass. Once researchers identify tentative core concepts, they seek to test whether they hold up, and, when they do, they further develop the patterns and concepts. Sometimes researchers think they have struck gold when they identify a possible core concept or pattern, only to find that the data—or metaphorical vein of gold—peter out (Phyllis Stern, personal communication, November 2002). They then go on to identify and follow up on other concepts and patterns that show promise of becoming viable.

Core concepts become viable when researchers are able to dimensionalize them (Schatzman, 1991) through selective coding (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). This means that researchers have found data that show the multiple facets of concepts, such as patterns and exceptions to any general patterns. Authors may use other terms to describe what they did, such as thematic analysis. What is important is to describe the processes and produces; what researchers call them is of less importance.

Core concepts may begin as sensitizing concepts. Researchers sometimes identify, name, and code core concepts through notions that are part of their general stores of knowledge but were not part of the literature review or reflexivity statement. Glaser (1978) called the practice *theoretical sensitivity*. The names researchers choose may be words or phrases informants have used. However derived, core concepts are central to the organization of findings (Gilgun, 2012a).

At some point, data collection stops, but analysis does not. Researchers carry analysis that occurred in the field into the next phases of the research. Immersion at this point means that researchers read and code transcripts of interviews, observations, and any documentary material they find useful. They carry forward the core concepts they identified in the field. An example of a core concept is *resilience*, which in my own research organized a great deal of interview material. The concept of resilience has been an organizing idea in several of the articles I have written and plan to write (Gilgun, 1996a, 1996b, 2002a, 2002b, 2004a, 2004b, ↳ 2005a, 2006, 2008, 2010; Gilgun & Abrams, 2005; Gilgun, Keskinen, Marti, & Rice, 1999; Gilgun, Klein, & Pranis, 2000).

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Corbin and Strauss (2008) stated that selective coding helps researchers to decide if a concept can become a core concept, meaning it organizes a great deal of data that have multiple dimensions. An example of dimensionalization is a study of social workers in Australia whose clients were aboriginal people. The researchers identified several core concepts, among them critical self-awareness (Bennet, Zubrzycki, & Bacon, 2011). The dimensions of critical self-awareness included understanding motivations to work with aboriginal people, fears of working with aboriginal people, and personalization and internalization of the anger that some aboriginal people express.

Like many other researchers, Bennet et al. (2011) were not working within an explicit Chicago school tradition. They therefore do not use terms such as core concepts, dimensionalization, and selective coding. Instead, they described their procedures as thematic analysis, conceptual mapping, and a search for meaning. However, they did use the term *saturation*, which is part of the Chicago school tradition.

A single core concept or multiple related core concepts compose research reports. The Bennet et al. (2011) article, for example, linked multiple core concepts. The authors showed how critical self-awareness leads to meaningful relationships that in turn connect to "acquiring Aboriginal knowledge" (p. 30).

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Grab

With viable core concepts and rich data, researchers are positioned to present their findings in ways that are memorable and interesting, that is, with grab (Glaser, 1978). Grab requires compelling descriptive material: excerpts from interviews, field notes, and various types of documents, as well as researchers' paraphrases of these materials. An example of a research report with grab is Irvine's (2013) account of her study of the meanings of pets to homeless people. She provided vivid descriptions of her interactions with the participants and compelling quotes that show what pets mean. Here is an example from Denise's account of her relationship with her cat Ivy:

> I have a history with depression up to suicide ideation, and Ivy, I refer to her as my suicide barrier. And I don't say that in any light way. I would say, most days, she's the reason why I keep going.... She is the only source of daily, steady affection and companionship that I have.
>
> (Irvine, 2013, p. 19)

These and other quotes, as well as Irvine's well-written, detailed descriptive material, show what grab means.

Grab equates with excellence in writing. Irvine's (2013) article is an example. In terms of the grab of her article, her work is in the Chicago school tradition. She wrote in the first person. She told complete stories in which she quoted extensively from the interviews, described the persons she interviewed and the settings in which she interviewed them, and provided biographical sketches. Robert Park and Ernest Burgess, both of whom trained generations of graduate students in qualitative research at the University of Chicago in the
p. 992 first quarter ↳ of the 20th century, held seminars on the use of literary techniques, such as those used in novels and autobiographies, in writing up research (Bulmer, 1984; Gilgun, 1999c, 2012a). These educators wanted researchers to report on their "first-hand observation." Park told a class of graduate students to

> go and sit in the lounges of the luxury hotels and on the doorsteps of the flophouses; sit on the Gold Coast settees and on the slum shakedowns; sit in the Orchestra Hall and in the Star and Garter Burlesk. In short, gentlemen [sic], go get the seat of your pants dirty.
>
> (McKinney, 1966, p. 71)

Park suggested to Pauline Young (1928, 1932) to "think and feel" like the residents of Russian Town, the subject of her dissertation, published in 1932 (Faris, 1967). Irvine's work shows these qualities. She immersed herself in the settings, she conducted in-depth interviews, and she conveyed her first-hand experiences in vivid terms.

The Chicago school also encouraged students to write in the first person. A good example is a report by Dollard (1937), who was concerned about the racial practices of the Southern town where he was doing fieldwork. He said he was afraid that other White people watched as he talked to "Negroes" on his front porch, when he knew that custom regarding the "proper" place of Negroes was at the back door. He wrote,

> My Negro friend brought still another Negro up on the porch to meet me. Should we shake hands? Would he be insulted if I did not, or would he accept the situation? I kept my hands in pockets and did not do it, a device that was often useful in resolving such a situation.
>
> (p. 7)

This description is a portrait of a pivotal moment in Dollard's fieldwork, and it is full of connotations about the racist practices of the time (Gilgun, 1999c, 2012a).

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Irvine (2013) also wrote in the first person. Here's an example:

> I met Trish on a cold December day in Boulder. She stood on the median at the exit of a busy shopping center with her Jack Russell Terrier bundled up in a dog bed beside her. She was "flying a sign," or panhandling, with a piece of cardboard neatly lettered in black marker to read, "Sober. Doing the best I can. Please help."
>
> (p. 14)

These two excerpts illustrate a methodological point Small (1916) made in his chapter on the first 50 years of sociological research in the United States: namely, the importance of going beyond "technical treatises" and providing first-person "frank judgments" that can help future generations interpret sociology. Without such contexts, "the historical significance of treatises will be misunderstood" (Small, 1916, p. 722). Throughout his chapter, Small wrote in the first person and provided his views—or frank judgments—on the events he narrated. From then until now, research reports in the Chicago tradition have been vivid and contextual, conveying to the extent possible what it was like to be persons in situations.

There are many other examples of well-done research reports. Eck's (2013) article on never-married men includes the basic elements that are present in almost all reports based on qualitative methods. It is transparent in its procedures, situated within scholarly traditions, well organized, vivid, and instructive both for those new to qualitative research and for long-term researchers like me. The other articles I cite in this chapter also show many desirable qualities in research reports.

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Research Report Sections

The main sections of standard reports based on qualitative methods are the same as for articles based on other types of methods: Introduction, Methods, Findings, and Discussion. The American Psychological Association manual (2009) provides information on what goes into each of these sections. Research reports in sociology journals follow a similar format, although the citation style is slightly different. The American Sociological Association uses first and last names in the reference section, a practice I support. In articles based on qualitative approaches, researchers sometimes change the names of sections, add or omit some, or reorder them. When changes are made, the general guideline is whether the changes make sense and are consistent with the purpose of the research. As Saldaña (2003) pointed out, researchers choose how to present their findings on the basis of credibility, vividness, and persuasive qualities and not for the sake of novelty. Because some articles report findings as fictionalized accounts, poetry, plays, songs, and performances (including plays), it makes sense that the sections on these findings vary from the standard format that I discuss here.

Although there are no rigid rules about how to write journal articles based on qualitative research, much depends on the methodological perspectives, the purposes of the research, and the editorial guidelines of particular journals. For example, if researchers want to develop a theory, it is important to be clear from the beginning of the article to state that as the purpose of the research. The entire article should then focus on how the authors developed the theory. Research and theory cited in the literature review should have direct relevance to the substantive area on which the authors theorized. The methods section should explain what the researchers did to develop the theory. The findings section should begin with a statement of the theory that the researchers developed. The rest of the findings section should usually be composed of three parts. The first part is composed of excerpts from those data that support the concepts of the theory. This is the grounding of the theory in something clear and concrete. The second part is the authors' thinking or interpretation of the meanings of each of the concepts. The third part is an analysis of how the theory contributes to what is already known, such as how the findings elaborate on and call into question what is

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known. Thus, a research report on the development of a theory should contain a lot of scholarship that others have developed.

A report based on narrative principles or one based on an ethnography should contain copious excerpts from interviews, citing less scholarship than an article whose purpose is to develop theory. However, it is good practice to bring in related research and theory in the results section when this literature helps in interpretation, when findings have connections to other bodies of thought, and when findings are facets of a larger issue. In my now older publication on incest perpetrators (Gilgun, 1995), the editors suggested that I show that when therapists engage in sexual relationships with clients, they are engaging in abuses of power similar to those of incest perpetrators. I was at first indignant that the editors wanted me to do even more work on the article, but I soon was glad they did. It is important to show that incest or any human phenomenon is not isolated from other phenomena, but part of a larger picture. Doing so fit my purposes, which was to show how to do theory-testing/theory-guided qualitative research. Showing how findings fit into related research and theory is part of this type of research.

p. 994 Whenever researchers are ready to submit an article for publication, it is wise to read recent issues of journals in which they would like to publish. If they can identify an article whose structure, methodologies, and general purpose are similar to theirs, they could study how those authors presented their material. If, for example, in a report on narrative research, the introductory material is relatively brief, and the findings and discussion sections compose most of the pages, researchers would do well to format their articles in similar ways. I study journals in which I have interest and model much of my own articles after those published in these journals. I make sure, however, that I cover topics that in my judgment are important to cover.

Prior Research and Theory

In my experience, something as simple as the place of prior research and theory can get complicated in the writing of reports based on qualitative research, even when the purpose of the article is primarily descriptive and is not to construct an explicit theory. In general, related research and theory literature can be presented at the beginning of a report as part of a review of pertinent research and theory, in the findings section when prior work helps in the interpretation and analysis of findings, or in the discussion section, where authors may reflect on how their findings add to, undermine, or correct what is known and even add something new.

Readers expect and journal editors typically want articles to begin with literature review, with some exceptions. A perusal of journals that publish qualitative studies shows this. Yet there are exceptions. Velásquez (2011) began her report on her encounter with Scientology with an extended and rather meandering first-person narrative. Her literature review began toward the end of the article. She tailored the review to the report that preceded it. In this article and others, the literature review helped in the interpretation of findings and helped to situate the report in its scholarly contexts. In other articles, the literature review appears in the introductory section. This sets the scholarly context of the research, highlights the significance of topics, and identifies gaps in knowledge. Neither authors nor reviewers should have rigid expectations about where the scholarship of others belongs. It belongs where it makes the most sense and has the most impact.

For many, the placement of literature reviews seems self-evident. Yet, some well-known approaches, such as grounded theory, can set authors up for confusion about where the literature review belongs. This can result in delays in writing up their results. The procedures of grounded theory are open ended and designed to find new aspects of phenomena—often underresearched—and then develop theories from the findings. At the outset of their work, researchers cannot anticipate what they will find. Therefore, teachers such as

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Strauss and Glaser advised students not to do literature reviews until they had identified basic social processes that become the focus of the research (Covan, 2007; Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

How, then, do researchers write up research reports when they are doing an open-ended study that, by definition, will culminate in unanticipated findings? Do they write their reports as records on how they proceeded chronologically, or do they follow American Psychological Association style and the dominant tradition that says the literature review comes first? For the most part, I follow the tradition, as, apparently, p. 995 do most researchers. ↳ However, to structure reports in this way sometimes feels strained and artificial. I would prefer to write a more chronological account, in which I can share with readers the lines of inquiry and procedures I followed. The literature review at the beginning of the report, therefore, would be brief. The methods section is quite detailed in how I went about developing the theory. The findings section would have the three-part format I discussed earlier: statement of the theory, presentations of excerpts that support assertions that certain concepts compose the theory, my interpretation of the meanings of the concepts and the excerpts that support them, and then the use of related research and theory to further develop the theory and to situate it in its scholarly traditions.

In all but one of the research reports that I have published, I completed the literature review after I had identified findings. The one exception was research I did based on the method of analytic induction, in which researchers can use literature reviews to focus their research from the outset (Gilgun, 1995, 2007). In this research, I used concepts from theories on justice and care to analyze transcripts of interviews I had previously conducted on how perpetrators view child sexual abuse. Even though I was familiar with the transcripts, I found that the concepts of justice and care and their definitions sensitized me to see things in the material that I had not noticed as I did data collection and during previous analyses of the data.

Furthermore, in writing up the results, I brought in research that was not part of the literature review to help me to interpret findings and to show how findings fit with and added to what was already known. I did not place this material in the introductory literature review. Placing related research and theory as parts of the results and discussion sections is common and may be necessary in articles that are reporting on a theory that the authors developed. For descriptive studies whose purpose is not theory building, such as ethnographies, some findings sections include the addition of research and theory not present in the introductory section. Often, however, authors do not follow this pattern. An example is found in Ahmed (2013), who described how migrants experience settling into a new country. She presented excerpts from interviews and her interpretation of them, including organizing them into a typology, but she did not bring additional research and theory into her interpretations.

Tensions can arise between how much space to give to literature reviews and how much to allot to presentation of informants' accounts/findings (Gilgun, 2005c). This happened in the most recent article I cowrote, which is on mothers' perspectives on the signs of child sexual abuse (Gilgun & Anderson, 2013). We believed the literature review was important because it not only set up our research but also summarized a great deal of information that was important to our intended audience of social service professionals. We also wanted to anticipate the expectations of reviewers and the journal editor. Yet, we put much effort into making the literature review as concise as possible to have reasonable space for findings. We wrote the literature review before we did data analysis. When we wrote up the results, the first draft was probably three times longer than any journal article could be.

We had written case studies first to be sure that we understood each case in detail. We wanted to share what the women said in the kind of detail that had helped us deepen our own understandings, so we cut back on the case material. The article was still too long. We decided to exclude the few instances we had in which women knew of the abuse but tried to handle it themselves or did not believe the children when told. We did more summarizing of the literature review. We eliminated many references.

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After much effort, we finally had a manuscript that was the required length of 22 pages. It included a literature review that set up the research in good form, an adequate accounting of the method, and findings that conveyed with grab the complexities of the signs and lack of signs of child sexual abuse. We wove points made in the literature review into our interpretations, yet we had to leave out important patterns for the sake of space. The editor's decision was to revise and resubmit, which we did. The main recommendation was to elaborate on applications. This was a great suggestion, and we dug deep to think about this. We are pleased with the results. We had to do further reading on topics we had not anticipated at the onset of our project, and we squeezed in a few new citations in the discussion section that related to implications of the research. This additional material greatly enhanced the meanings and usefulness of the research.

There is much more to say about qualitative research and literature reviews. Sometimes researchers get stuck, as I have more than once. I have research that I have not yet published because I have been unable to figure out how to do the multiple literature reviews I think I must do to show how my theory builds on, adds to, and challenges what is already known. I have written up this research as conference papers, where expectations about literature reviews are more relaxed (Gilgun, 1996c, 1998, 1999b, 2000). One of these papers was on a comprehensive theory of interpersonal violence (Gilgun, 2000). I wanted to write my theory first and then show how the findings contribute to what is already known. Doing so does not seem so outlandish today, and I now can imagine writing it up exactly as I would want to. At the same time, I wonder if I would? I really do not know if any journal that would publish a theory of violence would also accept an article that places a literature review after findings. Furthermore, my writing up of the theory would take so many pages that I would not have enough space to do a comprehensive literature review. As of today, the theory I am developing has links to 16 or more bodies of literature. There is no way that I can publish a journal-length article that will accommodate that much research and theory!

So, here I am, many years into the development of a comprehensive theory, still reflecting on how to create journal articles out of my analysis. I have published many articles in social media outlets exploring ideas that are the basis for the theory. I have put these articles into collections that are available on the Internet (Gilgun, 2012b, 2012c, 2013a). The theory is so complex that writing bits and pieces over the years and having a place to put them have been very helpful.

Finally, some articles may cite few if any related research and theory. This may fit articles whose purpose is to convey lived experience that stands on its own. These articles feature performances, plays, autoethnographies, fictionalized accounts, poetry, and song, among others. Egbe (2013) wrote two poems that she explained were accounts of her experiences of doing research in Nigeria with young smokers. She said she was "dazed by the vast opportunity this method gives a researcher to dig deep into a research problem and be submerged into the world of participants" (p. 353). Her two-page article is composed of two poems and her explanation. The article showed grab, evidence of immersion, experiences in contexts, and multiple perspectives. Her work, therefore, followed well-established guidelines for writing up qualitative research. Egbe not only omitted a literature review, but also did not write about how to use the results of her research, assuming that its uses are self-evident. Obviously, she thought a literature review unnecessary; the reviewers and journal editors agreed with her.

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Reflexivity Statements

A growing number of journals encourage researchers to include reflexivity statements in research reports. Researchers may place these statements in the introductory material of an article, after the literature review and before the methods section; this probably is the most important place to put them because reflexivity statements often influence the focus and design of the research, including the choice of sensitizing concepts and codes. Reflexivity statements may also appear in the methods and findings and methods sections when important. Reflexivity statements are accounts of researchers' experiences with the topic of research; accounts of their expectations regarding informant issues and their relationships to informants, especially in regard to power differentials and other ethical concerns; and accounts of their reflections on various issues related to possible experiences that informants may have had. They also may include the experience they had while participating in the research (D'Cruz, Gillingham, & Melendez, 2007; Presser, 2005). My article on doing research on violence is an extended reflexivity statement (Gilgun, 2008). There appears to be no standard content for reflexivity statements and no standard places for them to appear. Personal and professional experiences and reflections on power differentials may be the emergent standard. Whatever decisions researchers make about reflexivity statements, they alert audiences to researchers' perspectives, which can be helpful to readers as they attempt to make sense of research reports.

An example of a reflexivity statement is found in Winter's (2010) work. Winter is a practitioner turned researcher who had a previous relationship as a guardian ad litem with the children with whom she later conducted the research that she was reporting. Winter was reflexive about the implications of her prior relationship with these children. I imagine, based on my own experience, that she put only a fraction of her thinking into her article. Not only did she write in her reflexivity statement that she had a prior relationship with the children, but also she wrote about the ethical issues involved.

Ethical issues have a place in reflexivity statements. I have run into ethical questions over the course of my research career. One situation that stands out is the encounter I had with a mother and her 11-year-old daughter who had participated in my dissertation research on child sexual abuse (Gilgun, 1983). The mother cried and told her daughter how sorry she was that she had been unable to protect her from sexual abuse. The girl was touched but did not seem to know what to do. I suggested that she go stand by her mother. When she got close, the mother and daughter hugged each other and cried. This is a significant event with ethical implications that I included in the findings section of my dissertation and in a subsequent research report (Gilgun, 1984). The ethical issue is, first, whether I should have stepped out of my role as detached researcher and guided the girl to go to her mother and, second, whether I should have made my blurring of boundaries public by publishing them.

As far as the placement of reflexivity statements, the initial statement has a logical location after the literature review because the reflexivity statement contributes to the development of the research questions, the identification of sensitizing concepts, the interview schedule, and the overall design of research procedures. Accounts of ongoing reflexivity could be part the findings section and part of the discussion section. Reflexivity statements are not a standard part of research reports, but they can contribute to readers' understandings of the research.

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Along with the literature review, reflexivity statements contribute to practical and applied significance statements and may also help to identify gaps in knowledge. Literature reviews and reflexivity statements contain key concepts. The concepts that researchers define at the end of introductory sections typically become codes during analysis, although researchers may not label the concepts as codes either in the introductory section or in the methods section. I am unsure why such labeling has not become routine. When concepts carry the label *code*, this clarifies where codes come from. Without naming codes and stating where they come from, much of analysis is mystified. Many reports read as if the codes appear out of nowhere during analysis. Even Glaser's (1978) notion of theoretical sensitivity mystifies the origins of

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codes. How, for example, do researchers become theoretically sensitive? What if researchers are beginning their scholarly careers? How theoretically sensitive are they (Covan, 2007)? What are the implications for the quality of the analysis?

Research Questions, Hypotheses, and Definitions

The final part of the introductory section of a research report is devoted to research questions, hypotheses to be tested (if any), and definitions of core concepts. In general, in qualitative research, hypotheses are statements of relationships between concepts. Theories usually are composed of two or more hypotheses, although, at times, some researchers may use the term *theory* to designate a single hypothesis (Gilgun, 2005b). Concepts are extractions from concrete data. Sometimes concepts are called *second-order concepts* and data *first-order concepts*.

Research questions may be absent. In their place are purpose statements that make the focus of the report clear. Hypotheses are rarely present in qualitative research. When they are, the purpose of the research is to test them and typically to develop them more fully. This type of research has in the past been called *analytic induction* (Gilgun, 1995d), whereas a more up-to-date version of qualitative hypothesis testing and theory-guided research is called *deductive qualitative analysis* (Gilgun, 2005d, 2013). Analytic induction and deductive qualitative analysis are part of the Chicago school tradition.

Methods Section

Most methods sections for reports based on qualitative approaches have the same elements as any other research report. Descriptions of the sample, recruitment, interview schedule, and plans for data analysis are standard. The American Psychological Association manual provides guidelines (American Psychological Association, 2009) that fit many types of qualitative research reports. However, reports based on autoethnographies, poetry, and performances may have brief or no methods sections. As is clear by now, the report's contents depend on the purposes and methodologies of the research and on the editorial requirements of journals.

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Accounts of Methodologies

In writing up qualitative research, methods sections usually contain a brief overview of the research methodology, which is the set of principles that guided the research. The following is an account of the methodology used in a research report on cancer treatment in India:

> For this project we drew upon interpretive traditions within qualitative research. This involved us taking an in-depth exploratory approach to data collection, aimed at documenting the subjective and complex experiences of the respondents. Our aim was to achieve a detailed understanding of the varying positions adhered to, and to locate those within a broader spectrum underlying beliefs and/or agendas.
>
> (Broom & Doron, 2013, p. 57)

Sometimes, statements of methodology are much more elaborate, but in research reports, such a statement is sufficient, again depending on the editorial policies of particular journals. A few citations, which this article had, round out an adequate statement of methodology.

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However, many reports are written in a clear and straightforward way with scant or no account of methodologies. Examples are the work of Eck (2013) and Spermon, Darlington, and Gibney (2013). These kinds of well-done write-ups might eventually be considered generic. Spermon et al. said their study was phenomenological, which sets up assumptions that the report will be primarily descriptive. In actuality, the intent was to develop theory. Such mixing of methodologies may be the wave of the future; in many ways, distinctions between phenomenological studies whose purposes are descriptive and those whose purposes are to build theory are blurred. Such blurring may have been the case for decades because it is possible and often desirable to build theories based on phenomenological perspectives, that is, in-depth descriptions of lived experience. However, authors are wise to state in one place what their methodologies are and how they put them to use, such as for descriptive purposes or for theory building.

Description of Sample

Placing descriptions of sample size and the demographics of the sample in the methods sections is typical. As mentioned earlier, evaluation of sample size depends on the depth and breadth of the study. The more depth a study has, the smaller the number of cases can be. The more breadth and the sharper the focus, the larger sample sizes typically are. Samples on which a study is based must provide enough material on which to base a credible article. A sample size of one may be adequate if researchers show their work demonstrates the basic principles of almost all forms of qualitative research: perspectives of persons who participate in the research, researcher immersion into the settings or the life stories of persons interviewed, multiple perspectives, contextual information of various types, and applications. Autoethnographies often have an *n* of 1, but joint autoethnographies are possible. Ethnographies may not give a sample size, as was the case in the performance ethnography of Velásquez (2011), who wrote in the first person about her experience with Scientology. In her first-person ethnography, Irvine (2013) also did not mention sample size. She said that the narratives she used for the article were from a larger study on the meanings of animals to people who have no homes. She did not describe the usual demographics of age, gender, social class, and ethnicity.

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Most articles describe the demographics of the sample. In a recently accepted article (Gilgun & Anderson, 2013), I saw no relevance in mentioning the size of the larger sample from which we drew to tell the stories of how mothers responded to their learning that their husbands or life partners had sexually abused their children. We included an exact count of the larger sample because we assumed that it would be the journal's expectations. We also gave particulars of the demographics. Except for social class and ethnicity, we saw little relevance for the other descriptors. These status variables were relevant to us because most of the sample was White and middle or upper class. This is important because much research on child sexual abuse is done with poor people, and there are stereotypes that poor families and families of color are more likely to experience incest than are White middle-class and upper-class families. Overall, as with some other issues related to writing, the adequacy of the sample description depends on the methodological principles of the research and the journal's editorial policies.

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Recruitment

Accounts of recruitment procedures are important because researchers want to show that their work is ethical. Respect for the autonomy or freedom of choice of participants must be demonstrated. In addition, often the persons in whose lives we are interested have vulnerabilities. To show that the research procedures have not exploited these vulnerabilities is part of ethical considerations. Most articles have these accounts. Furthermore, when there are accounts of recruitment procedures, it becomes obvious why the sample is not randomly selected. Irvine's (2013) account of recruitment is exemplary. She recruited through veterinary clinics that took care of the pets of homeless persons. She did not approach potential participants herself. Doing so risked making refusals difficult. The staff informed persons of the research and its purposes. If individuals said they were interested, they gave permission for the staff to give their names to researchers. The research interviews took place in the clinics.

The ethics of recruitment revolve around values, such as respect for autonomy, dignity, and worth. Other ethical issues that are important to mention in reports include the use of incentives for participation. Although many human subjects committees now require monetary incentives for participation, this has ethical implications. Irvine (2013) solved this by giving gift cards after the interviews were completed. Reports on ethical issues have a place in methods sections.

Data Collection and Analysis

Accounts of data collection and analysis are part of the methods section. Data collection procedures should be detailed for many reasons. Primary among them is the need for transparency in terms of the ethical p. 1001 standards the researchers followed, as well as the need ↳ to allow for replication of the study. Such details also provide guidelines for others who might be interested in using the methods. In addition, there are many different schools of thought and procedures for each of the methods used with the three general types of data collection: interviews, observations, and documents. It is helpful to state which data collection procedures the researchers used. Researchers often provide examples of the kinds of questions asked and procedures used for recording observations and excerpts from documents. Some researchers may omit such an accounting, as with some autoethnographies and articles that turn research material into performances.

How researchers analyzed data is part of the methods sections. As with data collection, there are so many types of analysis that researchers must describe the particular forms that they used. For figuring out how to report on data analysis, researchers would do well to study articles in journals in which they want to publish. Irvine (2013) used a method of analysis I have never heard of, called *personal narrative analysis* (p. 8). She gave enough detail to provide the general idea of what she did and a sufficient number of citations for additional information.

The level of detail can vary. In some sociology journals, for example, researchers may say little about analysis and sometimes little about data collection. This is because the journal editors, reviewers, and those who publish in and read the articles have assumptions that they, for the most part, take for granted. Even in these journals, however, researchers may want to account for their analytic procedures, especially if they are writing on topics outside what is usual in such journals.

Other journals require a great deal of detail. In those instances, researchers first decide what they think is essential and then shape their accounts to fit what appears to be usual practice in the journal. The following paragraphs describe data analysis in a recently accepted article on signs of child sexual abuse in families (Gilgun & Anderson, 2013).

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Data Analysis

In the analysis of data, the first author read the transcripts multiple times and coded them for instances related to disclosures of child sexual abuse and associated signs of the abuse, such as how and when the women first learned of the abuse or suspected it was occurring in their families, their responses, and their reflections on the signs of abuse they might have missed, as well as child and perpetrator behaviors that they did not realize were related to child sexual abuse. Their initial and longer term responses and reflections were also coded. The second author independently read and coded about one third of the transcripts using this coding scheme to arrive at a 100% agreement.

Sources of the codes were our professional experiences in the area of child sexual abuse, the review of research, and the first author's familiarity with the content of the interviews because she had been the interviewer. These codes served as sensitizing concepts, which, as Blumer (1986) explained, are ideas that guide researchers to see aspects of phenomena that they might not otherwise notice. Although altering researchers' ideas to what might be significant serves an obvious useful purpose, sensitizing concepts might also blind researchers to other aspects of phenomena that might be important. Therefore, we also used negative case analysis, which is a procedure that guides researchers to look for aspects of phenomena that contradict or do not fit with emerging understandings. In this way, researchers are positioned to see p. 1002 patterns, variations within patterns, exceptions, and ↳ contradictions in findings (Becker, Geer, Hughes, & Strauss, 1961; Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; Cressey, 1953; Lindesmith, 1947).

As we wrote this section, we were aware of the limited space that we had to fill. Yet we were committed to accounting for where our codes came from for reviewers and editors who may be unfamiliar with preestablished codes. As discussed earlier, many reports are written as if codes appear by magic. We decided that, in this report, we would be as clear as possible about where our codes came from. We also reasoned that we would have to call on the authority of well-respected methodologists if reviewers and editors had questions about what we had done. Furthermore, we were aware of the dated nature of the references; we could do nothing about that because there has not been much written recently about preestablished codes. I have written about this quite a bit, but as one of the authors, I not only had to be anonymous during the review process, but also could not be the sole authority.

Generalizability

Many reviewers and editors have questions about the generalizability of the results of qualitative research. Authors themselves sometimes question the generalizability of their own findings. That is why it remains important to provide clear guidelines in research reports about how the authors view the usefulness of their findings. The following ideas may be helpful to authors as they write their reports and to reviewers who are positioned as gatekeepers. The results of qualitative research are not meant to be generalized in a probabilistic sense. But because dropouts and refusals limit the randomness of samples, most forms of research cannot be generalized in a probabilistic sense.

Conversely, as Cronbach (1975) wrote almost 40 years ago, the results of any form of research are working hypotheses that must be tested in local settings. Thus, the applicability of qualitative or any other kind of research can be demonstrated only through attempts at application. Do the findings illuminate other situations? Do the results provide researchers, policy makers, and direct practitioners with ideas on how to proceed? Those who apply the research expect to have to adjust findings to fit new situations. Many researchers and some journal editors and reviewers know through common sense and everyday experience how to use the results of qualitative research. Our personal lives are extended case studies. What we learn in one situation we carry over into another. We know we must test what we have learned in past situations for fit with new situations. If we do not, we impose our ideas on situations that may demand new perspectives.

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This common practice of applying results to all situations is disrespectful of local conditions and autonomy of persons. We want to avoid such disrespect in how we suggest readers use the results of our research.

Trustworthiness and Authenticity

Pointing out the trustworthiness of procedures and the findings that result from them sometimes are parts of methods sections. Related to trustworthiness are issues of authenticity (Guba & Lincoln, 2005). Both trustworthiness and authenticity arise from immersion, seeking to understand the perspectives of others in context, reflexivity, and seeking multiple points of view. Researchers who have applied these principles will p. 1003 produce reports that are ↳ trustworthy and authentic. In addition, the reports will have grab. Extended discussions related to these issues are beyond the scope of this chapter and the scope of research reports as well.

I get more requests for revisions of methods sections, especially for accounts of data collection and analysis, than for any other parts of a manuscript. This is not surprising, given the multiple possible variations. I never know who the reviewers will be and what their expectations are. I rely first on my beliefs about what I want in the procedures section and then I study articles the journal has already published. I include what journal editors appear to expect, but I also add information that I think is important, even when it is not part of what I see in methods sections.

Findings Sections

Findings sections in research reports include both descriptive and conceptual material. Descriptive material is composed of researchers' paraphrasing and summarizing what they found and excerpts from interviews, field notes, and documents. The descriptive material, at its best, is detailed and lively; it not only is informative, but also has grab. This material contributes to understandings of human experiences in context. In addition, descriptive material is the basis of researchers' theorizing and also provides documentation and illustrations of assertions that researchers make.

Conceptual material comprises the analysis and is made up of inferences such as the general statements, concepts, and hypotheses that researchers develop from the material (data). One way to think about the relationship between descriptive and conceptual material is to think of descriptive material as composed of first-order concepts and conceptual material as composed of second-order concepts. Each type depends on the other. Credible conceptual material is based on descriptive material, some of which is contained in the article. Qualitative research yields mountains of data, a fraction of which can be placed in a published article.

As with other sections of research reports, findings sections have many possible variations that depend on the purpose of the research and the methodologies on which the research is based. Thus, the findings can range from heavily descriptive to heavily conceptual. Heavily conceptual research reports arise from research whose purpose is theoretical, in which researchers set out to test, refine, reformulate, or develop theory. Theoretical reports require some descriptive material to show the basis of theoretical statements, but they are often relatively short on descriptive material.

Reports that are primarily descriptive are composed of excerpts from data. Theoretical material appears in often subtle ways, such as in the form of concepts that organize findings. Irvine's (2013) study of homeless people and their pets is largely descriptive, composed of excerpts from the interviews and Irvine's paraphrases and narration of what she did, how, and when. The findings were narrative case studies based on interviews and observations. The details of the narratives were vivid and had the kind of grab that Glaser (1978) recommended. They showed multiple perspectives and variations on what it meant to homeless

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informants to have pets in their lives. The first three pages were a review of relevant literature and a presentation of method. The last five pages were a discussion of the findings.

p. 1004 As lengthy as the descriptive material is, conceptual material frames the entire report. In the literature review, Irvine (2013) introduced notions of positive identity, generativity, and redemption. She used them to analyze her data and organize findings, which were the narrative case studies. She used the concept of redemption as the core or organizing concept, going into some detail about how the research material supports the significance of this idea of pets as redemptive for homeless people.

This analysis is based squarely on the descriptive material. For instance, Irvine (2013) wrote that in the stories she presented in her article, "animals provide the vehicle for redemption." She illustrated this point with a quote from one of the narratives and then reminded readers that the narratives "contain variations on the theme" of "*life is better because this animal is in it*" (p. 20; emphasis in original). Readers do not take this on faith because the basis of this general statement is presented multiple times in the case studies. Irvine has much more material on which she based these ideas, but there is not enough room in a journal-length article to show all her evidence.

An example of an article that is theoretical in purpose and short on descriptive material is found in the work of Cordeau (2012). She developed a grounded theory of the "transition from student to professional nurse" when student nurses work with "mannequins as simulated patients" (Cordeau, 2012, p. 90). Based on interviews, observations, and reports that the students wrote on their clinical experiences, the study was composed of about 10% descriptive material. This material included excerpts of interviews and student reports. In the results section, she used this descriptive material to illustrate and possibly document the grounded theory she constructed. The theory's "core category" was "linking," which had four components, called properties. She documented the properties, primarily with her own thinking about her research material and with excerpts from interviews, observations, and student reports.

Like Irvine's (2013) study, the purpose of Cordeau's (2012) work was applied where she wanted to build theory that would contribute to the development of clinical expertise in nursing students. She also devoted about one page of her study to applications.

Core Concepts

I previously provided an extended discussion of core concepts. This section highlights some key points and illustrates them. Core concepts, often called *core categories*, organize findings. I prefer the term *concept* because concept is the term used in discussing theory, such as "concepts are the building blocks of theory," and theory is one of several possible products of qualitative research. Researchers decide which concepts are core in the course of analysis. Researchers are ready to write up their reports when they have settled on, named, and dimensionalized one or more core concepts. The terms *core concepts* and *core categories* are associated with grounded theory (Charmaz, 2006; Corbin & Strauss, 2008), but they are useful in other types of qualitative research, such as interpretive phenomenology and narrative analysis. Core concepts both organize findings and, typically, bring together a great deal of information. The term *dimension* means that researchers account for as many aspects of the core concepts as they can to show the multiple perspectives and patterns that typically compose concepts.

p. 1005 In reporting on core concepts, I recommend that researchers name them, introduce them, describe them using excerpts from the research material, comment on them, and then situate each of the concepts and their commentaries within their scholarly contexts. As discussed earlier, this shows how the findings fit with what is already known, or add to, force modification of, or refute what is known. Although many researchers do not situate findings in their scholarly contexts, they usually cover the other topics.

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No matter how authors report findings, they should do so with grab. An example of a report exemplary for its grab is the work of Scott (2003) on what it means to be a professional with a physical disability. Scott began her article not with a literature review, but with three reviewer comments on other articles she had written. She then stated that the present article was a response to these comments. She followed up with a description of three male students who waited to speak to her after class about her disability and the notion of embodiment that she discussed in class. She brought in related literature throughout the article. Through her own reflections, reports on how others have responded to her, reports on the accounts that three other women with disabilities gave to her as a person with cerebral palsy, and her literature review, Scott showed not only the meanings of disabilities to persons who have them, but also what others say about their own disabilities, what some people who are able-bodied say about women with disabilities, and how all of this connects to what is known about disabilities and to widespread beliefs about disabilities. Her article is full of grab, such as the header that read, "The Day I Became Human." With the authors' own experience as the centerpiece, this article exemplifies write-ups that demonstrate the meanings of lived experience in various contexts, immersion, grab, and implications for social action. The analysis she presented as part of her findings is exemplary.

In the production of quality research, no matter the type of write-up, there are no shortcuts. Research reports based on poetry, for example, are held to the same standards as any other article: grab, immersion, lived experience in context, and implications for action. In addition, such research reports typically locate themselves within social and human sciences traditions. Furman's (2007) reflections and analysis of poetry that he wrote over the course of many years provide an example of how poetry can be used in qualitative analysis. This kind of research is a type of document analysis. In performance studies, researchers create a theater production of informant's accounts of their experiences whose purpose is to transform audiences and move them to action (Saldaña, 2003). The performances are the equivalent of research reports, and when they are effective, they have the four characteristics of qualitative research under discussion.

Discussion Sections

In traditional research reports, the discussion section follows the results section. In discussion sections, authors reflect on findings, including what the findings are, how findings contribute to understandings of phenomena of interest, the lines of inquiry the results open up, and implications for policy and practice. Other generic topics to consider are those related to the focus of the journal. For example, if the journal's focus is related to health, then authors show how findings are related to health.

p. 1006 Discussion sections present the author with opportunities to advocate for how his or her research can be used. The applied purposes of Irvine's (2013) research come through when she devoted an entire page to make observations about implications. She pointed out how her research contributes to a transformation of images of homeless persons as isolated to images of them as engaged in relationships not only with their pets but also with other persons. She noted that rehousing homeless persons requires a change in policy that would allow them to have pets. Furthermore, she said that caring for a pet "can turn things around" (p. 24).

In the discussion section I wrote with Anderson (Gilgun & Anderson, 2013), we addressed methodological issues, such as the probable existence of other patterns in addition to those we identified and the nonrandom nature of our sample. We also acknowledged the difficulties in working with families in which child sexual abuse has occurred. Since qualitative researchers want to understand lived experiences, we had to prepare ourselves to deal effectively in research areas that are difficult emotionally for us as researchers. Although we may acknowledge the emotional challenges of some topics in reflexivity statements, discussion sections are opportunities for authors to acknowledge the difficulties of using the results we

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produce. In the article I wrote with Anderson, we made such an acknowledgment, one that we hoped would facilitate more effective practice. We wrote,

> Practitioners themselves may experience shock, rage, and disgust. The practice of neutrality, in its therapeutic sense, is important in these cases (Gil & Johnson, 1993; Rober, 2011). Neutrality means that practitioners maintain their analytic stances while at the same time they remain attuned not only to service users but also to themselves. When practicing neutrality, service providers regulate their own emotional responses in order to remain emotionally available to service users. Neutrality also means that service providers remain open-minded so that they can hear stories that they may not expect to hear; in other words, to make room for the unexpected (Rober, 2011). Attunement to inner processes is a form of reflection that can facilitate the development of trust between service users and providers. When providers are reflective, they are less likely to tune out, close down, and otherwise stop listening to what services users express. When they listen and hear what service users say, they are more likely to facilitate the best possible outcomes in difficult situations (Weingarten, 2012).
>
> (Gilgun & Anderson, 2013)

Doing research on lived experience can be difficult for informants and for researchers. Acknowledgment of the implications of these difficulties for users of the research has a place in discussion sections.

Conclusion

In summary, most articles are fairly straightforward in their write-ups: focused literature reviews, reflexivity statements in many cases, clear statements of purpose, clarity about sources of research questions and/or hypotheses, identification and definition of key concepts, identification of codes the researcher develops from literature reviews and reflexivity statements, succinct accounting of methods, and findings organized logically by core concepts around which the researcher organizes the multiple dimensions of those concepts. ↳ Excellent writing makes articles interesting and accessible. Some kinds of write-ups deviate from these components, but they are held to the same standards of immersion, experiences in context, multiple perspectives, and implications for action and other applications. When authors have the good fortune to have a recommendation to revise and resubmit, suggestions for revisions often improve the quality of the article.

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The seemingly endless variations that are possible in the write-up of qualitative research make writing and reviewing manuscripts challenging, especially when compared to traditions in which rigid rules prevail. However, it is important that approaches to qualitative research continue to evolve to meet with our ever-changing understandings of human phenomena. The clarity and transparency of reports are the fundamental guidelines for making judgments about quality. I often tell my students that the guidelines for doing qualitative research are flexible, and what is important is to be clear about what you did, why you did it, and what you came up with.

The notion of grab is central to write-up. Since qualitative research seeks to understand lived experiences, it is logical that findings report on the lived experiences in vivid terms, replete with quotes from data. This is not to undermine the importance of analysis, but grab is possible even in write-ups that require a great deal of analysis. Grab becomes possible because researchers must provide the evidence for the theories and concepts they develop.

When there are questions about priorities related to informants' voices, researchers' interpretations, and prior research, I hope that authors, reviewers, and editors remember that as important as analysis and

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previous work may be, the voices of informants bring these other important parts of manuscripts to life. Researchers make decisions about whose voices take priority.

There is no one way to respond to these dilemmas. Authors must make their own decisions about what is important to them and then search for journals that will welcome what they want to convey. It is important to consider pushing the boundaries and writing an article in a way that the researcher thinks will best convey his or her findings.

The importance of quality data, quality analysis, and grab is foundational. I began this chapter with a discussion of the balance between description and analysis. I then considered core concepts as organizers of findings, the place of literature reviews, styles of presenting methods and methodologies, and the balance between the voices of informants and researchers. I concluded with the many variations in types of reports that result from the various purposes that qualitative research projects can have. There are many types of qualitative research and many styles of write-ups. This chapter may sensitize readers to enduring issues in the writing of research reports. Like qualitative research itself, there are multiple points of view on how to write up qualitative research.

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