

An Experiential Qualitative Guidebook for Novice Researchers

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The book *an experiential qualitative guidebook for novice researchers* (forthcoming Routledge) turns ethics pedagogy upside down. Rather than listing and then defining an inventory of ethical concepts for students to absorb, the book assumes that postgraduate students begin their studies with an established moral compass. The book also assumes that students can use their moral compass to identify issues in a research setting that cause them unease and they are able to reflect on that unease to rectify the situation. This is distinct from a worrying trend among graduate students in the social sciences who claim they don't always need permission to gather data on what people say (Tolich 2016a)? What necessitates this novel pedagogy is a qualitative epistemology that has its iterative research design and research ethics issues arise when the researcher is in the field and far from an ethics committee. Learning how to identify ethical issues across the epistemological divide takes place within an interactive classroom setting that promotes the lifelong learning of ethics. The book's innovation is not only its pedagogy but also in its use of incremental scenarios and puzzles that build on each other to establish an ethics toolbox. Latter parts of the eight chapters revert to a traditional style of reviewing ethical dilemmas in the literature and how they are addressed. This draws on the author's past and current experience of teaching students using this pedagogy (Tolich et al. 2017). The book is not focused on research design or epistemology yet it reviews how epistemological demarcations between quantitative and qualitative research exhibit divergent ethical considerations. For example, anonymity has utility for quantitative research but none for qualitative research. Vice versa, confidentiality has little utility in survey research. This divergence is seen clearly in distinctions between ethics in practice and procedural ethics (Guillemin and Gillam 2004). The deductive, linear form of quantitative research produces a certainty in ethical issues prior to beginning the research. Formal ethics review makes subsequent ethical issues predictable. Qualitative research epistemology, on the other hand, with its emergent research design means that formal ethics review is only ever partial. Once research has begun not only will the research design change but so too will its ethical issues. It is for these epistemological reasons that qualitative researchers must be trained to recognise how these new ethical issues arise in the field and encouraged to have the integrity to act upon them. Qualitative research requires researchers to self-police these ethical issues when they are in the field. No other ethics textbook uses this experiential model. A strength of the book is how it compares and contrasts qualitative research techniques (photovoice, autoethnography, narrative research, ethnography, participatory action research and focus groups) that manifest distinct types of ethical issues. For example, focus groups can offer the research subjects few ethical assurances (Tolich, 2008), autoethnography's claim the researcher owns their own story is problematic (Tolich, 2010), ethnography becomes ethically untenable when research subjects can identify themselves and others in the text (Tolich, 2004) yet photovoice's ethics are anticipatory and exemplary (Tolich, 2016b).

Keywords: Qualitative research, Ethics, Pedagogy, Experiential Learning



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