

Centre for Qualitative Research

MAIN TRAINING PACKAGE

SESSION ONE

Where does qualitative research come from?

Dr Bryan Clift

Session Summary

This session explored and reviewed the development of qualitative research philosophically and historically. Emerging out of the scientific revolution and age of enlightenment, key historical shifts in the philosophy of science and sociology of knowledge laid the groundwork for what we know of qualitative research today. This includes major epistemological and ontological changes across the following: positivism and post-positivism; interpretivism; constructionism/constructivism; critical inquiry; feminisms and racial studies; post-structural and postmodernism; and into current pluralities of philosophy and theory.

Along the way, we discussed key thinkers in each area, acknowledging that there are numerous scholars of note not explicitly encountered. The changes in these ways of thinking directly inform the goals and purposes of science, how science is conducted, and for whom. Collectively, the foundations of qualitative research anchor contemporary practices. The worldview of a researcher (beliefs, values, norms, ontologies, and epistemologies) is directly implicated in and related to how we frame our research endeavours (theories, methodologies, and methods) and the standards of quality or judgement.

Qualitative methods should not be considered as: simplistic or easy; isolated from the full or holistic research process; tangential or anecdotal; disconnected from theoretical, conceptual, or philosophical roots; or only a recent or pseudo-credible research orientation and practice. In doing qualitative research – from the simplistic to the complex – it behoves all researchers to at minimum recognize if not directly incorporate the philosophical roots of their work. For all qualitative inquirers, we must historically locate our work in the history of science in order to work with it, honour it, and push our various and collective fields forward.

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Tuesday 9 February 2021

Summary

- There are several key shifts in the history/philosophy of science that underpin current qualitative research practices
- These changes occurred as scholars/intellectuals recognized the needs of and for additional research tools to respond to people living in the world
- Philosophical roots are and should be integrated across the research process (whether acknowledged or not)

Reading List

Brinkmann, S. (2017). *Philosophies of qualitative research*. Oxford University Press.

Crotty, M. (1998). *The foundations of social research: Meaning and perspective in the research process*. London, United Kingdom: Sage Publications.

Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (Eds.). (2011). *The Sage handbook of qualitative research*. Sage Publications.

Jarvie, I. C., & Zamora-Bonilla, J. (2011). *The Sage handbook of the philosophy of social sciences*. Sage Publications.

Pernecky, T. (2016). *Epistemology and metaphysics for qualitative research*. Sage Publications.

Animation

<https://biteable.com/watch/swdtp2-2727633/5a40b9bd2ac6423ba62f7daf2437fb51>

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