



Critical  
Qualitative  
Research

READER

EDITED BY

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## PREFACE

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# What's Critical About Qualitative Research?

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Actually, everything is critical in qualitative research. Critical in the sense that it is essential; critical in the sense that it issues scrutiny; and, critical in the sense of stemming from critical theory, a philosophy which situates itself smack dab in the middle of power and politics.

We've been through the *Qual-Quant Wars* of the late 20th century, we've written *ad nauseam* about the oppression of positivism, empiricism, and scientism. As qualitative researchers we have been defensively disseminating our research, as scholars, teachers, and graduate supervisors, we have protected our students and metaphorically (or maybe not) jumped across tables attempting to be noticed, to be respected, and to be taken seriously.

And now, in the second decade of a new millennium, we are standing on top of our chipped, laminated classroom tables and declaring not only that we are qualitative and damn proud of it, we are critical. We are critical in the sense that what we research matters, we believe that research is a social theoretical act, and that it must be headlined by a socially just and equitable praxis. We believe that research must be contextual and is tentative in its surroundings. This reader is a credo to the belief that most research exists in a complicated web of power, neo-liberalism, patriarchy, Western linear thinking, and elitism. The *Critical Qualitative Research Reader* is our attempt to situate a humanistic research paradigm, which cannot be separated from the political.

The contributors to this reader are part of a growing community of researchers who dare to push against the egocentrism of Western research. It is with great pleasure that we invite researchers from all disciplines to consider the possibilities offered by criticalizing our qualitative work.

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Chapter two was previously published as: Kincheloe, J. L., McLaren, P. & Steinberg, S. R. (2011). Critical Pedagogy and Qualitative Research: Moving to the Bricolage. In Denzin, N. and Lincoln, Y. (eds.) *Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research* 4th Ed. Thousand Oaks: SAGE.

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