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Essentials of a Qualitative Doctorate, by Immy Holloway & Lorraine Brown

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Reviews (I)

Holloway, I. & Brown, L. (2012). *Essentials of a Qualitative Doctorate*. Walnut Creek, California: Left Coast press. ISBN: 978-1-61132-139-5

The book “Essentials of a Qualitative Doctorate” is one of the “Qualitative Essentials”, a series of books providing a comprehensive but succinct overview of topics in qualitative inquiry. It shows, in a very objective way, each of the steps involved in the research process within a Qualitative Doctorate.

One of the most remarkable aspects is the explanation of the problems that students encounter during the whole process. Thus, all the gaps in knowledge which can exist throughout the process are reflected. In order to clarify these issues, the book shows real examples of what has happened to PhD students, showing the concerns they had and reflecting on the solutions found.

In addition, the book explains in detail, how to structure a written inquiry in sections. The key questions which are posed at the end of each topic are also very illuminating showing a number of key responses that can help students to solve problems; for example, what happens if you have a problem with a thesis advisor and how to develop a methodological approach

The first chapters are introductory; aspects such as topic selection, the definition of the chosen proposal and how to locate the literature are explained. The completion of an initial theoretical framework is the key to developing a consistent and coherent research study. The literature referred to must be relevant as well as current, and should serve to guide the process. As in qualitative methodology there is no single valid procedure, since the book shows the importance of a research project

adapted to the specific context of study. The book provides comprehensive guidelines so that the researcher can resolve issues arising during the investigation process. Therefore, the possibility of adaptation to the context of the initially selected topics that guide the proposal is one of the guidelines mentioned in it. Qualitative methodology is not rigid, but must be adapted based on several factors including: the procedure carried out, the response rate of the sample and the results obtained.

The later chapters of the book describe the research process highlighting some important aspects such as communication with the thesis supervisors, the validity of the methodology and academic problems which can arise.

The last four chapters are the most practical in addressing issues of interest such as the need to publish articles before submitting the thesis, how to defend it and the dissemination of its results.

It is therefore a practical handbook that offers a detailed and concise account of how to carry out the research process, from the initial topic choice to the final reading and defense of the doctoral research. Obviously, it is not a recipe book describing the only way of carrying out an inquiry, but it explains in detail each of the steps to be followed. Furthermore, the book offers alternative solutions for the different problems which can arise during the research, explaining to the student how to bring them back. This is perhaps one of the most interesting aspects of the book, since it gives alternatives to the various problems that may occur during the process, such as disagreements with the thesis supervisor or any changes in the research.

All these ideas, expounded in an opened and inclusive way, allow researchers to choose the best way to carry out their study.

In our opinion, this is a valuable resource that allows students to detect problems, solve them, obtain reliable advice and guide them throughout the process.

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