

## Learning in the Field: An Introduction to Qualitative Research

By Gretchen B. Rossman, Sharon F Rallis



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This popular text is a true introduction to qualitative research, leading the new researcher into the field by explaining the core concepts through theory, research, and applied examples. The authors introduce each chapter with discussions among three characters - Ruth, Marla, and Anthony - students whose research projects demonstrate the challenges and excitement of qualitative research. Woven into the chapters and the characters' stories are three themes that are the heart of the book: First, research is about learning; second, research can and should be useful; and finally, a researcher should practice the highest ethical standards to ensure that a study is trustworthy.



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#### **Editorial Review**

#### Review

"I have reviewed a large number of qualitative research books. You learn quickly to decipher when a book's authors are simply writing conceptually versus when they are writing from solid fieldwork experience. Rossman and Rallis, out of their depth of real-world experience, illuminate qualitative research as the integration of science and art." (Michael Quinn Patton)

#### About the Author

Gretchen B. Rossman is Professor of International Education at the Center for International Education at the University of Massachusetts Amherst. She received her PhD in education from the University of Pennsylvania with a specialization in higher education administration. She has served as a visiting professor at Harvard University's Graduate School of Education. Prior to coming to the University of Massachusetts, she was Senior Research Associate at Research for Better Schools in Philadelphia. With an international reputation as a qualitative methodologist, she has expertise in qualitative research design and methods, mixed- methods monitoring and evaluation, and inquiry in education. Over the past 30+ years, she has coauthored numerous books, two of which are editions of major qualitative research texts (this fourth edition of *Learning in the Field*, with Sharon Rallis, and *Designing Qualitative Research*, 6th edition, with Catherine Marshall?both widely used guides to qualitative inquiry). She has authored or coauthored more than 45 articles, book chapters, and technical reports focused on methodological issues in qualitative research syntheses, validity in qualitative research, mixed-methods evaluation practice, and ethical research practice, as well as the analysis and evaluation of educational reform initiatives both in the United States and internationally.

Professor Rossman has served as principal investigator (PI) or co-PI on several international projects in such countries as Azerbaijan, India, Malawi, Palestine, Senegal, Tanzania, and the Gambia, as well as external evaluator on several domestic projects, including a Department of Education–funded reform initiative, a National Science Foundation–funded middle-grades science initiative, and a number of projects implementing more inclusive practices for students with disabilities. She regularly presents papers at the annual meetings of the American Educational Research Association and the Comparative and International Education Society.

Sharon F. Rallis is Dwight W. Allen Distinguished Professor of Education Policy and Reform at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst. Previously, she was professor of education at the University of Connecticut; lecturer on education at Harvard; and associate professor of educational leadership at Peabody College, Vanderbilt University. Her doctorate is from the Harvard Graduate School of Education. She has coauthored numerous books, including several on leadership: *Principals of Dynamic Schools: Taking Charge of Change* (with Ellen Goldring); *Dynamic Teachers: Leaders of Change* (with Gretchen Rossman); *Leading Dynamic Schools: How to Create and Implement Ethical Policies* (with Gretchen Rossman and others); and *Leading With Inquiry and Action: How Principals Improve Teaching and Learning* (with Matthew Militello and Ellen Goldring). Her numerous articles, book chapters, edited volumes, and technical reports address issues of research and evaluation methodology, ethical practice in research and evaluation, education policy

and leadership, and school reform.

A past-president of the American Evaluation Association (2005) and current editor of the *American Journal of Evaluation*, Professor Rallis has been involved with education and evaluation for more than three decades. She has been a teacher, counselor, principal, researcher, program evaluator, director of a major federal school reform initiative, and an elected school board member. Currently, her teaching includes courses on inquiry, program evaluation, qualitative methodology, and organizational theory. Her research has focused on the local implementation of programs driven by federal, state, or district policies. As external evaluator or principal investigator (PI), she has studied a variety of domestic and international policy and reform efforts, such as alternative professional development for leaders; collaborations between agencies responsible for educating incarcerated or institutionalized youth; initiatives supporting inclusive education for children and youth with disabilities; local school governance and leadership; labor-management relations in school districts; and leadership development. Her work with students on evaluation and qualitative methodology has taken her as far as Afghanistan, Turkey, and Palestine.

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