

A Paper Presented in Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements of

EDLS 6507 Research Methods

Article Critique

Assignment 2- Individual -Article Critique

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Date: August 2022

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The article which is being examined was written by Lisa E. Kim, Laura Oxley & Kathryn Asbury (2022) entitled What makes a great teacher during a pandemic? This article was published as Journal of Education for Teaching.

### **Background / Contextual Information on the topic**

According to Creswell 2013 researchers conduct qualitative research because a problem or issue needs to be explored and also to further identify variables that cannot be easily measured; therefore the study being critiqued met the criteria for a qualitative study despite elements of ambiguity presented throughout the article.

The title of the article was not entirely clear and was subject to interpretation however it was still relative to the issue under investigation. The abstract is lacking contextual information on the topic and does not represent a true summary of the article. The article is short in length and while there is an abstract there is no literature review. The overview is vague and elements of abstract are missing. Another element to consider is the literature review regarding the problem presented. This highlights other shortcomings in the article. Such as rendering the article less than comprehensive. There is no supporting literature within the past five years about the phenomenon presented by varied sources. A thorough literature review allows for credibility of the study. One major importance in beginning a research study is the need to ask, "What has been written about the problem?" The literature review provides the foundation for the study's significance and relationship to practice. Another observable weakness is that the fact that the reader can relate to the happenings and context as we have been currently experiencing the

pandemic however over time this will become a deficit in the article for the reader and audience in the post pandemic future. This is in part due to the missing elements of the abstract.

As a reader I was able to deduce and infer that the article was published in 2022 when many countries were adjusting to the effects of the Covid 19 pandemic. The Covid 19 pandemic has put education and pedagogy under laser focus since Covid-19 where we are dependent on technology in our daily lives. The onset of Covid-19 has severely affected the traditional education system resulting in shifts from the traditional way of learning. To keep up with the demand for effective teaching and learning, collaborative tools are on demand. One such tool is the Google Suite or G Suite which has been rebranded into Google Workspace to meet the needs of most learners. “Google Workspace is Google’s set of online productivity tools that include Gmail, Docs, Sheets, Drive, Classroom and Meet. It has everything you need in one place to create, communicate, and collaborate for work” (Thomas, 2021). Among these gaps were : successful navigation across platforms, compatibility with other hosting sites, accessing personal drives and shared drives, creation of related course content and assessments , retrieving grades and returning assignments and providing feedback to students. The need existed for the educators to rethink their roles as teachers and the extent of their custodial care duties for their students. Among the learning discrepancies were concerns about student socio-emotional well being As part of the investigation process, qualitative and data collection methods were utilized to determine a realistic appraisal of what truly happened. None of this information which helps to offer context was presented in the article.

It is common practice for qualitative research articles that the literature review may be found in a separate section, included in the introduction, or threaded throughout the study; however in general, the literature review can take several forms. Cooper (2010) advanced that

there are four types of literature reviews that (a) integrate what others have done and said, (b) criticize previous scholarly works, (c) build bridges between related topics, and (d) identify the central issues in a field.

In qualitative research, inquirers use the literature in a manner consistent with the assumptions of learning from the participant, not prescribing the questions that need to be answered from the researcher's standpoint. One of the primary reasons for conducting a qualitative study is that the study is exploratory. In short, this is a positive feature for this study however one may be required to do some digging with the terms mentioned and referenced in the article to see if in fact they can be used or whether they are being used interchangeably.

The exploratory nature of this qualitative study would usually infer that not much has been written about the topic or the population being studied, and the researcher seeks to listen to participants and build an understanding based on what is heard. However, the authors were selective and furnished the reader with the information which they "wanted to" in terms of the themes and this was a deductive analysis feature. This proved to be a weakness because it does not present a critical analysis of the literature and the phenomenon. This is observed with the reference by Klassen ,et al., 2018 "A study identified that the most important non cognitive qualities for effective teaching are : empathy and communication, organization and planning; resilience and adaptability (Klassen ,et al., 2018).The inclusion of this study as a point of reference is void of context.It is noteworthy that phenomenological research is a design of inquiry coming from philosophy and psychology in which the researcher describes the lived experiences of individuals about a phenomenon as described by participants. This description culminates in the essence of the experiences for several individuals who have all experienced the phenomenon. This design has strong philosophical underpinnings and typically involves

conducting interviews (Giorgi, 2009; Moustakas, 1994). The researchers engaged the participants using “semi- structured interviews by way of a video conferencing software.” This median would have attributed to much loss of anecdotal notes and data presented by the participants in the form of non-verbal cues as they expressed themselves. Grounded theory is a design of inquiry from sociology in which the researcher derives a general, abstract theory of a process, action, or interaction grounded in the views of participants. This process involves using multiple stages of data collection and the refinement and interrelationship of categories of information (Charmaz, 2006; Corbin & Strauss, 2007). A phenomenon such as described in the article would be greatly enhanced by the researcher being immersed in the data and combing through the information before the process of theme generation which is apart of the process of thematic analysis which is also highlighted as a keyword of this article.

The arguments brought forward were timely and relevant; this was circumstantial because we are now living through the month of August in the year 2022 and the article history confirmed that the article was received in March 15th 2021 and it was accepted on September 30th 2021 . Literature cited is not extensive as it is mostly from the authors and researchers of the article themselves. In short, salient ideas are not under-emphasized nor the minor ideas over-emphasized throughout the article.

The researchers have used a qualitative approach using thematic analysis and have found a number of interesting findings. I found the paper to be interesting, relevant, In this situation, the researcher seeks to establish the meaning of a phenomenon from the views of participants. This means identifying a culture-sharing group and studying how it develops shared patterns of behavior over time.

One of the key elements of collecting data in this way is to observe participants' behaviors during their engagement in activities this could not have been achieved to maximum effect using semi-structured interviews via a video conferencing software. Another notable strength of the article is the identification of key terms such as "COVID-19; teachers; social and emotional characteristics; thematic analysis" however none of these terms were defined. According to Locke, Spirduso, & Silverman (2013) terms should be defined in articles so that persons outside the field of study may have a comprehensive understanding of the terms that go beyond common language. Terms should also be defined when they first appear in articles to avoid the reader reading ahead processing the information with one set of definitions only to find out later that the author is using a different set of terms Wilkinson (1991). Against this backdrop one finds terms stated early in the introduction to articles. This article is qualitative in nature and in qualitative studies, because of the inductive, evolving methodological design, it is noteworthy that inquirers may define few terms at the beginning though may advance tentative definitions. Instead, themes (or perspectives or dimensions) may emerge through the data analysis. In the procedure section, authors define these terms in the procedure section as they surface during the process of research. This approach is to delay the definition of terms until they appear in the study, and it makes such definitions difficult to specify in advance in research. For this reason, qualitative proposals often do not include separate sections for a definition of terms. Instead, writers pose tentative, qualitative definitions before entry into the field.

## **Purpose Statement**

### ***The purpose of the research***

In the abstract the article outlines two themes "caring for pupil well being and dealing with uncertainty" however the article also states that the "current study examined what makes a great

teacher during a pandemic?” A study sometimes contains a hypothesis rather than a research question. Polit and Beck (2006) defined a hypothesis as “a prediction, usually a statement of predicted relationships between variables” (p. 501). Simply put, a hypothesis may predict, propose, suppose, explain, or test a quality, property, or characteristic of people, things, or settings. While many of us may have discussed “hypothetical situations.” The establishment of the research question or hypothesis is paramount to the focusing of the study. All aspects of the wording within the questions/hypotheses ought to be clear and concise to allow for the effective concentration of the research endeavor. This part is incomplete and therefore lacking in the article. The purpose statement was not explicitly stated because of this weakness the reader approaches the study with much ambiguity and less rational focus on the salient themes at hand. The purpose of this study was to explore the characteristics and traits necessary for teachers to deliver effective pedagogy and custodial care to their students during a crisis; specifically a pandemic. However, research must be read with a critical eye. This paper seeks to discern whether or not phenomena described, ideas conceptualized or theories discussed are worthy of further consideration and helpful for understanding depth of meaning. A qualitative study should be evaluated within the context of the author's purpose as well as the reader's own interest or purpose (Knafl & Howard 19/W). The article is of recent origin with relatively recent articles referenced however the paper is dominated with the authors themselves as the main sources of reference and this is a weakness because it limits the scope and objectivity of the study of the phenomenon presented. The purpose is presented “the current study examines what makes a great teacher during a pandemic?” This purpose is ambiguous. It does not however explicitly mention any of the key words to aid in clearly stating what the study is about. The inclusion of words such as “social and emotional” would have strengthened the purpose. According to

CyberNurse,(2005) it should “provide a prompt perception of the fundamental nature of the paper.”

### **Research Questions**

There were no research questions explicitly presented in the article; the reader was left to assume that the research title “What makes a great teacher during a pandemic? could perhaps doubled as a research question. The absences of research questions and a purpose statement has implications for the the data collection stage of the study; who is interviewed and what questions are asked depends on the purpose for the study and research questions guiding the study.

The title question “what makes a great teacher during a pandemic?” makes it difficult to determine if the study adequately addressed the phenomenon. The theory must work ( in short it should have explanatory power and be relevant and modifiable). Here we are able to observe a few obvious gaps and areas of concern. While the outcome is not anticipated to be a negative one ,the shortcomings have to be identified. Showcasing these concerns allows the reader to efficiently incorporate the results based on this in depth knowledge of the study findings. San Jose State University, (2005) advances that “no study is ever perfectly conducted unless it is not done on humans.”

### **Methodology( research design ,participants; data collection; instruments )**

#### **Research Design**

The researcher neglected to discuss the specific philosophical approach guiding the study or to justify the use of a qualitative approach. The author should provide a definition of the research approach and its characteristics and explain the theoretical perspective that underlies the research. Although not explicitly stated, various elements such as the data collection procedure



“inductive thematic analysis” leads the reader to infer that the study was a phenomenological study; nevertheless, this lack of specificity makes it difficult to determine whether the procedures in conducting the study were appropriate. Creswell (2010) states that the researcher must frame the study within the assumptions and characteristics of the specific qualitative approach to research.

Determining the appropriateness of the sampling method is critical in any study appraisal. When a convenient sampling method is used, the rationale and limitations related to this methodology must be congruent. “Designing and producing research is a complex activity” (Brockopp & Hastings-Tolsma, 2003, p. 59). Adequate planning is important to allow the use of the best evidence for incorporation in a well-thought-out design that allows for assurance that the evidence has practicality. The research design can be likened to a set of instructions allowing the builder to put together the pieces of a puzzle.

Instruments - This would be the actual questions asked. It is not stated whether the questions were shared with the participants before the interview. Semi structured interviews are conversational in nature however they can be influenced and impacted by group think. The interview questions were not shared in the article.

While the authors did not openly reference any problem in a community of concern or openly declare a theoretical lens it is still evident that the research was written with an advocacy lens for teachers. The main research question “What makes a great teacher during a pandemic?” seemed to be more about the perspective of the teacher with no consideration or inclusion of the sentiments of the students. Even though it is unclear and unstated within the article it leaves the reader to wonder if the participants initiated the research, or whether they were also actively

engaged in the project. Additionally, authors did not discuss the process of appropriate labeling of participants when using inductive research analysis.

### **Ethical Considerations for Methodology**

There were no ethical considerations stated in the article. Creswell (2013) states that the researcher must conduct an ethical study which involves more than simply the researcher seeking and obtaining the permission of institutional review committees or boards. Creswell (2013) also stated that ethical issues in qualitative research can be described as occurring prior to conducting the study, at the beginning of the study, during data collection, in conducting data analysis, in reporting the data, and in publishing a study.

The researcher did not identify any ethical considerations employed to mitigate or prevent harm to participants at each stage of the research process. The researcher did not: declare whether permission/approval to conduct the study was given by relevant authorities.; Disclose the purpose of the study to the participants; describe how data and materials will be stored using appropriate security measures; report contrary reports throughout the study; report multiple perspectives; report contrary findings; discuss if the report will be shared with others. The researcher also neglected to declare considerations for informed consent, anonymity, confidentiality and the right for participants to withdraw at any time during the research process.

### **Participants**

The researcher reported that the participants were 23 state primary and secondary teachers in England (5 male, 18 female) with “an average of 14 years of teaching experience”; however the appropriateness of the participants cannot be established because the research approach was not

stated; moreover, sampling selection, sampling method and interview site were not discussed. Also, the sample size is imbalanced in gender.(5 male, 18 female).

Having inferred that the study was undertaken using a phenomenological approach, the importance of the participants in a phenomenological study is to describe the meaning of the phenomenon for a small number of individuals who have experienced it. It is therefore critical to highlight that none of the participants were students; at least some of the participants should have been students to give a more diverse perspective of the phenomenon.

According to Creswell (2013), the concept of purposeful sampling is used in qualitative research. This means that the inquirer selects individuals and sites for study because they can purposefully inform an understanding of the research problem and central phenomenon in the study. Decisions need to be made about who or what should be sampled, what form the sampling will take, and how many people or sites need to be sampled. Further, the researchers need to decide if the sampling will be consistent with the information within one specific research approach to inquiry.

Creswell (2013) listed three considerations that go into the purposeful sampling approach in qualitative research, and stated that these considerations vary depending on the specific approach. They are the decision as to whom to select as participants (or sites) for the study, the specific type of sampling strategy, and the size of the sample to be studied.

Among the areas of concern were:

- There was no knowledge of how participants were chosen and the article does not state how the participants were selected. No students were included in the target population.

Additionally the article does not indicate who was excluded from the group (e.g., elderly teachers , pregnant women, minorities).

- The article did not state the number of trained and untrained teachers . There was also no further description of the chosen secondary school.It was not stated whether the school was an underperforming or low-performing secondary school.
- Research participants may or may not have been familiar with the key elements of “caring for pupil wellbeing, and dealing with uncertainty”
- There was no mention of how the participants were labeled throughout the thematic analysis process.
- Improvements can be made to improve the inclusiveness of the sample to increase the probability by extending the sample size to have a reflection of students, and a more descriptive review of the participants and the selection process.This is important for more comprehensive findings.
- The study stated that there are 23 participants on page 1 however on page 2 it says “Participant 24 identified the centrality of resilience ‘because it’s such a high stress job.’ This makes it unclear whether there were 23 or 24 participants. It was not clearly stated whether participant number 24 was male or female or was a senior leader or a classroom teacher.
- The article stated that “participants were asked what quality makes a great teacher during a pandemic,and whether that quality was equally important before the pandemic and would be equally important afterwards.Responses were collated by identifying keywords that participants used to describe the qualities in answer to the interview question, and an inductive thematic analysis was conducted (Braun and Clarke 2013).

Participants' responses to the question about the relative importance of this quality before and after the pandemic were recorded as yes, no or unsure" One strength identified here was that the participants were provided an opportunity for self-expression whereby allowing the researcher the opportunity to gather more details from participants.

- The article did not state if the teachers were invited to take part in the study voluntarily and were given an equal chance of being elected to provide the qualitative analysis from a sample size of twenty three participants.

The target group is expected to give insight into the extent of the use of "the two themes identified in relation to what makes a great teacher during a pandemic: caring for pupil wellbeing, and dealing with uncertainty" by teachers in a secondary school in England. In addition, the research is expected to inform on the acceptance of, presence of, and the understanding of the aforementioned by teachers participating in the study. It is a notable strength and consideration that the sampling design known as simple random sampling allows participants to have the probability of having an equal chance of being selected from a homogenous population (Leedy and Ormrod, 2010). This is important and may be justified in this case because for the use of simple random sampling is that: it is suited to a small population, is free from bias, and it is expected that the features of the sample size will be reflective of the population features under investigation (University of The West Indies Open Campus, 2016).

### **Data Collection**

The researcher reported using semi structured interviews which reinforces the idea that the researcher used a phenomenological research approach; however, it remains unclear whether this data collection was appropriate because the researcher did not explicitly state the research

approach used to conduct the study and it is also difficult to ascertain what type of phenomenological approach was used e.g. was it hermeneutical or transcendental?

Creswell (2013) describes data collection as a series of interrelated activities aimed at gathering good information to answer emerging research questions. According to Creswell 2013, the particular approach to research often directs a qualitative researcher's attention toward preferred approaches to data collection.

Also, The researcher's level of participation -ranging from passive observation to fully active participation -needs to be described because much of data gathering depends on the researcher skillfully observing, listening, and communicating. Also the researcher neglected to describe adequate recording procedures for data collection when conducting the interviews. Creswell (2013) recommends using more than one recording device during interviews.

The researcher's level of experience conducting qualitative research was also unclear and they did not discuss any precautions taken to prevent personal bias from influencing the research process, nor were the researcher's preconceptions and perspectives about the phenomenon identified prior to gathering data . According to Creswell (2013), The researcher first describes her/his personal experiences with the phenomenon under study. The researcher begins with a complete description of his/ her own experience of the phenomenon to set aside her personal experience. Researchers must maintain a delicate balance between using themselves as instruments.

According to Flower & Larkin (2009), the site of the interview is essential: a comfortably familiar setting (for the participant) is preferable, but this must also be safe (for all parties) and reasonably quiet, and free from interruptions. It is important that the reader knows if the

researcher conducted the study in the natural setting. Or whether they were intimately involved in the data collection process. Additionally, the reader also needs to know steps and mitigating attempts were made to establish validity and reliability of the sources. In short, the researcher must relate the study to current or future events (Brockopp & Hastings-Tolsma 1989). The article stated that the researcher engaged with the participants in “semi-structured interviews via a video conferencing software in 2020” however it does not state the length of the interview process, its duration, the time of day that the interviews took place or the day/s of the week or weekend for the interview process. There is no description of the video conferencing software used. Therefore we do not know whether it was adequate. We do not know what the quality of the audio and visual engagement of the participants and the researchers was like or the quality of the questions presented to the participants.

These unknown variables impact results and findings. A theory is ultimately generated through inductive and deductive activity. (Artinian, 1986) stated that the purpose of this type of research is to identify the core variable or process (p.17). Glaser and Strauss (1967) added that it is important that the codes and generated theory fit the data obtained from the study.

The researcher must say how the study sites were determined and describe the selection of participants and their levels of participation. The researcher must outline how the study sites were determined and describe the selection of participants and their levels of participation in detail (Cobb & Hagemaster, 1987). Particular informants (e.g. expert teachers) can be purposely included for their relevant knowledge or experience. Morse (1986) posits that the criteria of appropriateness and adequacy be used to evaluate sampling; an appropriate sampling method has a good "fit" with the study purpose (p. 185). The information provided by an adequate sample is

of good quality, and complete, and provides sufficient information. Morse considers these factors to be more important than the sample size (p. 185).

Also, the researcher's level of experience conducting qualitative research was unclear and they did not discuss any precautions taken to prevent personal bias from influencing the research process, nor were the researcher's preconceptions and perspectives about the phenomenon identified prior to gathering data [JM8]. According to Creswell (2013), The researcher first describes her/his personal experiences with the phenomenon under study. The researcher begins with a complete description of his/ her own experience of the phenomenon to set aside her personal experience. The researcher's level of participation -ranging from passive observation to fully active participation -needs to be described. Much of data gathering depends on the researcher skillfully observing, listening, and communicating.

It is unclear whether the interview questions were phrased in a way to meet the level of understanding of the participants.

Demographics could have strengthened the study because "Demographics" comprise demographic questions such as current subject area, context, grade level taught, age range, type of teacher (qualified/trained or unqualified/untrained), education level and years of teaching experience. It was not stated whether the participants were exposed to the interview question prior to the interview schedule by each respondent.

Semi-structured interviews offer advantages in terms of economy, the amount of data that can be collected, as well as the standardization of the data collected (Rubin & Babbie, 2011). Notwithstanding these benefits, issues of reliability and validity must necessarily be considered and addressed. Both concepts possess implications for the usability of the selected instrument,



that is, the ease with which it can be administered, interpreted by respondents and analyzed by the researchers (Instrument, Validity, Reliability, n.d.). Undoubtedly, any factor which potentially impacts on the usability of the data collection instrument for a study should be addressed and reconciled.

### **The interview**

An interview is considered a social interaction based on a conversation (Rubin & Rubin, 2012; Warren & Xavia Karner, 2015). According to Brinkmann and Kvale (2015), an interview is where “knowledge is constructed in the interaction between the interviewer and the interviewee” (p. 4). The qualitative research interview is further described as “attempts to understand the world from the subjects’ point of view, to unfold the meaning of their experience, to uncover their lived world” (p. 3).

The article stated that the researcher engaged with the participants in “semi- structured interviews via a video conferencing software in 2020”; however; the author did not describe the interview process in detail. Also, the author did not mention if all the participants’ cameras were turned on at all times or if there were any technical glitches. The author also neglected to state the duration of the interviews,, the time of day that the interviews took place or the day/s of the week or weekend for the interview process. The quality of the audio and visual engagement is also unknown.

### **Data Collection Procedures**

Researchers must maintain a delicate balance between using themselves as research instruments, and ensuring that their views do not bias, lead, or inhibit the participants (Robinson

& Thorne, 1988). It is helpful to know what the researcher's credentials and previous experience as a qualitative researcher are when judging the value of a study (Bums, 1989). This is important because the biases can creep into the findings of the research and render them skewed. By placing ethics at the intersection of the data collection circle, we emphasize the need to attend to ethical considerations across the phases of the research process. Creswell (2013)

## **Limitations**

While we acknowledge that there are strengths to the research design there are also variables that cannot be controlled and limitations that will interrupt the methodology of this study. The following weakness should be considered:

- Some teachers may not complete or answer all of the interview questions hence a full representation of the sample may not be measured.
- Some variables may influence the overall findings. Intervening variables such as unexpected disruptions in the video conferencing , poor internet connectivity or teacher/participant absenteeism from the study may influence and affect procedures and data collection.
- Even though a varied representation of teachers was used in the sampling (Senior Leadership Teams (SLT) and Classroom teachers ) , their various locals may cause difficulty in collection. England is a very big country. Additionally the sample is made up of more females (18) than males (5) . There was no further description or criteria given for the teachers other than that they contributed to “ an average of 14 years of teaching experience”. The ages and professional training levels of the teachers could have assisted with achieving a more objective outcome. For example, some teachers are more

technologically savvy than others and may have been able to better navigate during the interview process using the video conferencing tool versus being interviewed in person.

### **Data Analysis Procedures**

The data analysis process involves sorting, labeling and categorizing all information gathered from the semi-structured interviews questionnaires obtained from the study. The study states that “an inductive thematic analysis was conducted”. The study may be strengthened under this theme by coding. A code that lists each variable/question name, all the answer options and the numerical assigned to each answer option for all sections should be developed to assist with recording the data. This practice is consistent with phase two of the Inductive thematic analysis upon collecting the data. The study may be further strengthened and should reflect showcasing each participants’ response by assigning a unique participant ID, and organize responses and tabulate each by survey item/question.

The coding derived from the data helps you explore the subject. Therefore, this approach to coding is usually adopted for researchers, who want to investigate new ideas or concepts or what they want to create new series. We are able to discern that the inductive and deductive approaches represent two ends of a spectrum. But this doesn't mean that they're usually exclusive. This study yields much data to be filtered and coded. It can be best handled by taking a hybrid approach where you utilize a mix of both. For example, if you find a set of codes, you've derived from a literature review or be previous study,(a previous study was referenced in the article by Klasseen ,et al.,2018) in other words, a deductive approach, however one must be mindful in the event that you still may not have a rich enough code set to capture the depth of your qualitative data. By combining deductive and inductive approaches, which we call a hybrid

approach. Adopting a hybrid approach requires that one begins the analysis, a set of priority codes. In other words, a deductive approach. Then add new codes. In short, the hybrid coding approach provides the best of both worlds, which is why it's pretty common to see this in research. (Creswell 2012)

### *The credibility of the findings*

The participants consisted of teachers and admin only; however, students could have been included to gain diverse perspectives of the phenomenon being studied. Creswell (2013) suggests that researchers may lose track of the need to present multiple perspectives and a complex picture of the central phenomenon. They may actually side with the participants on issues, and only disclose positive results that create a Pollyanna portrait of the issues. This “going native” may occur during the data collection process, and reporting multiple perspectives needs to be kept in mind for the final report.

According to (Patton, 2002), In designing a research study, the researcher should employ the following strategies to ensure study trustworthiness and methodological congruence. It is difficult to declare the study as credible and trustworthy as more than one of the prescribed elements necessary to ensure credibility and rigour is missing from the study. For example “caring for pupil wellbeing, and dealing with uncertainty”. The former links to the importance of empathy and communication from Klassen, et al., (2018) study and somewhat to extraversion from (Kim, et al., 2019) meta-analysis. Carter (2006) suggests that the data collection aspect is a crucial component of the presentation of qualitative research projects. The reader must be walked

through the entire process from identification of the participants to the management of the data and the congruence of the data collected with the research.

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