

## Ethnographic Designs

- Qualitative research method for describing, analyzing, and interpreting cultural organizations shared patterns of behavior, beliefs, and language that develop over time
- Entails “thick description” as the core sources for understanding and analyzing cultural practices
  - For more information see Geertz, C. (1973). Thick description: Toward an interpretive theory of culture. In C. Geertz (Ed.), *The interpretation of cultures* (pp. 3-30): Basic Books.
- Ethnography focuses on understanding of a phenomenon through description rather than theory generation
- Many of the research related practices in education ethnographic designs are borrowed from the field of anthropology

## Types of Ethnographic Design

- Realist Ethnographies

Check following for good educational ethnography resources: Wolcott (1992, 1994, 1995, and 1999) and Fetterman (1998)

- Used by cultural anthropologists
- An objective account of the cultural phenomenon being examined
- Typically written in the third person

- Case Studies

Check following for good case study resources: Stake (1995) and Merriam (1998)

- Differs from ethnography in many ways
- Identifies and examines a “bounded system” that is defined as a case
- A case could be defined as a program, event, activities, individuals, or a group of individuals
- Conduct an in depth exploration of the identified “case” rather than identify a cultural theme

- Yamagata-Lynch (2003) Sample Case study
  - Research question: How does a professional development program fit into participant teachers' everyday work life during and after the program?
  - In 2.4 Data collection (p. 596) describes the study two school districts being individual cases, and the teachers who participated in the study from each school district were part of a larger case
  - Thus, the goal of this qualitative research was to understand and describe the phenomenon surrounding the research question from the perspective of the two cases

- Critical Ethnographies
  - Brings in a “critical” approach to ethnography
  - Usually politically minded
  - Critical ethnographers take an advocacy perspective and through research are interested in empowering groups of marginalized people in our society
  - For example read Kozol, J. (1992) *Savage inequalities: Children in America’s schools*. New York: Harper Perennial.

### **Data Collection Methods in Ethnography**

- Go back to pages 197-218 in textbook where qualitative data collection methods are described and check Table 15.3 on page 492

## **Understanding Grounded Theory Design and Ethnography Design Activities**

- Either in pairs or on your own identify the key characteristics of grounded theory or ethnography design
  
- Then, in the same pairs or on your own examine Feen-Calligan (1999). Enlightenment in chemical dependency treatment programs: A grounded theory (page 464-479) or Finders (1996). Queens and teen zines: Early adolescent females reading their way toward adulthood (pages 505-519)
  
- Identify what characteristics of grounded theory design or ethnography design are incorporated into the articles.
  
- Be prepared to discuss your findings with the class