

Thinking with Theory in Qualitative Research: Viewing Data Across Multiple Perspectives

Alecia Youngblood Jackson, Lisa A Mazzei



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Winner of the 2013 American Educational Studies Association's Critics Choice Award!

Thinking With Theory In Qualitative Research shows how to use various philosophical concepts in practices of inquiry; effectively opening up the process of data analysis in qualitative research. It uses a common data set and utilizes various theoretical perspectives through which to view the data. It challenges qualitative researchers to use theory to accomplish a rigorous, analytic reading of qualitative data. "Plugging in" the theory and the data produces a variety of readings applying various theorists and their concepts, including:

 \circ Derrida - Deconstruction

• Spivak - Postcolonial Marginality

Foucault - Power/Knowledge

• Butler - Performativity

 \circ Deleuze – Desire

• Barad - Material Intra-activity

Thinking With Theory In Qualitative Research pushes against traditional qualitative data analysis such as mechanistic coding, reducing data to themes, and writing up transparent narratives. These do little to critique the complexities of social life; such simplistic approaches preclude dense and multi-layered treatment of data. It shows that "thinking with theory" pushes research and data and theory to its exhaustion in order to produce knowledge differently. By refusing a closed system for fixed meaning, a new analytic is engaged to keep meaning on the move. The result is an extension of thought beyond an easy sense.

Special features of the book include schematic cues to help guide the reader through what might be new theoretical terrain, interludes that explain the possibilities of thinking with a particular concept and theorist and detailed chapters that plug the same data set into a specific concept. This vital tool will help researchers understand and fully utilize their powers of data analysis and will prove invaluable to both students and experienced researchers across all of the social sciences.

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