

## Recommended Examples of Qualitative Research

Lancy, David. (1993). *Qualitative Research in Education*. New York: Longman.

A summary of hundreds of qualitative studies, with emphasis upon methodology. An interesting book to read.

Ratcliff, Donald (1995). *An Elementary School Hallway: Social Formations and Meanings Outside the Classroom*. Dissertation at The University of Georgia. Ann Arbor, MI: University Microfilms #9531229.

Ok, I admit to being a bit vain in listing my dissertation. But I'm self-justifying (rationalizing?) its inclusion because I took seriously what one of my committee members recommended before I began writing: "Make this a teaching document, teach us about qualitative research methods." My committee was made up of two strongly qualitative people and four very quantitative people. It was co-chaired by Judith Preissle (who coauthored what is probably the best textbook on educational qualitative research methods) and a quantitative researcher who was interested in qualitative methodology. I had a great committee--challenging, yet open and interested.

Spindler, George (1982). *Doing the Ethnography of Schooling: Educational Anthropology in Action*. New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston.

An edited volume that gives many examples with strong emphasis upon methodology. It's a classic.

*Anthropology and Education Quarterly*.

An excellent journal that includes many qualitative research studies.

[Also see some of the cited research studies in Margaret LeCompte and Judith Preissle's *Ethnography and Qualitative Design in Educational Research*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. San Diego, CA: Academic Press; and Robert Bogdan and S. Biklen's *Qualitative Research for Education*, Boston: Allyn and Bacon. Also see Patton's book and the Lofland and Lofland text for cited research studies, although these are less likely to be educationally oriented.]

### Educational Ministry-Related Sources

*Many of the studies below are not specifically educational ministry, but are related to possible topics that could be considered in educational ministry research. Of course*

*many of the subjects considered in qualitative educational research could also be adapted to educational ministry.*

Ammerman, Nancy. (1998). *Studying Congregations: A New Handbook*. Nashville: Abingdon.

An interesting overview of a number of studies in this area. Many, though not all, of the studies cited are qualitative. While not sophisticated methodologically, there are lots of good ideas for research studies in churches. This book is very readable, on a "high popular" level. I wish I had written this book--although I probably would have emphasized methods a bit more [and perhaps that would keep it from selling as widely!].

Birkholz, David. (1995). *Walking With God: Students' Stories of Spiritual Growth at a Small Christian College*. Dissertation at the University of St. Thomas. Ann Arbor, MI: University Microfilms #9501457.

College students' concepts of spiritual development are considered within a qualitative framework of study. This was done at a fairly conservative school. This subject should be studied at other kinds of Christian colleges and seminaries, as well as churches. Is there uniformity or considerable diversity in people's understanding of spiritual development in evangelical schools and churches?

McLaren, Peter (1993). *Schooling as a Ritual Performance*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. New York: Routledge.

This is an interesting book, although the methodology fits well with the postmodernist fringe of qualitative research. The book has a strong neo-Marxist inclination. It is included here for two reasons: 1. some of the concepts of how youngsters are socialized into faith may be valid, and 2. While I don't like the postmodern assumptions, it is only fair to give a positive example of what that perspective can accomplish. Frankly, I think McLaren is a good thinker and a good writer, and those qualities probably obscure the shortcomings of the methods used.

Parker, Stephen. (1996). *Led by the Spirit: Toward a Practical Theology of Pentecostal Discernment and Decision Making*. Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press.

This doctoral dissertation (Emory University) that examines how Pentecostals--primarily in one church near the denominational headquarters--express their understandings of God's leading. Some of the theology is suspect (he has a chapter on Paul Tillich) and some would question the predominant psychological theory (object relations), but his

methodology is quite well done. How about a study of Baptists on the same subject??

Peshkin, A. (1986). *God's Choice: The Total World of a Fundamentalist Christian School*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Peshkin is highly respected as a strong methodologist in qualitative research. This book has been lauded by many in the field because he is able to describe a school's culture in a manner such that you can't tell whether he agrees or disagrees with it until the very end. A good example of "bracketing self out," to the degree this is possible.