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Summary

Qualitative research in education

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Qualitative research in education is a specific area with a legitimacy of its own. Qualitative research in education brings together a complex and interrelated group of terms, concepts and assumptions. This includes various research paradigms and perspectives related to positivism, postpositivism, modernism and postmodernism. There is a detailed bibliography on a number of methods and approaches that belong to the field of qualitative research in education. Qualitative research has its own specific tradition and is related to five historical “moments”, each of which marked the development of the qualitative paradigm in education in its own way. In such a specific social and historical context, it is difficult to offer a unique generic definition of qualitative research. Any definition we consider must take into account this complex methodological area. However, as a starting point we need to provide a general definition of qualitative research in education as a multi-paradigmatic and multi-method oriented research including naturalistic and interpretative approach to the subject of research. This means that qualitative methodology always studies actors in their social and historical context aiming to understand and interpret the purpose or meaning of their actions and everyday experiences, which is appropriate for the specific modes of evaluational research. Qualitative research studies in education involve various theoretical paradigms and research strategies, as well as methods of collecting and analysing empirical material, from constructivism and interpretivism, to critical theory, phenomenology, ethnomethodology, action research, in-depth interview and participant observation.

Keywords: education, qualitative research, hermeneutics, phenomenology, critical theory, ethnomethodology.