

# Preface

This book invites the readers to join me in a research journey that took four and a half months, the journey of an Israeli researcher carrying out ethnographic research in another country. As someone who has more than two decades service in teacher education in Israel, this lengthy stay as a researcher at a teacher education institute in a different country gave me the chance to get to know its structure and management well, and to observe its faculty members' modes of conduct and work.

As a researcher and as an academic, I aspired to take advantage of this unique opportunity to get to know the American higher education world, to conduct comprehensive and long-term ethnographic research, and to accumulate professional and personal experiences. Achieving these aims correlates with all academics' desire to constantly learn and develop professionally, be up to date with the newest innovations in their area of professional expertise and contribute to the enrichment of existing knowledge. The opportunity to reside at an American institution was an opportunity to learn and develop while carrying out research on another, different model of teacher education and to experience empowering professional and personal events.

Inserting a researcher with many years' experience in teacher education to conduct research in an institution whose core activities are so similar raised many fascinating challenges and exposed the differences in perception, management and modus operandi. Many channels were opened to me to collect data and gather information, to get to know colleagues, to identify behavioural norms and to learn about a culture and values different from those familiar to me.

The uniqueness and strength of my experiences as an individual made me want to generalize them and produce rich, generic knowledge that would benefit all researchers. Personal and professional experiences have been interpreted and given meaning, which enables fellow teacher educators and researchers, who have not undergone similar experiences, to grow as a result of the experiences of one researcher. The most significant of my many experiences and events were chosen in order to glean from an individual story, broad insights into ethnographic research and the world of higher education and teacher education (Trahar 2009).

The chosen methodology for this research is qualitative-ethnographic research. In order to carry out ethnographic research, ethnographic researchers must change where they live, their living conditions, regular habits and lifestyle. They must join and live in a culture and society unknown to them and devote time to research, learning and data collection. Such a stay becomes a unique personal–professional experience, filled with events and happenings.

This book presents different features of the ethnographic research I carried out, as a researcher specializing and focusing on academic research of those involved in teacher education. With the right conditions and infrastructure provided, it was possible for me to concentrate on doing significant and quite a long-term research.

Along my journey, I was able to observe the research field from different angles, to fulfil a variety of role and present my findings using different voices. So too in this book, where things are present from different points of view, which enables the reader to move naturally between collected data and research interpretations given to events. The possibility to examine things from different points of view and degrees of involvement are expressed by different voices that present conclusions and insights from a research aspect and that of a teacher education academic. The book presents different points of view, each one reflecting one of the roles that I fulfilled while carrying out this research: teacher educator, higher education faculty member, researcher, student and Israeli educator.

The book is designed for lecturers, researchers and students and will constitute a professional source for those engaging in the comparison of teacher education models that are implemented in diverse contexts, cultures and societies, while examining professionals' characteristics and world views, for ethnographic researchers and those studying the contribution of scholars in residence programs. The book is intended for higher education faculty members and students in all subjects addressed in the book, including tools for teacher educators who are interested in learning different teacher education models and making comparisons between them.

The book will contribute to a number of areas in the sphere of research knowledge such as ethnographic research and the ethnographic researcher, the teacher education profession, teacher education models, higher education, professional development and more.

This book can be used as a resource for lecturers teaching qualitative research method, as a text book to be used in courses and assist students, who choose ethnographic research, to complete their research tasks. It can inform ethnographic researchers about preparing for their research, ways to carry it out and ways of dealing with challenges during the research process. It will address learning from the experience of others about stages of planning and execution in ethnographic research; theoretical learning of the characteristics and procedures of methodology in ethnographic research and the ethnographic researcher; and issues to address prior to and during ethnographic research and more.

Because the book was written by a teacher educator and the research carried out in a college of education, the book has additional value specifically for teacher educators and policy makers in the education system. Teacher educators will find

information about different ways of training teachers, including comparative measures with regard to how teacher educators operate, training institutions' influence on the academic conduct of their faculty members, the motivation of faculty members to develop professionally and more.

This book will allow readers and experts to benefit from the professional experiences it depicts and the research findings and conclusions it presents. The unique circumstances and conditions that allow applied academic research are expressed in the way the book is written, which integrates theoretical and academic, research and personal narrative writings. It includes academic articles alongside personal narratives and theoretical descriptions. The combination of three types of writing enables the reader to get a complete picture including practical applications of the research and analysis of the data to reach findings and conclusions, as well as what went on behind the scene. These transitions allow a style of writing that lets the reader participate, makes him/her part of how things develop, their uniqueness and what can be learned from them. Alongside the theoretical background, the findings and conclusions that emerged from the research will teach readers about the experiences that a researcher goes through while carrying out research, including how research is undertaken including difficulties and successes, as well as the advantages of the chosen research design. Therefore, the texts in the book are presented as three types of written performance:

**Descriptive-Theoretical text**, which describes ethnographic research processes and how it is carried out;

**Reflective-Narrative text**, which describes my personal narratives as a researcher about events, situations and my experiences, including thoughts, difficulties, reflections, impressions and interpretations;

**Research-Theoretical text**, which includes theoretical and academic articles that resulted in the ethnographic research. Each article is made up of the required components for an academic article, namely theoretical background, data, findings, conclusions and recommendations.

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## Reference

Trahar, S. (2009). Beyond the story itself: Narrative inquiry and autoethnography in intercultural research in higher education. *Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, 10. Retrieved from <http://www.qualitative-research.net/index.php/fqs/article/viewArticle/1218/2653>



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