

Reflections on the role of the researcher in sensitive organizational inquiry

WHITE, Heather, MEd

Inquiry into organizational well being can be influenced by the researcher's methodological decisions. How the researcher engages with the research participants can be a key consideration to ensuring a relevant methodology to guide the research inquiry. Issues surrounding the benefits and limitations of taking an insider or outsider perspective as well as managing the nuances and challenges of intersubjectivity are particularly important explorations that shape the research design. These issues are of heightened importance when the inquiry is focused on looking at the sensitive issue of organizational health. Research explorations of the organizational factors which enhance employees and, in turn, the organization itself need to consider the psychological safety of participants especially when entering organizations that are not currently functioning at their optimal level of health. This paper will offer an exploration of the literature in the area of insider/outside roles, the nature and realities of intersubjectivity as well as the delicate balance needed to sustain a psychologically safe research environment where participants can offer meaningful and honest perspectives on their experiences. The author will explore ways to balance the needs of the individual with the demands of rigor required of a doctoral research project.