

## 29. CELEBRATING WRITING

Doubts creep through the cracks  
of our ideas  
What's to celebrate about writing?  
There!  
We said it out loud.  
Far easier to write about  
the struggle  
the hard work  
the sore backs  
from sitting at computers  
the frustrations  
of not being able to say  
quite what we mean  
in quite the right way.  
We'd rather be dancing!  
or walking  
through the crisp autumn air.  
Still ...  
There's something about  
having a party at the end  
that's inviting.  
The joy of crafting  
words that create communities  
researching for change.  
Now that's worth celebrating!!!

In this chapter we reflect on writing qualitative research on practice. We do this by distilling from previous chapters the essential richness and diversity of enacting and celebrating the act of writing.

We identify key features of writing and demonstrate that the process of qualitative writing generates valuable by-products, particularly growth and development. In the very act of writing we are able to learn many things: about our subject/s, the writing process itself and, importantly, about ourselves.

#### MERGING THEORY AND PRACTICE

Our aim in editing and writing for this book was to write about the social context of writing. As we wrote about it we found we were repeatedly enacting the very things we were writing about: we were frequently engaging with co-authors and editors, with our participants' stories, with authors of other texts, with critical friends, and with members of our writing groups. Our writing about qualitative research on practice was a carefully planned and executed exercise. At the same time we unconsciously enacted what we were writing about. That is to say, in the process of theorising about writing qualitative research on practice, we found that theory and practice merged.

We also celebrate a "coming of age" for qualitative research in this book. Each chapter is evidence, at least from its authors' points of view, that old prejudices questioning the claim of qualitative research to be rigorous and credible scholarship are well and truly buried. The time for apologies for qualitative research has passed. The energy once used to defend our work as qualitative researchers is now being diverted to creative and well crafted research writings which reflect an astonishing depth and breadth of work. This is evidenced in this book which offers a mixture of theoretical chapters and chapters that draw primarily on the practical knowledge of experts. We celebrate the fact that these latter chapters spring directly from the practice wisdom of their authors.

#### KEY FEATURES OF WRITING

The authors in this book embrace the notion of writing and reading as message- and meaning-making in all their forms, including photographs, images, poetry and music. This, we believe, allows clear, accessible and exciting communication about research on practice. Exploring and using multiple forms of writing provide researchers with the tools to capture the research experience fully, as well as making their work engaging and interesting for many types of readers. This is essential if we seek to do research that others will engage with and find useful and transformative of practices at many levels and in a multitude of contexts. Within and across the diversity of the writings in this book we discovered that three key features were evident in the many different ways of writing qualitative research: writing to be read, writing as social practice and writing as research practice.