Chapter 4
Heuristic Inquiry: The Internal Research Pathway

ABSTRACT
This chapter presents current research insights into the selection of heuristic inquiries for a doctoral-level inquiry. Heuristic inquiry within social science research allows for self-as-subject representations in search of the essential meaning of phenomena or constructs explored and through the analysis of the individual experience, results may inform larger sociocultural contexts. While receptivity of heuristic inquiry as rigorous doctoral-level research varies by discipline and institution, the research design in doctoral education remains widely accepted for doctoral-level inquiry as it often appeals to the doctoral scholar due to the deep introspection expected in the phases of analysis. While heuristic inquiry emerged within psychology, doctoral scholars use the introspective research design across fields of study, the doctoral degree program, and institution to meet all institutional requirements and ethical assurances. Like autoethnography, the relational aspects between doctoral scholar and research supervisor are vital to successful heuristic inquiry and the doctoral scholar’s development as a new investigator.

INTRODUCTION
As we become conscious of the last frontier, the interiority of the self as experienced by the self, we may learn how to consciously transform both the internal experience and the outside world. – Sandy Sela-Smith (2002, p. 86)

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-5225-9365-2.ch004

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Moustakas (1990) put forward a brief guide to the use of heuristic research only after his own landmark study of self-as-subject focused on the phenomenon of loneliness (Bach, 2002; Moustakas, 1961). The author needed a word to describe the process of an internal investigation of the intrinsic human experience, and came upon the Greek word, *heuriskein*, which meant heuristic, or the internal search to know (Moustakas, 1990, p. 9). The guide continues to offer a rigorous and systematic process along with detailed procedures for a heuristic research design. For doctoral scholars desiring to conduct systematic research for new knowledge of a lived construct or phenomenon, Moustakas offered HI as an alternative to intensive and systematic introspection for researchers who desire an “existential lens” to the inquiry (Blau, Bach, Scott, & Rubin, 2013, p. 99). The procedures have been described as a self-disciplined and rigorous examination necessary to know the very essence of the construct or phenomenon of the inquiry (Bach, 2002) and continue to be utilized across doctoral disciplines well beyond humanistic psychology in fields such as education, medicine, and other social sciences. Many researchers have utilized HI with personal data, but others have also gathered archival data from others (Throne, 2016) or even self plus others for HI analysis (Ikiugu, 2012).

Yet, perhaps Moustakas still remains more often better known for his later adaption of Giorgi’s (1970) phenomenological methods for phenomenological research design (Blau et al., 2013; Moustakas, 1994). Ozertugrul (2017a) clarified HI contrasts phenomenological inquiry where detachment from the phenomenon is expected as HI expects the researcher-participant to explore a construct from the individual perspectives apart from larger structures or conclusive definitions within the field, and Brisola and Cuapperry (2016) situated HI within the many forms of phenomenology and said, “Although other phenomenological methods also value the researcher subjectivity, the heuristic approach puts it, explicitly, in the center of the investigative process” (p. 2). Appelbaum (2012) succinctly outlined four faulty assumptions often attributed to Giorgi’s phenomenology that can be helpful to doctoral researchers who consider blending HI with Moustakas’ (1994) phenomenology, hermeneutic phenomenology, or descriptive phenomenology for self-as-subject research and Giorgi (2017) has responded to critics of scientific phenomenology that can also be helpful to sorting through qualitative research approaches to align with a self-as-subject doctoral research study.
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