

Prospectus: Making Sense of Social Research Methodology: A Student- and Practitioner-Centered Approach

Course and Market Conditions

This text will be used for an introductory research methodology course in education, counseling, social work, teaching, and other applied social sciences. Nearly all master's level graduate programs in these fields, particularly education, require an introductory social science research methodology course. There is, indeed, a longstanding commitment to including courses like this as part of what it means to earn a graduate degree, and along with this, stability in the market for course texts. Typically, a graduate program will offer about 8 sections of such a course every year enrolling on average 20 students per section. Such courses are usually titled something like "Research Methods in X" or "Introduction to Educational Research Methods," where "Educational" might be replaced with Social Work or other specific field-related names.

Although doctoral programs also require an introduction to research methodology course, there is often a distinction between the interests and needs of master's and doctoral students in terms of their relationship to research as consumers or producers. Our book is unique in that it is particularly accessible to graduate students who intend to be professional consumers of research, making use of scholarship in their everyday practices, though it will also be useful for those who intend to go on to be researchers in academic settings. Though not specifically geared for the undergraduate level, we anticipate advanced undergraduates in social science fields might benefit from it.

Competitive Landscape

One of the important things to note as we identify the competitive set of texts is that nearly all of them are written assuming the readers are future academic researchers. By positioning readers as future researchers in the more formal sense of that word, students whose aims are to be school leaders, counselors, non-profit directors or other human serving professionals are potentially disconnected in at least two ways – not sensing themselves as an appropriate audience for the book and not easily recognizing the value of research for their everyday lives (Ross, Zhao, Li, Dennis, 2014 and in press). Shifting this so that the main orientation positions the reader as a *consumer* of scholarship and ordinary researchers as knowledge-seekers creates a more inclusive text for graduate programs. Our textbook embraces this kind of inclusivity. According to our research and experience, students who enter graduate programs in order to improve and promote their professional practices tend to enter an introductory research methodology course with a disconnect already in place – "Why do I need to know about research to be a good school counselor?" From our own teaching experiences, a more inclusive approach that facilitates connecting with students' motivations and passions can increase the relevancy of the course for students.

Another important characteristic to note is that these texts are all content-centered rather than student-centered. This often results in the text delivering a cannon on research methodology to the students – as if methodology is a set of rules, principles, and procedures one learns to follow. Our text veers away from this tendency to think about content as a cannon of information (e.g., characteristics of particular research designs, procedural differences between qualitative and

quantitative research, and memorizable definitions of validity, for examples). Instead, our textbook will focus on engaging students in reflection about the everyday world they encounter as professionals in terms of how it relates to important concepts and practices in research methodology. We intend to create critical opportunities for students to bring to the text their own experiences, knowledges and needs resulting in a more relational and personal understanding of methodological content. In terms of structure, our pedagogical design involves developing content knowledge organically through a dialogic form with the students that honors their perspectives, experiences, needs, and identities.

We have identified 6 popular texts utilized in the kinds of courses appropriate for our proposed text.

- *How to Design and Evaluate Research in Education* by Fraenkel, Wallen and Hyun (McGraw-Hill Education, 2014, 9e). This book is organized mainly by research designs. However, the organization is unclear and overlapping, with a disproportionate emphasis on quantitative research. For example, in addition to the “Introduction to Research” in Part One, the authors include Part Five, Introduction to Qualitative Research. The part on data analysis only introduces statistics, which is used solely in quantitative studies. Co-author Dennis was taught using a previous edition of this book in 1996. The book has been around a long time, but is clearly not balanced in its presentation of research methodologies and does not take into account contemporary social science deconstruction of design-centered approaches.
- *Real World Research* by Robson (Wiley, 2011, 3e). This comprehensive and densely written textbook provides an experientially daunting amount of information for new learners. A strength of the book is that the author identifies his philosophic stance (critical realism) and clearly discusses what this stance means for doing research. Another appeal of this book is the way it is organized through a flexible discussion-oriented approach to research. Robson strikes a balance between presenting common strategies for research and engaging contemporary debates. Co-author Dennis used this book for several semesters, but discontinued its use because students consistently felt overwhelmed by its complexities and comprehensiveness.
- *Educational Research: Planning, Conducting, and Evaluating Quantitative and Qualitative Research* by Creswell (Pearson, 2014, 5e). This is probably the most widely used text in graduate introductory research methodology courses in schools of education. All four co-authors have used it off and on. As an introductory text it errs on the side of oversimplification. For example, the text’s approach reinforces methodological divisions based on design structure (quantitative, qualitative and mixed) without really exploring the various complexities associated with these divisions, such as epistemological aspects. The oversimplification results in “mis”-information commonly learned. For example, ethical and validity issues are raised as if they *only* relate to research procedures. The book attempts to draw connections to students’ everyday lives by using a student-future-researcher as an exemplar case in working through the various steps and procedures

entailed in the research process. However, in our view, the book does not adequately integrate those narratives into the content presentation (the narratives are distinct from the presentation of substantive material). Also, the exemplar is a method for learning the canon, rather than a perspective from which to critically engage with the canon. This will be different in our book.

- *Educational Research: Fundamentals for the Consumer* by McMillan (Pearson, 2012, 6e). As in Creswell's text, McMillan uses research procedures and research designs as the primary threads to structure his book. The book falls short in providing a solid and accessible epistemological foundation and mostly introduces procedural and technical issues of research in a prescriptive way. Therefore, it is less inviting and stimulating for students. It implicitly uses quantitative research as the prototype of research and reinforces the stereotype of a hierarchy/gold standard view of research methodology. Also, the textbook discusses validity dispersedly without providing a coherent understanding.
- *Introduction to the Philosophies of Research and Criticism in Education and the Social Sciences* edited by Paul (Pearson, 2004). Paul's textbook aims at equipping students with knowledge on different perspectives of research as the basis for critically reading research articles. It includes nine educational studies as examples as well as critiques of these studies from different perspectives. However, the textbook is unable to offer a clearly defined understanding of "perspective," and thus leaves people to wonder why the author picked these nine perspectives and not others. Although the textbook has multiple voices, very little work has been done to build meaningful conversations between the different voices. Since the book emphasizes critical readings of research, it seems as if research consumers are an included audience, but the critics engage the readings primarily based on their philosophical orientation. Thus, the connection between research and practice is totally missing. Co-author Dennis has successfully used this text as a supplemental text in her introductory course, but on its own it does not sufficiently prepare graduate students to use or engage in research.
- *Methods of Educational and Social Science Research: The Logic of Methods* by Krathwohl (Waveland Press, 2009 3e). This text begins with an overarching look at the philosophy of social science and then moves into concepts, skills, and at last design specific sections that are methodological in focus. While much more integrative than the other texts, this latest edition still privileges a quantitative way of thinking as its general frame of reference. Though the presentation of content is thorough, like its counterparts, the oversimplification becomes problematic and the material itself is set up as a canon of knowledge and skill set that the student should take in. The material is not easily translatable to graduate students' practice.

Approach

This text is co-authored by a group of scholars who have been researching, writing and presenting together for over 5 years. We intend this text to be used as the primary text in graduate introductory research courses. As suggested in our critical identification of competitive texts, our book will differ from existing textbooks in its student-centered approach. Our focus on students has grown out of our own ongoing research project with graduate students enrolled in the very course this book targets. We are using the findings of this study to inform the development and writing of the book. For example, we draw on a diversity of student perspectives and experiences to create an inclusive approach to the learning. Secondly, findings from our study have provided us with a way to reconceptualize traditional material taught in introductory methodology courses by thinking through various student motivations, needs and identifications as they relate to inquiry. The book moves *away from* a didactic view of knowledge as if it exists external to the student and *toward* the premise that learning and knowledge are interactional and relational, always internal to the learners. We expect that learning is optimized when students, as they are, interact with doing and thinking through *inquiry*.

One key finding in our study has been coming to understand how a student's starting conceptions of research and her way of identifying with research are entailed in the way the contents of the course (including the text and the cannon) are *interpreted*. We have been writing about "pragmatic fissures" evidenced in our study – that is, disjunctures in the ways students talk about research in contrast with how they position themselves as knowers. We intend to use this finding to help us bridge the gaps between students' ideas about what research is and their own experiences as producers and consumers of knowledge. The existing texts assume one correct interpretation of the material and treat the material as a cannon of expected, impart-able, knowledge that someone with a graduate degree should command. Unfortunately, the traditional way of delivering this course is not relevant for the majority of graduate student practitioners, and existing texts neither aim at nor succeed in alleviating this problem.

By taking a student-centered orientation, we intend for our book to be broadly inclusive and dialogic. We specifically intend for the book to welcome graduate professional practitioners to understand and engage with research, learning to identify with it in ways that are personally meaningful and that resonates with their identities both as graduate students and as professionals (in some cases, very experienced professionals) in a variety of applied fields. This is in contrast with the traditional approach that assumes one common particular reader and simultaneously positions that reader as the recipient of didactically produced information. In addition to excluding a large number of students who cannot locate themselves in this designated position (more master's level practitioner students than doctoral level students), such didactic approaches limit the way the substantive material itself is engaged. The tendency to either oversimplify (Creswell) or overwhelm (Robson) seems a natural outcome when the focus is on getting the material across.

Our text does not assume that an introduction to research methodology by-and-large requires a didactic presentation of hows-tos and standardized explanations. Neither will our text primarily exclude those students whose main orientation toward the class will be professional practice. Lastly, our text will not perpetuate an idea that research methodology is irrelevant to everyday inquiry. Instead, our text will build on the idea that as graduate students and practitioners in professional fields, we are all engaged in research, moving from understanding this in informal

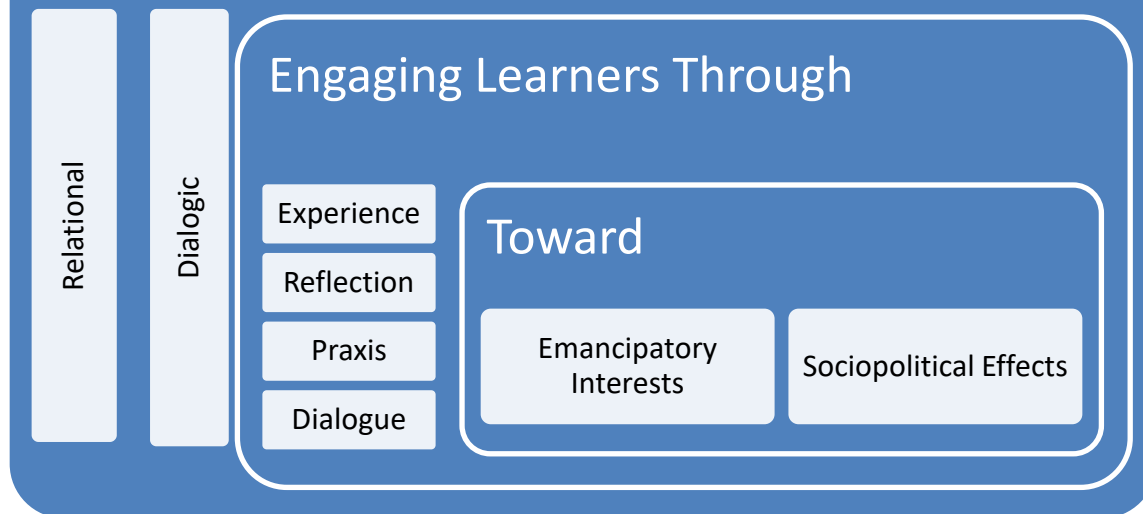
practice to understanding this in formal practice. Our approach conceptualizes research as creative, engaged, fluid practice that ethically taps into a variety of knowledge domains, including contemporary research methods. Methods themselves will not serve as the primary orientation for the text, although discussions of applying different methods of data collection/analysis (as well as of writing up research and engaging with existing literature) will be integrated into the chapters.

Through our study, we identified key modes through which students pragmatically connect with the material (namely experience, reflection, praxis and dialogue). We will use these modes to provide opportunities for students to engage conceptually with the field of inquiry. For example, in each chapter, readers will be asked to reflect on an ordinary or every day experience in a way that connects the structure of that experience to research concepts and vocabulary. In the initial chapter, we use the experience of getting to know a person one might fall in love with. Our text will also take a more holistic approach to the content, rather than the more common linear (moving through the research process) or design oriented approaches. We intend to focus on the *relational* aspects of doing research – a phrase you would be hard-pressed to locate in a current introductory text on research methods. We think of research as *communicative action* and this has layers of relationality nestled within it. We use the idea of relational aspects of research to help us orient the chapters. These decisions are informed by our research and are responsive to issues and needs that we have been able to identify through that research. In the sections that follow, we provide more details regarding how this approach actually manifests in the text.

Features and Pedagogy

Because our main approach centers on students and their experiences, each chapter will be organized around modes of relating and engaging the readers with research and core substantive concepts. Our goal is to invite readers into modes of “experience,” “reflection,” “praxis,” and “dialogue” with research ideas and practices. What we hope to do across these four modes is draw on readers’ ordinary experiences, facilitate reflection into those experiences, and make connections between experience and practice with practices to include both professional and research domains. Dialogue is both process and product in the chapters. By situating research practices as dialogic, we hope readers increase their abilities for and interests in both learning from and contributing to research conversations. Each chapter involves a dialectical movement between informal to formal modes of inquiry, a “going deeper” approach to looking inside concepts and practices, and a critical orientation toward research knowledge itself.

LEARNER-CENTERED APPROACH (Learning *with*)



- Chapters will begin with a “*puzzle*,” a scenario based on an ordinary/everyday situation, leading to a set of Socratic questions. These puzzles are designed to invite readers to engage with the topic of the chapter in a way that is grounded in everyday experiences and help readers reflect upon their own positions in relation to these topics. A scenario on ethics, for example, might ask readers how they would handle being misinterpreted by a friend, what could be done about the misinterpretation, and so forth.
- “Puzzles” will be followed by *narratives* that focus on the substantive content of the chapter. These narratives will vary across the chapters: some will be written in the form of interviews with scholar-practitioners, some may be presented as a series of multi-vocal narratives (exemplified in the first chapter included with this prospectus); others may be presented as plays or in other textual formats. The goal of the narratives will be to present conceptual ideas in an engaging manner and to highlight how methodological concepts arise in the research process. Additionally, integrated into the narratives will be “conceptual interlude” sections, which will highlight and explain conceptual ideas/terminology introduced within the narratives and will introduce students to the range of methods used for data collection and analysis. Narratives may be accompanied by more than one “conceptual interlude.”
- Following each narrative will be a *scenario* or set of scenarios, applying concepts raised in the narratives into a research context, using examples of empirical research and research processes from the professional fields that graduate students may be working in (education, counseling, etc.). These scenarios will illustrate concretely how the concepts addressed in the chapters manifest in actual research studies and will introduce students to the diversity of research methods they might use if/when they engage in formal empirical research, comparing and contrasting traditional approaches to the more critical approach introduced earlier in the chapter. For instance, scenarios will be accompanied by concrete questions that allow readers to focus on the practical and technical aspects of

research design, data collection, and data analysis as well as on broader conceptual issues. Moreover, a key element of these scenarios is that they will draw upon concepts from earlier chapters as well, becoming more complex and synthesizing multiple concepts. The scenarios will also explicitly link informal and formal contexts of inquiry – highlighting links to research in professional practice and different forms of knowledge.

- This will be followed by an integrative section that offers a *synthesis/anti-thesis* of the conceptual issues presented via the narrative and scenarios.
- Each chapter will then include a brief *recap* of key concepts and will end with a section entitled *You and research* that explicitly asks students to consider how concepts discussed throughout the chapter, including those focused on the technical aspects of inquiry, might apply to their own engagement with research in academic and/or practitioner contexts.

This chapter structure facilitates the modes through which students can engage with the content such that the actual content is constructed, deconstructed and reconstructed through their active involvement with the material.

Artwork

We expect to produce our own drawings and charts. We do not intend on using publicly produced or other's artwork. The purpose of the drawings, tables and charts will be to illustrate relationships and concepts to one another in a visual format. These will work as graphic organizers for the material/student interaction.

Length

The book will be 17 chapters long with chapter length averaging 10,000 words for a total of number of chapter words not exceed 170,000 words. Additional pages will include appendices, an index, list of references, and front matter increasing the word length to an estimated 200,000 words. This translates into on average 20 page chapters totaling 340 pages, with an additional 20 pages for index, references, and front matter. Total anticipated book page length is 360.

Ancillaries

Since this approach is significantly different from that taken in other texts our plan is to include a brief companion website or supplementary textual material for instructors that (1) shares the research findings guiding the text; (2) offers classroom activities and lesson planning ideas to correspond with the chapter readings; and (3) creates reflective questions to engage instructors to reflect on how their own pedagogical approaches interact with this text. We do not anticipate this being very long. We also plan to include a list of additional readings/resources at the end of each chapter that will guide readers towards materials that can help them further develop their knowledge of specific data collection and analysis techniques. In addition, discussion questions will be provided within and at the end of each chapter, especially in the section of *You and Research*, to engage and guide students to make sense of, further reflect on, and apply the learning materials to their own professional contexts. We will also integrate a series of appendices that expand on the text content if/when the main text has limited space to do so, for instance, additional articulation on certain philosophical and/or theoretical foundations, a historical review of different research traditions and approaches, checklists of key research

competencies, sample research proposal templates, and sample research studies that successfully capture the integration of research and professional practice. We will also compile a glossary to highlight key research concepts and vocabularies.

Detailed Table of Contents

The textbook will be organized into three “clusters,” each consisting of several chapters that raise questions about similar issues and highlight important topical similarities and contrasts. We have organized the text specifically with the eye toward maximizing the recursive non-linear nature of research and challenging the quantitative-qualitative divide characteristic of how most texts introduce research methodology. Yet, it is a book so sentences will be read in a linear way. We hope that the recursive nature of inquiry and its related concepts will be maximized through the organizational structure previously described. Key concepts and processes will be presented in ways that help students gain confidence in being able to engage in all aspects of the research process (choosing a design, asking good research questions, considering methods for acquiring/generating and analyzing data), but will also be addressed in a critical manner and revisited with increasing complexity. For example, in the first cluster we present the tension between data and interpretation, understanding that most readers will easily recognize this tension. Then in cluster two we have a chapter on data preceding a chapter on research questions. This ordering undermines the original tension and invites readers to recognize that a general sense of data precedes any particular effort to “collect” data. This opens a space for discussing the agentic nature of a researcher’s data as well as the political effects of data. This chapter ordering, also, allows us to deconstruct the linear idea that data comes before interpretation and is neutral in terms of its interpretive content. We intentionally deconstruct the distinction between data and interpretation after allowing for its substantiation earlier in the text. In the third cluster, we address the inferential possibilities and constraints implicit in the way data are particularly constructed for inquiry purposes.

- *Chapter 1* will begin by introducing our own collective research project (on the meaning of research for students in an research methodology course) as a way of introducing the book as a whole and setting the stage for *Cluster 1*.

Cluster 1: Introductory cluster

The introductory cluster will raise “big-picture” issues that are relevant across the full spectrum of research methodology topics and set the stage for presenting research as a relational endeavor. The integrated introduction will build a strong foundation for developing conceptual interludes in later clusters of the textbook.

- *Chapter 2* will introduce students to the concept of “research” and discuss the relational nature of research as it manifests within this project. The chapter will also invite readers into the approach we will take and models the structure of the following chapters.
- *Chapter 3* will focus on issues of identity. Building on the relational approach to research first addressed in chapter 1, this chapter will raise the questions, “Who am I?” and “Who are you and I?” in relation to the research process. Central concepts will include action research and legitimate knowledge and how these are tied to the identity of the researcher. Many introductory research texts are written as if the identity of the reader

or researcher is not consequential for the learning of introductory research material, but our research indicates otherwise. We found that *how* students identified with research did influence their learning. Moreover, one goal of the text is to help students take a praxis-oriented approach to research and such an approach requires an awareness of identity. Substantively, there is a distinct difference in the way qualitative and quantitative researchers explicitly address identity in the research process; we will thus facilitate a dialogue about this difference in preparation for discussing the relationship between identity and meaning and validity in subsequent chapters.

- *Chapter 4* will address ethics as a topic permeating all research processes. While it will include a discussion of ethics as related to Institutional Review Boards, the chapter will move beyond this, reflecting the contemporary ethical debates of the field. Specifically, the chapter will use concepts from chapter 3 as a springboard for discussing ethics as drawing on relationships, and will touch on issues related to positionality and power dynamics embedded in the research process. The chapter will juxtapose procedural approaches to ethics and how these should be addressed with an emphasis on interactive demands of a more situated ethics in a way that resonates with research practices.
- *Chapter 5* will focus on knowledge and meaning. In this chapter we will discuss the concepts of ontology and epistemology, relating them back to issues of identity and ethics discussed in the previous chapters. In this chapter, multiple ways of thinking about meaning will be engaged through a dialogue about meaning in the data analysis process and interpretation. Drawing on critical theories as an example of philosophical foundation, particularly the ideas of Jürgen Habermas, we will illustrate the active nature of meaning, locating it internal to knowledge and knowledge-seeking. Habermas's theory provides a framework through which we can draw out insights from other theoretical foundations, including but not limited to phenomenology, constructivism, humanism, and post-structuralism. We realize it might seem odd to have a chapter on meaning in an introductory methodology text, but we find its more traditional omission dissatisfying because by understanding "meaning" we can better understand validity aspects of research, how to interpret the link between data and phenomena, how to mix methods, and so on. As we encourage our readers to think about their assumptions about knowledge and meaning, we will also share our own, which is an understanding of meaning as internally embedded in intersubjective communication based on Habermasian critical theory. By sharing our own assumptions, we do not intend to impose a correct answer to this query, but to invite more conversations and questions.
- *Chapter 6* will connect the concepts discussed in previous chapters to the broader sociopolitical context within which research takes place. Specifically, we will focus on the way that the sociopolitical context shapes and can limit our interpretations and how we engage in the analytical process, how it is linked to knowledge, and the way that the context can shape ethical dilemmas and possibilities for their resolution. There are several interesting communities of researchers, for example RADSTATS and Critical participatory action researchers who foreground the need to think of the real world effects of research: What effect does this research have on the world, including on the world of the research participants/subjects? We take seriously the adage that no research is neutral research and that all research acts have consequences. We want students to think about the broader sociopolitical consequences and contexts both as consumers of research and as do-ers of professional, research-informed practices.

- *Chapter 7*, the last chapter of this introductory cluster, will focus on issues related to validity. Given the importance of validity as a research concept, we view it as necessary to address the topic in an integrated manner that transcends the traditional divide between qualitative and quantitative research and the specific aspects of validity connected to different methodological approaches. We will discuss validity holistically as it relates to the other concepts emphasized in this cluster, specifically: ethics, knowledge, and identity. Readers will have an opportunity to examine how they intuitively draw on concepts of validity when resolving disputes in order to see how a unified way of thinking about validity might underlie particularly validity concepts, and related strategies and requirements during research practice.

Cluster 2: What's the meaning of 'data'?

Building upon the introductory part of the text, cluster 2 will be composed of chapters that address questions related to data – what it means, how it is generated, and so forth.

- *Chapter 8* will focus on defining data, addressing questions such as: what are data? What counts as data? Who decides this and how is it decided? Is there a difference between 'raw' data and data as an interpretable phenomenon? The chapter will also draw a relationship back to concepts discussed in the introductory cluster. It will include a discussion of the relational nature of data as well as the way that validity issues relate to the way data is defined and delimited. Prior to asking a research question, one has to accept a generalized concept of data as representation of phenomena and not the phenomena themselves. This generalized concept of data becomes explicit through acts of operationalizing and so forth. By explicitly creating data or accepting something as data, a researcher is being agentic. Creating data is an active process that both enables and constrains the research parameters. Understanding this is necessary prior to articulating research questions.
- *Chapter 9* will emphasize the question, "What am I interested in/what am I looking for?" The chapter will revisit the link between research and identity, this time as related to data collection and in particular the background knowledge that researchers bring to the table as they begin the research process. The chapter will also discuss the process of conducting a literature review and how the literature review process connects to the development of research questions and hypotheses. Standards for researchability and quality of articulation will be discussed, as well as the relationship between research question and research methodology, and how one develops a research project in which this link between question and methodology is clear. The concept of research design, along with examples of research designs, will be introduced. As an application, we will also introduce the process and structure of developing a research proposal in this chapter while being dispersed in other relevant chapters and synthesized in Chapter 16 as well.
- *Chapter 10* will focus on the process of acquiring and generating data across a variety of forms or methods. This will include a discussion of what it means to acquire data in relation to generating data by building on the earlier discussion of "data" in Chapter 8. Very specific approaches to generating and tapping into data will be critically examined. For example, the chapter will introduce techniques such as questionnaires, interviews, observations, and tests and how these can be developed and utilized in the context of a given methodological approach. It will explore the differences between them by thinking

about how the phenomena of interest are assumed to be represented through the data and by thinking about the researcher's responsibility in relation to the particular data at hand.

- *Chapter 11* will emphasize the questions, "How do I know I have enough data?" and "How do I know I have good data?" In the chapter, we discuss issues related to sampling, operationalizing, test/questionnaire selection and so on. With this focus, chapter 10 will begin making the connection between data and inference which is the topic of cluster 3.

Cluster 3: How do we understand 'inference'?

In the chapters making up cluster 3, we will move into a discussion of making inferences and how this is related to our definitions of data and different forms of data acquisition/generation. Each chapter will explain concepts related to inference in a way that helps students develop confidence in engaging in the inferential process, and will continue to raise questions about the concept of 'data' and its relationship to interpretation.

- *Chapter 12* will focus on issues related to the inferential or analytical process. The chapter will address questions related to the kinds of inferences people make and how theory and identity influence the way inferences are made. The chapter will also discuss inference in relation to the sociopolitical context, focusing on, e.g., who has the right to make certain types of inferences, and how the sociopolitical context shapes the inferences that we make.
- *Chapter 13* will discuss issues related to description vs inference. This will include an introduction to conceptual statistical issues – for instance, explaining the difference between descriptive and inferential statistics. The chapter will also discuss qualitative inferences, such as the concept of 'thick description' and how this differs both from 'raw data' and from reconstructive analyses.
- *Chapter 14* will focus on inferences related to trends and experiences. Key concepts in this chapter will include causation, correlation, explanation, and generalization (in terms of both micro- and macro-level inferences).
- *Chapter 15* will focus on the implications of the inferential process. Touching upon, but reframing, issues raised in chapter 12 on the inferential process, the chapter will emphasize in particular the relationship between inferences in the research process and policy making – in other words, how the inferences we make from our data can shape the sociopolitical context.
- *Chapter 16* will address the writing up of research, further building on the concepts raised in chapter 15 by focusing on how the stories we tell, or how we re/represent our research, shapes the way it is received and the impact it might have. This chapter will also tie together some of the discussions related to the writing of research proposals that are infused throughout other chapters of the textbook.
- *Chapter 17* will conclude the text. This chapter will explicitly re-emphasize concepts raised in all three clusters of the textbook, including broader issues such as validity and ethics, as well as the relationship between data and inference. It will also provide a meta-reflection on the relational aspect of research.

Textbook table of contents:

Chapter 1: Our Research Story: A Prelude

Cluster 1: Understanding research: Making Sense of Underlying Assumptions

Introduction to chapters 2-7

Chapter 2: How do we know? That is the question

Enquiring minds want to know: Knowledge-seeking in ordinary life: A puzzle

The meaning of “research”: Narrative and conceptual interludes

(Main concepts and ideas introduced here: epistemology, criticalism, partisanship, intersubjectivity, reflection)

Lessie Jo Frazer: A research scenario

Understanding “research”: A synthesis and antithesis

You and research

Further resources

Chapter 3: Research, identity, and relational processes

The presentation of self in everyday life: A puzzle

Exploring identity in research: Narrative and conceptual interludes

(Main concepts and ideas introduced here: identity and identity claims, action research, legitimate knowledge, pragmatic knowledge)

Action research: a multi-vocal research scenario

Research, identity, and relational knowing: A synthesis and antithesis

You and research

Further resources

Chapter 4: Ethical considerations across the spectrum of research

What would you do? An ethics puzzle

Procedural and relational ethics in research: Narrative and conceptual interludes

(Main concepts and ideas introduced here: a procedure approach to ethics vs. a situational approach, power dynamics, positionality, intersubjectivity)

Who and what is prioritized? An ethical research scenario

Tensions in the ethics of research: A synthesis and antithesis

You and research

Further resources

Chapter 5: Knowledge and meaning in research

What we know and how we know it: A puzzle

Theories of knowledge and knowing: A multi-vocal narrative and conceptual interludes

(Main concepts and ideas introduced here: ontology and epistemology, multiple philosophic foundations of research, validity of research)

What we mean by “understanding meaning”: A research scenario

Re-thinking epistemologies: A synthesis and antithesis

You and research

Further resources

Chapter 6: Contextualizing research in social, cultural, and political spheres

What is legitimate knowledge? A puzzle

Normativity and research: Narrative and conceptual interludes

(Main concepts and ideas introduced here: social structure and individuals, normativity, integrating theories into empirical studies, effects of research, emancipatory knowledge)

Emancipation through research: A research scenario

Power and the research process: A synthesis and antithesis

You and research

Further resources

Chapter 7: Engaging with validity through research

Dealing with outliers: A puzzle

Validity in the research context: Narrative and conceptual interludes

(Main concepts and ideas introduced here: different ways to conceptualize validity, validity and meaning, validity and ethics, validity and identity)

How do we know it's valid? A research scenario

Validity as holistic: A synthesis and antithesis

You and research

Further resources

Cluster 2: What is the meaning of ‘data’?

Introduction to chapters 8-11

Chapter 8: The making and remaking of ‘data’

A phenomenon by any other name: A puzzle

Data isn't “raw”: Narrative and conceptual interludes

(Main concepts and ideas introduced here: representation of social phenomena, the impossibility of raw data, interpretation, operationalization, variables)

The limitations of data: A research scenario

Data as interpretation: A synthesis and antithesis

You and research

Further resources

Chapter 9: What am I looking for? Revisiting research and identity in the context of data

What is it that intrigues us? A puzzle

The questions we come up with: A multi-vocal narrative and conceptual Interludes

(Main concepts and ideas introduced here: conducting literature review, formulating research problems, questions and hypothesis, developing a research proposal)

Developing questions: A research scenario

Research, research questions and methodology: A synthesis and antithesis

You and research

Further resources

Chapter 10 Acquiring and generating data

How should I make that lasagna? A puzzle

A day in the life of a researcher: Narrative and conceptual interludes

(Main concepts and ideas introduced here: different techniques of acquiring data, connecting data acquisition to given methodological approaches, ethical issues related to data acquisition)

Making choices about data collection: A research scenario

The iterative nature of data generation and acquisition: Synthesis and antithesis

You and research

Further resources

Chapter 11: How do I know I have “enough”/”good” data?

How did the lasagna turn out? A puzzle

Around the world of research studies: Narrative and conceptual interlude

(Main concepts and ideas introduced here: different sampling strategies, saturation, generalizability and transferability, selection of instruments)

Evaluating the data collection process: A research scenario

What makes it “good”? Synthesis and antithesis

You and research

Further resources

Cluster 3: How do we conceptualize ‘inference’?

Introduction to chapters 12-16

Chapter 12: Understanding inference as a process

How did you choose your graduate school?: A puzzle

A feminist-multi-culturalist debate: Narrative and conceptual interludes

(Main concepts and ideas introduced here: inference, reliability and validity of inference-making, power and egalitarianism in making inferences, types of inferences)

Theory, epistemology, and inference: A research scenario

Making sense of data: Synthesis and antithesis

You and research

Further resources

Chapter 13: Description and inference in the research sphere

The process of making choices: A puzzle

Inferences around the research world: Narrative and conceptual interludes

(Main concepts and ideas introduced here: conceptual issues of descriptive and inferential statistics, thick description, reconstructive analysis, coding)

Making decisions: A research scenario

Inference, analysis, and theory: Synthesis and antithesis

You and research

Further resources

Chapter 14: Making inferences about trends and experiences

Obesity is contagious! A puzzle

How do you infer “impact”? Narrative and conceptual interludes

(Main concepts and ideas introduced here: causation, correlation, interpretation, generalization, transferability, theory building)

The process of making inferences: A research scenario

Products of the inferential process: A synthesis and antithesis

You and research

Further resources

Chapter 15: Coming back full circle: implications of the inferential process

What is the impact of your choices? A puzzle

Making sense of it all: Narratives and conceptual interludes

(Main concepts and ideas introduced here: inferences in research and policy-making, rethinking the role of researchers)

How inferences can shape the context: A research scenario

Tying it all together: A synthesis and antithesis

You and research

Further resources

Chapter 16: The writing and telling of research

Re-presenting: A puzzle

The stories that we tell: Narrative and conceptual interludes

(Main concepts and ideas introduced here: writing up research proposals, evaluating inference-making and reporting process, social and political impacts of research, from research findings to practice)

Writing it up: A research scenario

Telling it to the world: A synthesis and antithesis

You and research

Further resources

Chapter 17: Continuing the Story: The Postlude

References

Ross, K., **Dennis, B.**, Zhao, P., and Li, P. (in press). Exploring students' understanding of research: Links between identity, validity, and research conceptions. *International Journal of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education*.

Ross, K., Zhao, P., Li, P., and Dennis, B. (April, 2014). Exploring students' conceptions of research and inquiry. Presented at the Annual Conference of the American Educational Research Association, Philadelphia, PA, April, 2014.

Credentials

All four of us have been involved in teaching courses for which this text is appropriate for over 5 years. We are considered strong instructors by our peers and students, with multiple teaching awards as part of our credentials. We all have Ph.D. emphases in educational research methodology intersecting with substantive fields including multicultural education, higher educational, peace/comparative education, counseling education, and professional psychology. We also all publish and present on methodology and are active in scholarly associations such as the American Educational Research Association. We have been working together on this project for over 5 years.

Schedule

We have started writing the text, and have completed one additional chapter in addition to sample chapters 1 & 2 included in this proposal.

Book Production Proposed Timeline

