

A Bibliography of Research Methods Texts

ACRL Instruction Section Research and Scholarship Committee

April 2006 (Document last updated January 2009)

This annotated bibliography of research methods texts is produced by the ACRL Instruction Section Research and Scholarship Committee. It provides information on research methods relevant to library and information science, and is intended to complement the "Research Agenda for Library Instruction and Information Literacy."

<<http://www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/acrl/about/sections/is/projpubs/researchagendalibrary.cfm>>.

This annotated bibliography lists English language texts that are currently in print and that focus on research methods in librarianship or the social sciences. The books are arranged into general subject categories and then listings appear alphabetically by author. Paired with each citation is a list of published reviews including reviews authored by committee members. Additional details may be found in the Committee Publications Details & Revisions Schedule (pdf). The list is reviewed and updated biennially, and is intended to be selective rather than exhaustive. The annotated bibliography is a work in progress: current selections are based on recommendations from committee members. The IS Research and Scholarship Committee welcomes suggestions of citations for inclusion. Please contact the current Research & Scholarship Committee chair

<<http://www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/acrl/about/sections/is/committees/commiteecharges.cfm>>.

[I. Introduction to General Research Methods](#)

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[VII. Case Studies](#)

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I. Introduction to General Research Methods

Babbie, E. R. 2007. *The basics of social research* (4th ed.). Australia: Thomson/Wadsworth. 576 pages. ISBN: 0495094684. \$102.55 (pbk).

Committee Member Review

This is a recent update to the textbook many librarians used in graduate school. The latest edition contains commentary on contemporary issues in social research in addition to clearly-written and engaging essays on understanding and performing qualitative and quantitative research.

-Caroline Barratt, Jan. 2009

No published reviews.

deMarrais, Kathleen B. and Stephen D. Lapan. 2004. *Foundations for research: Methods of inquiry in education and the social sciences*. Mahwah, NJ: L. Erlbaum Associates. 432p. ISBN: 0805836500 (pbk.), US \$47.50.

Committee Member Review

Foundations for research is a unique work in the area of research literature. The authors provide an array of important social science research possibilities, and practical suggestions for conducting research. What makes the text truly unique is the author's discussion of the philosophical debates that are inherent to research in the social sciences, and their emphasis on implementing high-quality and trustworthy designs.

In *Foundations for research*, deMarrais and Lapan distinguish between research methods and methodologies and deliberate at length the relationship between research theory and design. Specific research methods and pedagogical strategies are also provided. Librarians in search of a text that combines practical suggestions with ethical direction can find both in this book.

- Christopher Hollister, March 2006

Published Review:

Review of *Foundations for research: Methods of inquiry in education and the social sciences*, by Kathleen B. deMarrais and Stephen D. Lapan. 2004. *Reference & Research Book News* 19:1.

Denscombe, Martyn. 2007. *The good research guide for small-scale social research projects*. 3rd ed. Maidenhead, UK: Open University Press. 360 pages. ISBN: 0335220223. \$48.50 (pbk).

Committee Member Review:

This accessible guide covers both philosophical and practical issues regarding social research. Beginning with a discussion of several approaches to social research, Denscombe then digs into the details of performing social research, ending with an explanation of interpreting both qualitative and quantitative data. The book is designed to help the researcher who has limited time and resources to determine first what strategies would be best for his/her research, then what particular methods to use to collect the data, and finally how to analyze the data. The book is therefore organized in three parts: The first half of the book is Part I, *Strategies for Social Research*, covering surveys, case studies, internet research, experiments, action research, ethnography, phenomenology, and grounded theory. Part II, *Methods of Social Research*, covers questionnaires, interviews, observation, and documents. Part III, *Analysis*, discusses quantitative data, qualitative data, writing up the research, and includes examples of tables and graphs discussed. A *Frequently Asked Questions* section provides a few key definitions, and there is an index and an extensive list of references.

A helpful feature of the book is the use of an icon that indicates a link between a discussion in one chapter with one in another chapter, so that the reader can jump to related information without consulting the index. Useful periodic checklists provide criteria for decisions on use of various strategies, methods of data collection, or types of analysis. Short summarizing paragraphs are also sprinkled throughout the text, and these, the linking icons, and the checklists are all set off well to make scanning the text for important points very easy. Throughout, the author emphasizes that there is no single correct research technique, and that the researcher needs to know the issues involved in order to make educated decisions. This book aims to help that process.

This update to his best-selling book includes information on mixed methods and research using the internet, enhancing a useful guide for the first-time researcher.

- Nancy H. Dewald, Feb. 2006; Caroline Barratt, Jan. 2009

Published Reviews:

Of the first edition:

Kemple, Mary. 2000. Review of *The good research guide for small-scale social research projects*, by Martyn Denscombe. *Journal of Advanced Nursing* 31:733.

Todd, Roy. 1999. Review of *The good research guide for small-scale social research projects*, by Martyn Denscombe. *Sociology -The Journal of the British Sociological Association* 33:839.

Of the 3rd edition:

Brady, Mary. 2008. Review of *The good research guide for small-scale social research projects*, by Martyn Denscombe. *Nurse Researcher*, 15,2: 88.

Dooley, David. 2001. *Social research methods*. 4th ed. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall. 385p. ISBN: 0139554289, (hbk.), US \$105.00

Committee Member Review:

Dooley's book is an introductory text for students in the social sciences. His emphasis is on quantitative methods. Only one chapter, "Qualitative Research: Participant Observation," discusses qualitative methods. Each of the fifteen chapters in the book ends with a summary, related web sites (though some links are dead, there are still useful suggestions), exercises, and key words (which are bolded throughout the text).

The fourth edition added information on use of the World Wide Web in Appendix A. Obviously, much has happened on the Web since the book was published in 2001, and most librarians would not read this book to access this section. Appendix B, entitled "Statistics Review," might be more helpful and could serve as a quick review of statistical terms and examples. The book concludes with a glossary, reference list, and name and subject indexes.

- Christen Cardina, December 2005

Published Review:

Vogt, Paul. 2001. Review of *Social research methods*, 4th ed., by David Dooley. Education Review. <http://edrev.asu.edu/reviews/rev121.htm>.

Drew, Clifford J., Michael L. Hardman and Ann Weaver Hart. 1996. *Designing and conducting research: Inquiry in education and social science*. 2nd ed. Boston, MA: Allyn and Bacon. 470p. ISBN: 0205166997 (hbk.), US \$94.00

Committee Member Review:

For those of us who may lack the "conceptual framework" in research methods, the authors provide an excellent primer. The text has 16 chapters, references, a glossary and both a subject and an author index. The authors begin logically with an introduction to the research and the research process (I only wish a review of the literature had been prominently featured), ethics and professionalism and then they get to the nitty-gritty with design and detailed statistics. This book would be helpful as a textbook

if you were teaching students (undergraduate or graduates) about research or for one's own use at the outset of a research project.

My favorite features included:

- same data graphed different ways
- design validity comparing two methods of teaching
- entire chapter on measures, instruments, and tasks
- designing non-experimental (questionnaires & interview, e.g.) research

This is not an advanced statistics book that includes all the tables necessary for analysis and that's just as well: it's not overwhelming. *Designing and conducting research* is a great tool for the beginning researcher.

- Alison Armstrong, March 2006

No published reviews.

Glicken, Morley D. 2002. *Social research: A simple guide*. Boston, MA: Allyn and Bacon. 282 p. ISBN: 0205334288 (hbk.), US \$46.67

Committee Member Review:

In his experience as a professor of graduate research in social work, the author found that his students had difficulty understanding the research methods texts he assigned; he felt that social research should be comprehensible to everyone interested in research and wished to make social science research appealing and understandable for students. This guide accomplishes that for anyone interested in improving research methods.

Social Research concisely describes each phase of the research process using real-world examples and humorous vignettes to aid in understanding complex concepts; it is clearly written and very readable. Starting with a discussion of why research is done in the social sciences the author then explains how to choose a research problem and walks the reader through the proposal process. Later chapters describe and explain research instruments, qualitative research design and quantitative research design, the importance of (and how to do) the literature search, statistical analysis, ethics in research, and writing the report. Written and tested as a textbook, each chapter is followed by review questions and a list of references.

- Polly D. Boruff-Jones, March 2006

No published reviews found.

Gray, David E. 2004. *Doing research in the real world*. London, UK: Sage Publications. 422p. ISBN 0761948783 (hbk.); 0761948791 (pbk.), US \$140.00 (hbk.); \$56.95 (pbk.)

Committee Member Review:

Doing research in the real world is a well written introduction to research methods, whether for people doing research in the workplace, students writing theses and dissertations, or people writing

journal articles. Gray writes in a friendly, helpful style, as if sitting next to the reader and guiding him/her through the process.

The first three chapters should be read by everyone, and later chapters on specific methods can be read as needed. After explaining the difference between the deductive process and the inductive process in chapter one, chapter two summarizes the philosophical underpinnings of the various research methodologies. Chapter three discusses selecting and planning a research project, including helpful tips on types of topics to avoid. This chapter also includes information on writing a research proposal. Succeeding sections of the book cover research methods (experimental and quasi-experimental, surveys, case studies, evaluation); data collection tools (questionnaires, interviews, observation, unobtrusive measures such as document evaluation); analysis (of quantitative and qualitative data) and report writing; and action research. Ethical issues are mentioned throughout the text. The writing is clear and succinct, and references to more detailed information are provided in each chapter and in the final bibliography.

Throughout the book brief case studies and activities are set apart in boxes. The case studies bring theories and definitions to life, while the activities are provided to help the reader reflect on his/her own research, or to analyze ideas in the text, or to explore relevant web sites. The book also includes chapter objectives and summaries, a glossary, and index.

This helpful book is highly recommended to anyone getting started in research.

- Nancy H. Dewald, March 2006

Published Reviews:

Bostock, Stephen. 2005. Review of *Doing research in the real world* by David E. Gray. *Nurse Researcher* 12:90.

Redish, Janice. 2005. Review of *Doing research in the real world* by David E. Gray. *Technical Communication* 52:376.

Kerlinger, Frank Nichols and Howard B. Lee. 1999. *Foundations of behavioral research*. 4th ed. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth. xxv, 890 p. ISBN: 0155078976 (hbk.), US \$127.95

Committee Member Review:

This text examines the fundamentals of solving a scientific research problem, focusing on the relationship between the problem and the research design. This edition includes new information about computer statistical software, multivariate statistics, research ethics, and writing research reports in APA style. This book is ideal for graduate students in that it covers statistics, research methodology, and measurement all in one volume. This is a book that graduate students will keep as a reference throughout their careers.

There are very few books written that cover as many important topics in behavioral research methods as this one. This is a must have book for anyone planning to do statistical analysis, not only in psychology but in the social sciences as well. Earlier editions were outstanding and the fourth edition is exceptional. The new material in the 4th Edition is helpful to today's researcher. Both researcher and student doing research should have this book. The examples are extremely useful in facilitating the understanding of research methods and the analysis of data.

Foundations of behavioral research's major purpose has always been the same: to help students understand the fundamental nature of the scientific approach to problem solution. Technical and methodological problems have been considered at length. One cannot understand any complex human activity, especially scientific research activity, without some technical and methodological competence. But technical competence is empty without an understanding of the basic intent and nature of scientific research: the controlled and objective study of the relations among phenomena. All else is subordinate to this. Thus the book, as its name indicates, strongly emphasizes the fundamentals or foundations of behavioral research.

- Mark Spasser, December 2005

No published reviews

Miller, Delbert C., and Neil J. Salkind. 2002. *Handbook of research design and social measurement*. 6th ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications. xxii, 786p. ISBN: 0761920463 (pbk.), US \$84.95

Committee Member Review:

The 6th edition of the authors' "reference handbook" addresses all areas of social science research. It would make an excellent text for any overview course in this area. Comprehensive in scope, it addresses most of the aspects of understanding behavioral or organizational research, applied and evaluation research, and qualitative research. It also deals with issues such as study design, data collection, research resources, and analysis. Particularly useful are the sections regarding such fundamental issues as research proposals and ethics.

Each section includes many examples and an extensive list of resources. This volume may not be practical for the casual reader or practitioner in a hurry; it is so broad in scope that it would be most useful for someone with a serious academic interest in social sciences research.

- Anna Pilston, March 2006

Published reviews:

Powell, Ronald R. 2004. Review of Handbook of research design and social measurement, 6th ed., by Delbert C. Miller and Neil J. Salkind. *Library & Information Science Research* 26:110.
 Uprichard, Emma. 2004. Review of Handbook of research design and social measurement, 6th ed., by Delbert C. Miller and Neil J. Salkind. *Sociology - The Journal of the British Sociological Association* 38:407.

Neuman, W. Lawrence. 2006. *Social research methods: Qualitative and quantitative approaches*. 6th ed. Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon. 592p. ISBN: 0205457932 (hbk.), US \$89.00

Committee Member Review:

Neuman presents an updated edition of his popular textbook, *Social research methods*. This book is really meant for use in an undergraduate or beginning graduate class. It introduces readers to social research generally, including discussions of theory and basic methodologies. The remainder of the book has basic information on developing research questions, a literature review, and quantitative and qualitative research designs and methods. The book provides definitions and some excellent examples throughout, especially of good research questions and an example of effective literature reviews.

The book would be useful to librarians who want a very general introduction to the broad sweep of social science research. Consulting the chapters on literature reviews and measurement, for example, might be useful at the beginning of a research project. The book does read like a textbook, however, and is less effective in its entirety. For more detailed and practical treatments of various qualitative and quantitative research methods, books focused on those areas alone are likely more useful.

- Wendy Holliday, March 2006

Published Review of the 5th edition:

Bischoping, Katherine. 2005. Review of Social research methods: Qualitative and quantitative approaches, 5th ed., by W. Lawrence Neuman. *Teaching Sociology* 33:95.

Outhwaite, W., & Turner, S. P. 2007. *The SAGE handbook of social science methodology*. Los Angeles (Calif.); London: SAGE. 640 pages. ISBN: 1412901197. \$130.00 (hbk).

Committee Member Review:

A thorough guide to the history, issues, and debates regarding social research and its methodologies, written by experts in the field. Though not a how-to handbook, this collection of essays may be useful to the researcher who seeks to understand the philosophies behind certain modes of inquiry.

-Caroline Barratt, Jan. 2009

Published Review:

Wang, R. 2008. Review of The SAGE handbook of social science methodology by W. Outhwaite and S. P. Turner. *CHOICE*, 45, no. 2 (Oct): 359.

Patten, Mildred L. 2004. *Understanding research methods: An overview of the essentials*. 4th ed. Glendale, CA: Pyczak Publishing. 170p. ISBN 1884585523 (pbk.) 5th ed.: 183p. ISBN 1884585647 (pbk.), US \$52.50

Committee Member Review:

(This review is of the 4th edition) The strongest feature of *Understanding research methods* is its explanation of research methods for students of all ages. For the reader who barely remembers his/her old research methods course or never took one at all, this book explains the essentials clearly and concisely. Each topic (of which there are 59) is explained in two pages, and each topic ends in a three part exercise: (1) review questions, (2) "questions for discussion" to help the reader synthesize the information, and (3) questions "for students who are planning research" that help a researcher apply that topic to his/her own research planning. The topics are organized under seven categories: introduction to research methods, reviewing literature, sampling, measurement, experimental design, understanding statistics, and effect size and meta-analysis.

There are seven Appendices. The best amplify the regular text on the topics of standard deviation, effect size, and determining reliability, and one reprints an excellent article by R. Burke Johnson from the journal *Education* titled "Examining the Validity Structure of Qualitative Research." The three remaining appendices would be less useful to librarians: excerpts from literature reviews, electronic

bibliographic databases, and electronic statistical databases. A "table of random numbers," a "table of recommended sample sizes for populations with finite sizes," and an index complete the book. There are no references to other sources. This book would be helpful to any researcher trying to determine what type of method(s) to use for researching a particular subject, as well as how to ensure the quality of one's research.

- Nancy H. Dewald, February 2006

Published Review (of the second edition):

Baker, Lynda M. 2001. Review of *Understanding Research Methods: An Overview of the Essentials*, 2nd ed., by Mildred L. Patten. *The Library Quarterly* 71:96.

Simon, Julian Lincoln. 2003. *Basic research methods in social science: The art of empirical investigation*. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers. [Reprint of previous 2nd edition, 1978, entitled *Basic research methods in social sciences: The art of empirical investigation*.] 558p. ISBN: 0765805308 (pbk.), US \$34.95

Committee Member Review:

This textbook is a reprint of the second edition, published in 1978, with a new introduction by James E. Katz. Katz praises the author's conversational style as well as his emphasis on applied examples to help new social scientists not only conduct, but understand, research. The book has five parts: "The process of social-science research," which gives basic descriptions of statistical terms and types of empirical research; "Research decisions and procedures," the bulk of the book, covers the steps in the research process from advice on finding an appropriate research problem (very helpful), to designing experiments, collecting, analyzing, and writing up the data. Various research methods are also thoroughly described. Part three is entitled "The obstacles to social-science knowledge and ways to overcome them," followed by "Extracting the meaning of data," which explains relationships among variables, probability and hypothesis testing. The Epilogue, Bibliography and Index complete the book. Chapters include exercises, "additional reading," tables, graphs, and even cartoons. This book is highly recommended for its thoroughness, clarity, and applicability to library research.

- Christen Cardina, December 2005

No published reviews.

Yates, Simeon J. 2004. *Doing social science research*. London, UK: Sage Publications: Open University. 293p. ISBN 0761967974 (hbk.); 0761967982 (pbk.), US \$119.00 (hbk.); \$48.95 (pbk.)

Committee Member Review:

Yates begins by explaining that this book was developed with the book *Social science in question* by Mark J. Smith, and that while Yates frequently relates techniques to theories such as empiricism or positivism, he refers the reader to fuller discussion of philosophy and theory in the Smith book. However, it is not necessary to read both books to benefit from Yates' text. Following an introduction, Part II discusses quantitative research methods, including survey research, experimental research, and the numerical data analysis used for both of these methods.

Part III, qualitative research methods, discusses interviewing (in-depth interviews, focus group

interviews, and ethnographic fieldwork), analyzing qualitative data, and discourse analysis. The book ends with a brief chapter on selecting and evaluating methods of research; references; and an index. Yates has included extended readings from other sources. Some of these readings simply provide further explanations of the text, while others are fascinating research articles, for example, "Lessons from the electorate: What the 1992 British general election taught British pollsters about the conduct of opinion polls" and "Becoming a mother - Developing a new theory of early motherhood." Yates also uses Self Assessment Questions (SAQs) throughout the text to help the reader absorb the material. Although there are no library or information science examples, this is a helpful textbook for researchers who are relatively new to social science methodology.

- Nancy H. Dewald, Feb. 2006

No published reviews.

II. Introduction to Qualitative Research [↑](#)

Berg, Bruce L. 2008. *Qualitative research methods for the social sciences*. 7th ed. Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon. 336p. ISBN: 0-205-62807-9 (pbk.), US \$76.40

Committee Member Review:

This book offers the most comprehensive coverage of qualitative techniques of any book on the market today and does it in a way that is easy to read and follow. The author's central purpose is to instruct naive researchers to effectively collect, organize, and construe qualitative data, while stressing the importance of ethics in research and of properly designing and thinking through any research endeavor. After reading this book, new researchers should be able to design, collect, and analyze data and then present their results to the scientific community. Berg considers seven different data collection strategies in detail. *Qualitative research methods* describes focus group interviewing, one of the fastest growing styles of data collection, in detail including a new Moderator's Guide that provides the inexperienced focus group facilitator with a step-by-step guide to how the interview should be conducted. The book continues its emphasis on ethics in research including a new section on the President's apology for the Tuskegee Syphilis Study. *Qualitative research methods* is for anyone in the social sciences who needs to develop research methodological skills.

Unique in both scope and focus, *Qualitative research methods* is a comprehensive introduction to designing, collecting, analyzing, and reporting research data. This book also stresses the importance of taking the time to properly design and think through any research endeavor. Topics new to the fifth edition include appropriate uses for the Internet, and using computers as a tool for interviewing and for conducting ethnographic research.

7th edition includes new and expanded discussions of many research strategies, including concept mapping, critical ethnography, action research, and visual ethnography.

- Mark Spasser, December 2005, Amy Deuink, Jan. 2009

Published Reviews (of the 6th ed.):

Caulley, D. N. 2007. Review of *Qualitative research methods for the social sciences*, 6th ed, by B. L. Berg. *Qualitative Research Journal* 6.2: 227.

Ellingson, L. L. 2007. Review of *Qualitative research methods for the social sciences*, 6th ed, by B. L. Berg. *Communication Research Trends* 26.1: 24.

Creswell, John W. 1997. *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five traditions*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications. 403p. ISBN: 0761901442 (pbk.), US

Committee Member Review:

This book explores the philosophical underpinnings, history and key elements of each of five qualitative inquiry traditions: biography, phenomenology, grounded theory, ethnography and case study. Creswell relates research designs to each of the traditions of inquiry and consistently compares each of the research strategies for theoretical frameworks, writing introduction to studies, collecting data, analyzing data, writing the narrative, and employing standards of quality and verifying results. Five journal articles in the appendix offer fascinating reading as well as examples of the five different qualitative designs.

Creswell manages to clearly explain differences and similarities of the five methods. Vocabulary, glossaries, examples and illustrations make each of the methodologies come alive to the reader. It is excellent as a review for someone who is writing their thesis, or for a new graduate student to grasp an understanding of qualitative methods. Chapters include designing a qualitative study, philosophical and theoretical traditions, and standards of quality and verification. Appendixes include examples of a biography, a phenomenology, grounded theory, and an ethnography.

- Mark Spasser, December 2005

Published Reviews:

Denzin, N. K. 1999. Review of *Qualitative inquiry and research design: choosing among five traditions*, by John W. Creswell. *Contemporary Psychology* 44:97.

Race, R. 1999. Review of *Qualitative inquiry and research design: choosing among five traditions*, by John W. Creswell. *Educational Research* 41:236.

Rodgers, B. L. 1999. Review of *Qualitative inquiry and research design: choosing among the five research traditions*, by John W. Creswell. *Qualitative Health Research* 9:711.

Whittaker, E. 2000. Review of *Qualitative inquiry and research design: choosing among five traditions*, by John W. Creswell. *Current Anthropology* 41:883.

Gorman, G. E., & Clayton, P. 2005. *Qualitative research for the information professional*. 2nd ed. London: Facet. 320 p. ISBN: 1-85604-472-6 (hbk.), US

Committee Member Review:

The second edition of this well-reviewed and accessible text serves as a brief theoretical and highly practical introduction to qualitative research by information professionals, for information professionals. The title briefly discusses the value of information research to information work and evaluating the existing qualitative research upon which new research is based, before delving into practical information on conducting qualitative research. These topics include: research design; the case study; conducting fieldwork using observation, interviewing, group discussion, and historical investigation; recording and analyzing your data; and, writing up your research findings.

- Amy Deunk, Jan. 2009

Published reviews:

- Agosto, D. E. 2006. Review of *Qualitative research for the information professional*, by G. E. Gorman and Peter Clayton. *Journal of the American Society for Information Science and Technology* 57.12: 1708-1709.
- Goulding, A. 2006. Review of *Qualitative research for the information professional*, by G. E. Gorman and Peter Clayton. *Education for Information* 24: 73-74.
- Bawden, D. 2005. Review of *Qualitative research for the information professional*, by G. E. Gorman and Peter Clayton. *Journal of Librarianship and Information Science* 37.3: 161-162.
- Firth, A. 2005. Review of *Qualitative research for the information professional*, by G. E. Gorman and Peter Clayton. *Education Libraries Journal* 48.2: 29-30.
- McDowell, N. 2005. Review of *Qualitative research for the information professional*, by G. E. Gorman and Peter Clayton. *Library Collections, Acquisitions & Technical Services* 29: 338-339.
- Terras, M. 2007. Review of *Qualitative research for the information professional*, by G. E. Gorman and Peter Clayton. *Literary & Linguistic Computing* 22:246-248.

Merriam, Sharan B. (ed.). 2002. *Qualitative research in practice*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass. 439 p. ISBN: 0787958956 (pbk.), US \$30.00

Committee Member Review:

This book is intended as supplement to more standard textbooks for students or practitioners in the social sciences who want to learn more about qualitative research through reading and studying articles. Although not focused specifically on library science, the preface notes that although different questions asked by disciplines as diverse as education, nursing, social work, or urban studies, the strategies of qualitative inquiry are the same in each of these areas. The preface notes that "qualitative research" can be applied to interpretive, critical, feminist, post-structural, Marxist, and participatory research, with the majority of chapters reflecting an interpretive approach to research. *Qualitative research in practice* consists of two sections: an introductory section comprised of two chapters that explain qualitative research and discuss ways of assessing and evaluating it, as well as a second section consisting of 16 articles which exemplify different types of qualitative research. The second section includes two examples each of basic interpretive studies, phenomenological research, grounded theory, ethnography, and case study, as well as two critical qualitative research studies and two postmodern studies. A concluding chapter rounds out the book. References are included, as is an index.

- Rob Withers, April 2006

Published Reviews:

- Chapman, Valerie-Lee. 2002. Review of *Qualitative research in practice*, by Sharan B. Merriam. *Adult Learning* 13:32.
- Clark, Christopher, et al. 2003. Review of *Qualitative research in practice*, by Sharan B. Merriam. *Teachers College Record* 105: 656.
- Cox, Pat. 2003. Review of *Qualitative research in practice*, by Sharan B. Merriam. *Social Work Education* 22:115.
- Frankel, Richard M. 2004. Review of *Qualitative research in practice*, by Sharan B. Merriam. *Education for Health: Change in Learning & Practice* 18:305.
- Hansman, Catherine A. 2004. Review of *Qualitative research in practice* by Sharan B. Merriam. *Education for Health: Adult Education Quarterly* 54:242.

Morse, Janice M. and Lyn Richards. 2007. *Readme first for a user's guide to qualitative methods*. 2nd. Ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications. 288p. ISBN: 1-4129-2743-9 (hbk.), US \$48.95

Committee Member Review:

Morse and Richards provide a substantial introduction to three traditions of qualitative research: phenomenology, grounded theory, and ethnography. The goal of the book is to educate readers about the various, purposive choices that qualitative researchers need to make in order to design and conduct good qualitative research projects. The theme of purposiveness runs through the book, as Morse and Richards return to the three traditions of qualitative research as touchstones. Morse and Richards argue that researchers need to return to the larger questions of purpose and theoretical methods during project planning, data collection, data analysis, and writing up research. Researchers need to think their projects through, from beginning to end, and make the best choices from a range of strategies.

The book is organized into four parts. "Thinking research" includes a theoretical overview of phenomenology, grounded theory, and ethnography, including assumptions, the kinds of questions best addressed by each method, and a description of what "data making" looks like. Part Two, "Inside analysis" provides a brief introduction to interviews, observations, and document analysis. These sections are especially useful with practical tips on ways to track and manage data, an often overlooked process in books on qualitative research. This section also covers coding and abstracting larger ideas or theories from data and using memos to track evolving thoughts and ideas throughout the research process. The last section, "Getting it right," reviews techniques and strategies for ensuring quality and rigor throughout the research process. The book also includes a CD-ROM tutorial on QSR's NVivo qualitative research software. Richards is one of the creators of the software. The CD-ROM includes tutorials using actual data from two qualitative research projects, and supports Morse's and Richard's argument that one must learn qualitative research by doing. The tutorials are especially useful for those who need concrete examples of what qualitative data looks like.

This book is meant for practitioners and students who are thinking about beginning qualitative research. It is especially useful to beginners because it does not advocate a particular method. Rather, it asks researchers to ground their research within a particular method, based on the questions, goals, and purpose of the research. The book explains why this important, and might help those new to qualitative research to create more effective and sound research projects from the beginning. For more seasoned researchers, the book might also provide a good refresher with some basic research design and analysis tips.

Updates to the 2nd ed. include Qualitative software overviews and advice, reflects changes to the new release of the NVivo software, new sections on writing, more detailed accounts of the integrity of qualitative methods, and an emphasis on methodological choice, including a "map" of methods.

- Wendy Holliday, March 2006, Amy Deuink, Jan. 2009

Published Review:

Of the first edition:

Hislop, Ethel. 2002. Review of *Readme first for a user's guide to qualitative methods*, by Janice M. Morse and Lyn Richards. *Nurse Researcher* 10:85.

Slater, P. 2004. Review of *Readme first for a user's guide to qualitative methods*, by L. Richards and J. M. Morse. *Journal of Family Studies* 10.1: 130-131.

Of the 2nd edition:

Day, W. 2007. Review of *Readme first for a user's guide to qualitative methods*, by L. Richards and J. M. Morse. *Qualitative Research Journal* 7.1: 67.

Patton, Michael Quinn. 2002. *Qualitative research and evaluation methods*. 3rd ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications. xxiv, 688p. ISBN: 0761919716 (hbk.), US \$85.95

Committee Member Review:

This volume focuses on qualitative research and data, which the author identifies as coming specifically from "three kinds of data collection": interviews, observation, and document analysis. It is divided into three sections. The first discusses "conceptual issues," explaining the basics of qualitative research, theory, and applications. In the second section, "designs and data collection," the author discusses the design of studies as well as fieldwork and interviewing. Finally, the third section addresses "analysis, interpretation, and reporting," including the best ways to enhance results for presentation purposes. All three sections are generously sprinkled with useful examples, or "exhibits," and case studies.

Although the book lacks a general introduction, its organization is clearly outlined in its two tables of contents, one brief and one more detailed. All references are included in one big list at the end of the volume, and the book also has separate author and subject indexes. This resource is detailed and thorough, but its style still manages to be very readable, and at times is even lighthearted and amusing. It would be a welcome guide for serious practitioners or students.

- Anna Pilston, March 2006

Published reviews:

Devitt, Patric. 2003. Review of *Qualitative research and evaluation methods*, 3rd ed., by Michael Quinn Patton. *Nurse Education Today* 23:467.

Janesick, V. J. 2003. Review of *Qualitative research and evaluation methods*, 3rd ed., by Michael Quinn Patton. *Qualitative Health Research* 13:884.

Locke, Karen. 2002. Review of *Qualitative research and evaluation methods*, 3rd ed., by Michael Quinn Patton. *Organizational Research Methods* 5:299.

Tiefer, L. 2003. Review of *Qualitative research and evaluation methods*, 3rd ed., by Michael Quinn Patton. *Journal of Sex & Marital Therapy* 29:403.

Rossman, Gretchen B. and Sharon F. Rallis. 2003. *Learning in the field: An introduction to qualitative research*. 2nd ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications. 392p. ISBN: 0761926518 (pbk.), US \$43.95

Committee Member Review:

Rossman and Rallis have provided a useful book for those who learn better through narrative and concrete examples, rather than abstract discussions. The book is organized around three characters, Anthony, Marla, and Ruth, students in a qualitative research class. Each chapter begins with a conversation between the students as they struggle with major phases of the research process, from developing good, focused research questions to data analysis and writing. Each character represents a different qualitative research approach: descriptive, evaluative, and action research. Within these three approaches, the characters also represent further typological breakdowns, or what the author calls qualitative genres: ethnographies, phenomenological studies, and socio-communication studies. The

authors try to organize the book to address broad commonalities across disciplines. This organization can be especially useful to librarians who tend to borrow from a variety of fields.

The first four chapters provide a grounding in qualitative research basics, ranging from more philosophical discussions of researcher reflexivity to a chapter on "competent and ethical" research. The remaining chapters are organized chronologically, moving from the development of research questions through data collection and analysis and the final presentation of results. Chapters 8 and 11 provide extensive excerpts from the characters' data and analysis, so that readers can see concrete examples of field notes, interview transcripts, and interpretive memos and preliminary coding. Rossman and Rallis have provided a more reflective book, rather than a "cookbook" approach. The goal is to introduce researchers to "principles of good practice" that can be applied more broadly, rather than mastering a particular data collection technique. The authors also emphasize how research can and should be used to make changes in the real world of practice. This approach can also be especially useful to librarians (especially instruction librarians) conducting evaluative research with the goal of assessing, and possibly changing, actual practice.

- Wendy Holliday, March 2006

Published Review of 2nd edition

Breacher, Alan and Avon J. Murphy. 2005. Review of Learning in the field: An introduction to qualitative research, 2nd ed., by Gretchen B. Rossman and Sharon F. Rallis. *Technical Communication* 52:90.

Published Reviews of 1st edition:

Berger, J.G. 1999. Review of Learning in the field: An introduction to qualitative research, 1st ed., by Gretchen B. Rossman and Sharon F. Rallis. *Harvard Educational Review* 69:349.

Hammersley, M. 2000. Review of Learning in the field: An introduction to qualitative research, 1st ed., by Gretchen B. Rossman and Sharon F. Rallis. *Contemporary Psychology-APA Review of Books* 45:260.

Patton, Michael Quinn. 2002. Review of Learning in the field: An introduction to qualitative research, 1st ed., by Gretchen B. Rossman and Sharon F. Rallis. *American Journal of Evaluation* 23:115.

Strauss, Anselm, and Juliet Corbin. 2007. *Basics of qualitative research: Techniques and procedures for developing grounded theory*. 3rd ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc. xiii, 379p. ISBN 1412906431 (hbk.), US \$89.95

Committee Member Review:

Aimed primarily at students and novice researchers across a range of disciplines, the authors intend this work as a "set of useful tools for analyzing qualitative data" (xi), rather than as a "recipe book to be applied to research in a step-by-step fashion" (xi). The grounded theory methodology - originally co-developed by Strauss and having the "ability not only to generate theory but also to ground that theory in data" (8) - is comprehensively explored. In her preface, author Juliet Corbin describes this text as a substantial revision that includes new and rewritten chapters while maintaining much of the content of the 1st edition. Chapters are clustered in three sections that flow through background information on qualitative research and project planning considerations, techniques for analysis, and post-research writing and presentation processes. Many chapters begin by defining terminology. Throughout the work a combination of italics, bold formatting, and underlining facilitate scanning and systematically communicate specific emphasis.

This is an enjoyable text to read, conversational in style and characterized by interesting, illustrative examples and anecdotes. It concludes with a question-and-answer format summary intended to address those questions most frequently posed by developing researchers.

The 3rd ed. is "significantly revised." Key features include: a "Critical Issues" section at the end of each chapter for students to develop their critical thinking skills; demonstration of actual steps involved in data analysis (from description to grounded theory) and data gathering by means of theoretical sampling; exercises for thinking, writing and group discussion; and, a student companion website that includes real data and practice with qualitative research software such as MAXQDA and practice exercises.

- Merinda McLure, March 2006, Amy Deuink, Jan. 2009

Published Reviews (of the 2nd edition):

Hoffart, N. 2000. Review of *Basics of qualitative research: Techniques and procedures for developing grounded theory*, 2nd ed. *Nephrology Nursing Journal* 27,2: 28.

III. Introduction to Quantitative Research [↑](#)

Gorard, Stephen. 2003. *Quantitative methods in social science*. New York: Continuum. 252p. ISBN: 9780826465863 (pbk.), US \$45.00

Committee Member Review:

If you are considering undertaking a survey or other quantitative research project, Gorard's book is an essential guide. Gorard's main theme is to think carefully about your motives for using quantitative methods, and then plan your project from sampling and survey design through data analysis. Chapter One lays out a cogent case for getting beyond the quantitative/qualitative debate and looking instead at what numbers can really tell us as social science researchers. Chapter Two suggests that researchers should consider the option of using existing data for secondary analysis, as this can be less expensive and provide better results than designing a bad survey. The remaining chapters discuss basic issues in quantitative research, including sampling, questionnaire design, and basic overviews of various types of statistical analyses, including simple arithmetical calculations and more complex parametric tests and regression analysis. The book will be useful to those with some basic statistical knowledge, as well as relative novices. The explanations are written in clear prose, and there are useful examples from real research throughout. Gorard is especially good at using real examples to show how simpler research designs and analyses can utilize the power of quantitative methods over the seemingly more rigorous complex statistical tests that are now so easily available via statistical software packages like SPSS. Gorard provides a brief, but effective, glossary of statistical terms, as well as a list of references to more detailed treatments of quantitative methods.

Quantitative methods in social science will be of real use in the design phase of any project that makes use of numbers, even simple descriptive statistics. Gorard makes a strong argument that good research design is essential to good research, suggesting that researchers often collect data without thinking through the process of analysis. Sampling, questionnaire design, analysis, and presentation of data are all integrally linked and should be well-planned from beginning to end. The book is especially strong

in explaining the fundamental concepts and principles underlying statistical methods and analysis so that researchers can make better and more informed choices. In an age when software tools make it relatively easy to collect numbers, Gorard's book is a welcome prescriptive for using numbers in a sound and effective way.

- Wendy Holliday, March 2006

No published reviews.

Maleske, Robert Thomas. 1995. *Foundations for gathering and interpreting behavioral data: An introduction to statistics*. Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks/Cole Publishing Corporation. 464 p., ISBN: 0534237428 (hbk.), US \$79.95

Committee Member Review

The author states that this is her response to other elementary statistics and resource methods textbooks. He faults these books for focusing on statistical analysis as an end in itself. He intends for this work to "help readers understand the process of gathering and interpreting behavioral data." (vii). The author believes that readers will most easily understand information when they can related it with their own experiences, and states that experience in observing everyday people and events, questioning observations, and making interpretations is the only prerequisite for using this book.

The book is divided into three main sections, "Understanding descriptive statistics," "Understanding inferential statistics," and "Selecting and interpreting statistical analyses," with each section containing 3-6 chapters. Sections and chapters begin with verbs to emphasize the use to which information surveyed in the chapter will be covered. Each chapter begins with a list of objectives and concludes with a summary, key terms/concepts, and exercises. The text within each chapter is broken up by the liberal use of headings, graphs, tables and charts.

A series of appendices, which includes answers to selected exercises, as well as an index, rounds out this book.

- Rob Withers, April 2006

No published reviews.

Osborne, J. W. (2008). *Best practices in quantitative methods*. Thousand Oaks, Calif: Sage Publications. 608 p. ISBN: 1412940658 (hbk.), US \$130.00

Committee Member Review:

This collection of best practices in quantitative research methods is intended for graduate level students and researchers. The text, featuring a variety of international academics, includes best practices in measurement, research design, data analysis, quantitative methods and best advanced methods in quantitative methods. The text aims to provide the reader with best practices and, when possible, demonstrate why those practices are deserving of the term 'best'.

- Catherine Johnson, Jan. 2009

Published Reviews:

2008. Review of *Best practices in quantitative methods* by J. W. Osborne. *Reference & Research Book News*, 23,1 (February): 84-87.

IV. Researching Library and Information Science [↑](#)

Beck, S. E., & Manuel, K. 2007. *Practical Research Methods for Librarians and Information Professionals*. New York: Neal-Schuman. 306 p. ISBN: 1555705916(pbk.), US \$65.00

Committee Member Review:

Intended for both the novice and expert researcher, this excellent textbook provides a practical and comprehensive view of how to conduct research in our field. Susan Beck and Kate Manuel examine an array of commonly used research methodologies and exemplify their successful application with real examples of studies reported in the LIS literature.

- Jaqueline Alvarez, Jan. 2009

Published Reviews:

Glantz, S. 2008. Review of *Practical Research Methods for Librarians and Information Professionals*. *Library Media Connection* 27,1: 60.

Hilyer, L. A. 2008. Review of *Practical Research Methods for Librarians and Information Professionals*. *Journal of Academic Librarianship* 34,3 (May): 271.

Gorman, G.E., and Peter Clayton. *Qualitative research for the information professional: A practical handbook*. 2005. 2nd ed. London, UK: Facet Publishing. xxi, 282p. ISBN 1856044726 (hbk.), US \$95.00

Committee Member Review:

True to its title, this is a practical, focused, and very accessible text intended for students, practitioners, and researchers in information settings. A substantial revision of the 1997 edition, with two new chapters, this book is well designed for comprehension: each chapter begins with focus questions, includes one or more illustrative research scenarios at appropriate points, and concludes with select suggestions for further readings. Subheadings, tables, figures, and lists are all effectively incorporated, both structuring and extending the text.

Guiding the reader through an introductory discussion of qualitative research and on to more detailed discussions of four major investigative techniques (observation, interviewing, group discussion, and historical study), the authors explore the critical evaluation of qualitative research, fieldwork, data analysis, and finally the written reporting of processes and findings. A concluding bibliography provides additional, suggested readings and is usefully divided into three categories: theoretical writings, discussions of specific methods/issues, and published qualitative studies that may serve as informative examples.

- Merinda McLure, March 2006

Published reviews:

McDowell, Nicola. 2005. Review of *Qualitative research for the information professional: A practical handbook*, 2nd ed., by G.E. Gorman and Peter Clayton. *Library Collections, Acquisitions, and Technical Services* 29:338.

Matthews, J. R. 2007. *The Evaluation and Measurement of Library Services*. Westport, Conn.: Libraries Unlimited. 372 p. ISBN: 9781591585329. \$50.00

Committee Member Review:

The author begins this by differentiating research from evaluation. While the first "is concerns about rigorous methodology and publication" the latter "employs standard research for evaluative purposes." Even though this is not purely a research textbook, practitioners, especially those in administrative positions will find useful information about systematically collecting and analyzing evidence about library programs and services.

- Jaquelina Alvarez, Jan. 2009

Published Reviews:

Nitecki, D. A. 2008. Review of *The evaluation and measurement of library services*. *Library & Information Science Research*. 30,4 (December): 322-323.

Williams, D. E. Review of *The evaluation and measurement of library services*. *The Journal of Academic Librarianship*. 34,4 (July): 371-372.

Myers, Michael D., and D. E. Avison. 2002. *Qualitative research in information systems: A reader*. London, UK: Sage Publications. 312p. ISBN: 0761966323 (hbk.), US \$130.00

Committee Member Review:

Both editors of this book are professors of information systems. Their book is a collection of scholarly articles written by "leading IS researchers from around the world." (viii). The intent was to make them more accessible to students, scholars, and those doing qualitative research in other fields by having them all in one volume.

The editors provide an introduction to the use of qualitative research in information systems in the first chapter, pointing to the research contained in the subsequent twelve chapters, as well as other research and websites. The chapters are divided into four parts: "Overview of Qualitative Research," "Philosophical Perspectives," "Qualitative Research Methods," and "Modes of Analyzing and Interpreting Qualitative Data." The final sections include the Bibliography as well as Subject and Author Indexes.

Each chapter in Part III, "Qualitative Research Methods," discusses the strengths and limitations of specific research methods such as "action research," "case studies," "ethnographic research methods," and "grounded theory." The editors assume that the reader has a basic knowledge of qualitative research methods and statistics. In fact, each article is highly referenced and dense with information. This collection would help those experienced library and information specialists working in the area of qualitative research in information systems.

- Christen Cardina, December 2005

No published reviews.

Pickard, A. 2005. *Research Methods in Information*. Facet Publishing. London, UK: Facet. 336 p. ISBN: 1856045452. \$99.95

Committee Member Review:

Although this book is intended for practitioners, it can be used as an introductory research methods textbook for undergraduate and graduate classes. While few discussions are narrowly focused on British cases, it provides a solid introduction to research methods, both qualitative and quantitative, analyzing data and presenting results.

- Jaqueline Alvarez, Jan. 2009

Published Reviews:

Ciambella, C. 2008. Review of *Research Methods in Information*. *Legal Information Alert* 27,1 (Jan.): 11-12.

Logan, R. A. 2008. Review of *Research Methods in Information*. *Journal of the Medical Library Association* 96,1 (Jan.): 70-71.

M. K. 2008. Review of *Research Methods in Information*. *Internet Resources Newsletter* (May): 9-9.

Maceviciute, E. 2007. Review of *Research Methods in Information*. *Information Research* 12,4 (Oct.): 1-2.

Shankar, K. 2008. Review of *Research Methods in Information*. *Journal of the American Society for Information Science & Technology* 59,1 (Jan.): 158-159.

Terris, O. 2008. Review of *Research Methods in Information*. *Multimedia Information & Technology* 34.1 (Feb.): 23-23.

Turner, R. 2007. Review of *Research Methods in Information*. *New Library World* 108,7/8 (July): 384-386.

Powell, Ronald R., and Lynn Silipigni Connaway. 2004. *Basic research methods for librarians*. 4th ed. Westport, CT: Libraries Unlimited. 360 p. ISBN: 1591581125 (pbk.), US \$40.00

Committee Member Review:

Now in its fourth edition, this book is specifically for librarians and library and information science students who need to learn the methodology of basic research and publish. The author notes that while the book does not consider applied or action research, many of the techniques involved in basic research are relevant to other types as well. The methods are applicable to most social science research but examples and illustrations are geared specifically to the library setting. The author also mentions that the primary emphasis of the book is on quantitative research but that a number of techniques also apply to qualitative research.

The first chapter addresses the place of research in librarianship, concerns about some of the research to date, and what may lie in store for the future of library research. Other chapters cover the development of a research study and ways to select the appropriate methodology for the study. Several types of research are covered: surveys, experimental, qualitative, and historical, with an emphasis on

sampling and the associated issues. There is a chapter on statistical analysis, but the author cautions that this book is meant as an introduction and that serious researchers should supplement their reading with standard texts on statistical analysis in particular. The final chapters discuss writing the research proposal and the research report. An appendix provides information on how to get published in library and information science journals. An extensive bibliography provides additional resources for learning about more specific aspects of research methodology.

- Terry Taylor, March 2006

Published Reviews:

Johnson, Travis. 2005. Review of *Basic research methods for librarians*, 4th ed., by Ronald R. Powell and Lynn Silipigni Connaway. *portal: Libraries & the Academy* 5:584.

Rubin, Jeffrey. 1994. *Handbook of usability testing: how to plan, design, and conduct effective tests*. New York: Wiley. 330 p. ISBN: 0471594032 (pbk.), US \$60.00

Committee Member Review:

Librarians are usually at the consumer end of most electronic resources used regularly by library clientele, that is to say, without much control over how these products are designed. The products are also widely distributed, making in-person help an option only for those using the resources on-site. Because of this and other factors, libraries have begun creating customized tools to assist those who need to learn to use computer-based resources quickly and more effectively. The design issues formerly encountered only by specialists are now within the responsibilities of the library along with the challenge of making the "homegrown" tools both user-centered and audience-appropriate. This book addresses the planning, design, implementation, and analysis of usability tests. It is geared to an audience with little or no experience in usability engineering and would also be useful for college and university students in computer science, psychology or other related fields. The first part of the handbook introduces four types of usability tests: exploratory (for early stages of the development cycle), assessment (once the basic design or organization is in place), validation (late in the development cycle to verify the product's usability), and comparison (used at any stage of development). Part two discusses testing environments and recommends one for organizations just beginning the testing process. Other chapters provide a step-by-step approach to conducting a usability test as well as strategies for setting up a usability program within your organization. Each section includes useful charts, checklists and sample forms to clarify the various stages of the process.

- Terry Taylor, March 2006

Published Reviews:

Noyes, Jan. 1996. Review of *Handbook of usability testing: how to plan, design, and conduct effective tests*, by Jeffrey Rubin. *Ergonomics* 39:339.

Shaw, Debora. 1996. Review of *Handbook of usability testing: how to plan, design, and conduct effective tests* by Jeffrey Rubin. *Journal of the American Society for Information Science* 47:258.

Westbrook, Lynn. 2001. *Identifying and analyzing user needs: A complete handbook and ready-to-use assessment workbook with disk*. New York: Neal-Schuman Publishers. 307p. ISBN: 1555703887 (hbk.), US \$79.95

Committee Member Review:

The specific focus of Westbrook's book is on conducting a community information needs analysis in academic, public, and school libraries. The research methods are discussed within this context. Specifically, Chapter 4, "Framing questions and choosing tools" helps match data collection methods to research questions. It also covers development of research instruments, including the wording of questionnaires. Chapter 8, "Analyzing results" gives very brief definitions of statistical terms which would not be adequate explanations for anyone new to data analysis. As with all of the book's chapters, further reading on each topic is included. Since the book was published in 2001, the readings suggested are now somewhat dated, though all focused on library research.

The format of this work is part handbook, part instruction manual, which comes on a 3" diskette and provides many ready-to-use forms and worksheets. The handbook is divided into ten chapters which make up the first two thirds of the book, with the final section consisting of Appendices (including case studies), suggested readings, cited works, glossary, and index. This book fills a specific niche in conducting library research although it would not be recommended for an overview of library research methods.

- Christen Cardina, Dec. 2005

Published Reviews:

Clougherty, Leo. 2001. Review of *Identifying and analyzing user needs: A complete handbook and ready-to-use assessment workbook with disk*, by Lyn Westbrook. *The Journal of Academic Librarianship* 27:484.

Cullen, Rowena. 2002. Review of *Identifying and analyzing user needs: A complete handbook and ready-to-use assessment workbook with disk*, by Lyn Westbrook. *Australian Library Journal* 51:78.

Krueger, Janice, M. 2002. Review of *Identifying and analyzing user needs: A complete handbook and ready-to-use assessment workbook with disk*, by Lyn Westbrook. *College & Research Libraries* 63:99.

Pungitore, Verna L. 2001. Review of *Identifying and analyzing user needs: A complete handbook and ready-to-use assessment workbook with disk*, by Lyn Westbrook. *Library & Information Science Research* 23:37.

Ruppel, Margie. 2002. Review of *Identifying and analyzing user needs: A complete handbook and ready-to-use assessment workbook with disk*, by Lyn Westbrook. *Reference & User Services Quarterly* 41:294.

Saracevic, Tefko. 2002. Review of *Identifying and analyzing user needs: A complete handbook and ready-to-use assessment workbook with disk*, by Lyn Westbrook. *The Library Quarterly* 72:390.

Shell, Michael Austin. 2002. Review of *Identifying and analyzing user needs: A complete handbook and ready-to-use assessment workbook with disk*, by Lyn Westbrook. *Public Libraries* 41:115.

Stavri, P. Zoe. 2002. Review of *Identifying and analyzing user needs: A complete handbook and ready-to-use assessment workbook with disk*, by Lyn Westbrook. *portal* 2:182.

Whitmire, Ethelene. 2002. Review of *Identifying and analyzing user needs: A complete handbook and ready-to-use assessment workbook with disk*, by Lyn Westbrook. *Journal of the American Society for Information Science and Technology* 53:966.

Whitlach, Jo Bell. 2000. *Evaluating reference services: A practical guide*. Chicago: American Library Association. vi, 226p. ISBN: 0838907873 (pbk.), US \$42.00

Committee Member Review:

This volume is a straightforward manual of the basic techniques and examples of data collection for reference, which are clearly and immediately defined by the author as not including instruction settings or online searching by appointment. Overall, the author addresses the key questions of why to evaluate reference services at all, and what to do with the information at the end of the process.

The body of the book is divided into four parts: planning, which succinctly explains the what and why of the process; evaluation methods, which discusses the strengths and weaknesses of common techniques; data and results, which contains an overview of issues related to data collection and analysis; and an extensive annotated bibliography. Since this book was published in 2000, the bibliography is somewhat out of date, but it is still an excellent starting point. Each chapter within the sections has its own, shorter, list of works cited, and the volume also contains an index and brief biographical notes on the contributors.

Users should find this a helpful tool in navigating the evaluation of this sometimes neglected area of library services.

- Anna Pilston, March 2006

Published reviews:

Cullen, Rowena. 2002. Review of *Evaluating reference services: A practical guide*, by Jo Bell Whitlach. *Australian Library Journal* 51:79.

Curry, Ann. 2001. Review of *Evaluating reference services: A practical guide*, by Jo Bell Whitlach. *Public Libraries* 40:186.

Draz, Linda M. 2001. Review of *Evaluating reference services: A practical guide*, by Jo Bell Whitlach. *Public Library Quarterly* 20:64.

Duckett, Bob. 2002. Review of *Evaluating reference services: A practical guide*, by Jo Bell Whitlach. *Library Review* 51:56.

Hernon, Peter. 2000. Review of *Evaluating reference services: A practical guide*, by Jo Bell Whitlach. *Journal of Academic Librarianship* 26:440.

Jackson, Michael Gordon. 2002. Review of *Evaluating reference services: A practical guide*, by Jo Bell Whitlach. *The Library Quarterly* 72:123.

Keller, Kit. 2001. Review of *Evaluating reference services: A practical guide*, by Jo Bell Whitlach. *Library Mosaics* 12:21.

V. Research Design [↑](#)

Creswell, John. 2008. *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*. 2nd ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications. 296p. ISBN: 14129-6556X (hbk.), US \$96.95

Committee Member Review:

Creswell's *Research design* is an accessible and useful book that stimulates students through experiences, use of exercises, and production of actual writing samples. It models the types of issues that best suit different approaches and allows students to understand when to use mixed methods.

Furthermore, its focus on theory and paradigms is done in ways that help students appropriately and effectively apply qualitative, quantification, and mixed models. Key features include: Writing exercises allow readers to practice the principles they learn and, if all the exercises are completed, will provide a written plan for their study; numbered points provide a checklist for each step in the process; and annotated passages strengthen comprehension of key research ideas.

New to the Third Edition:

- The philosophical assumptions underlying the examination of research and theory are introduced earlier in the book
- The ethical issues discussion now includes more information related to data collection and research findings reporting
- A CD with accompanying PowerPoint slides and sample lessons is included
- Web-based technologies such as Google Scholar and SurveyMonkey are included
- Mixed Methods Procedures (Ch. 10) has been revised to include the latest ideas about design
- The second edition's chapter in definitions, limitations and delimitations has been incorporated into earlier chapters on the literature review and the introduction to the proposal
- The third edition includes a new glossary of terms assisting researchers in understanding the language of the discipline
- References are updated

- Mark Spasser, December 2005, Christopher Cox, Jan. 2009.

Published reviews:

Bradley, Jana. 1996. Review of *Research design: qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*, 1st ed., by John Creswell. *The Library Quarterly* 66:225.

Lundberg, C. C. 2003. Review of *Research design: qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*, 2nd ed., by John Creswell. *Organizational Research Methods* 6:404.

De Vaus, David. 2001. *Research design in social research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications. 279p. ISBN: 0761953477 (pbk.), US \$46.95

Committee Member Review:

As the title suggests, *Research design in social research* is a text primarily focused on the importance and the specifics of design. This is noteworthy because similar how-to books commonly focus on other aspects of the research process. The author, David De Vaus, begins by distinguishing between research design and methodology. Once this is established, De Vaus offers definitions of standard terms and concepts, and then leads the reader through important types of social science research design: case studies, cross-sectional, experimental, longitudinal, and so on. The author discusses each area of design in terms of tools required, possible issues, and data analysis.

The strength of this text, as also noted in the review below, is that De Vaus never strays from the importance of design. The idea is emphasized from start to finish. This, too, is what distinguishes the text from other works that purport to focus on design. Additionally, the text is useful to both novice and more advanced researchers. The author provides clear and concise definitions, directions, and examples. Librarians, who are often required to do research, and who are commonly untrained in the area of research design, would do well to consult this book.

- Christopher Hollister, March 2006

Published reviews:

Tierny, A.J. 2002. Review of *Research Design in Social Research*, by David De Vaus. *International Journal of Nursing Studies* 39:669.

Marshall, Catherine and Gretchen B. Rossman. 1999. *Designing qualitative research*, 3rd ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications. 224 p., ISBN: 0761913394 (hbk.), US \$109.00, 0761913408 (pbk.), US \$49.95

Committee Member Review:

Written for academic researchers and policy analysts, *Designing qualitative research* is a guide to writing (*designing*) successful qualitative research proposals (it is not a guide to conducting qualitative research). The authors identify and examine two major themes that run through the book: 1) the notion that "design flexibility is a crucial feature of qualitative inquiry..." and 2) the research proposal as an argument with the "primary purpose [of convincing] the reader that the research is substantive, will contribute to the field ... and that the researcher is capable of conducting the research..."

The book's introduction discusses characteristics and typologies of qualitative research, challenges of conducting such research, and the process of developing an argument. In chapters 2 through 7 the authors describe how to build the conceptual framework of a proposal, research design, data collection methods, managing and analyzing data, planning time and resources (with a section devoted specifically to planning dissertation research), and defending the value of qualitative research. Thirty-three vignettes representing real-life research questions are interspersed throughout to illustrate the methodological issues and challenges as the authors address them; many of the questions portrayed in the vignettes come from the authors' doctoral students.

- Polly D. Boruff-Jones, March 2006

Published Review:

Review of *Designing qualitative research*, 3rd ed., by Catherine Marshall and Gretchen B. Rossman. 1999. *Reference & Research Book News* 14:67.

Maxwell, Joseph A. 2005. *Qualitative Research Design: An Interactive Approach*. 2ND ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications Limited. ISBN: 0-7619-2607-0 (hbk.) US \$79.95

Committee Member Review:

This portable little book, now in its second edition, is as much handbook as textbook, concentrates primarily on research design vs. the crafting of the research proposal. Through clear, concrete extended examples and exercises at the end of each chapter, Maxwell seeks to capture what researchers really do, offering advice on every part of the design process from figuring out what your study should accomplish to planning how to deal with potential validity threats to your conclusions. Drawing on his years of teaching at Harvard, Maxwell does a wonderful job of relating the research proposal to the design of the research, even including a draft proposal in the appendices. The book is useful for researchers at all levels, offering a "hands-on" approach to qualitative research.

-Christopher Cox, January 2009.

Published Reviews:

- Skibba, Karen. 2006. Review of *Qualitative Research Design: An Interactive Approach*, 2nd ed., by Joseph A Maxwell. *Adult Education Quarterly* 56,2:165.
- Bean, CJ. 2007. Review of *Qualitative Research Design: An Interactive Approach*, 2nd ed., by Joseph A Maxwell. *Organizational Research Methods* 10,2:393.

VI. Data Analysis [↑](#)

Dey, Ian. 1993. *Qualitative data analysis: A user-friendly guide for social scientists*. New York: Routledge. 285 pp., ISBN: 041505852X (pbk.), US \$42.95

Committee Member Review:

Published in 1993, this book is rather dated as it focuses on the role computers play in qualitative data analysis - a relatively new concept for qualitative research at the time. Although specific software packages are not discussed, issues and methods of qualitative analysis using computer applications are described in the context of what was available at the time the book was written and, of course, much has changed in the intervening years. Still, the author's advice on the more general aspects of organizing qualitative research and data analysis may remain useful to the social science researcher. The author's humorous approach makes the book a more interesting read than the subject might suggest.

- Polly D. Boruff-Jones, March 2006

Published Reviews:

- Atkinson, Paul. 1994. Review of *Qualitative Data Analysis: A User-Friendly Guide for Social Scientists*, by Ian Dey. *The Sociological Review* 14:584.
- Fielding, Nigel G. 1994. Review of *Qualitative Data Analysis: A User-Friendly Guide for Social Scientists*, by Ian Dey. *Sociology* 28:607.

Grbich, Carol. 2007. *Qualitative Data Analysis: An Introduction*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications Limited. 358 pp. ISBN: 1-4129-2143-0 (pbk.) US \$49.95.

Committee Member Review:

Grbich's book is slim, but includes a great deal of pertinent overview information regarding data analysis as it relates to qualitative research. Her approach involves dividing data analysis into three parts – determining the approach, analyzing the documentation, and then writing up the data. The book starts out with an overview of the major epistemological traditions, followed by an examination of the various analytical approaches one might take, such as ethnographic or feminist. Following this is an interesting discussion of the analyses of documentation via methods such as content analysis, narrative analysis, visual interpretation, etc. Lastly, there is a chapter on writing up the data and data display, and a brief section on qualitative data analysis computer programs. The book is logically constructed, concise and includes a good bibliography for those interested in further reading on a particular topic.

-Christopher Cox, January 2007

Published Reviews:

Halcomb, Elizabeth J. 2007. Review of *Qualitative Data Analysis: An Introduction* by Carol Grbich. *Nurse Researcher* 14, 4:94.

Kzillen, Maureen and Nikki Jarrett. 2007. Review of *Qualitative Data Analysis: An Introduction* by Carol Grbich. *Journal of Advanced Nursing* 59,5:557.

Krippendorff, Klaus. 2004. *Content analysis: An introduction to its methodology*. 2nd ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc. xxiii, 413p. ISBN 0761915451 (pbk.), US \$48.95

Committee Member Review:

A substantive exploration of content analysis, its procedures and protocols, this very thorough text will be usefully considered by librarians seeking to explore the behavior, attitudes, and opinions of library users by "analyzing meaningful matter, texts, images, and voices" that is, data whose physical manifestations are secondary to what they mean to particular populations of people" (xxii).

While advanced and graduate students in social science disciplines are the primary, intended audience of this textbook, the effective introduction suggests different starting points for other users. Likewise, the pragmatic Chapter 14 is a practice-oriented summary of concepts previously presented and will serve readers as an overview and a quick pointer to more detailed discussion in earlier chapters. This edition is a comprehensive revision of the first and an extensive text; bold subheadings and Chapter 14 will particularly help practitioners use this text for select, pragmatic reading, while others will appreciate the full scope of this detailed discussion of content analysis.

- Merinda McLure, March 2006

Published reviews:

Ford, John M. 2004. Review of *Content analysis: An introduction to its methodology*, 2nd ed., by Klaus Krippendorff. *Personnel Psychology* 57:1110.

Miles, Matthew B., and A. Michael Huberman. 1994. *Qualitative data analysis: An expanded sourcebook*. 2nd ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications. xiv, 352p. ISBN 0803955405 (pbk.), US \$66.95

Committee Member Review:

Focusing on data analysis (rather than broader research design and administration) and designed as a sourcebook of resources, this is a practical, extensive text intended for both beginning and practicing researchers.

Chapters discuss data display and analysis methods: each method is introduced in the context of an analysis problem, briefly described, and illustrated. Variations are noted and "Advice" and "Time required" sections complete the discussion. Illustrative examples are intended to facilitate active consideration of the method and in addition the authors note that the text will be most effective when researchers are concurrently working with real data.

While now an older text, this book's practical, interactive approach provides many examples for developing researchers and an extensive bibliography. (*This review is of the 2nd cloth edition, now out of print.)

- Merinda McLure, March 2006

No published reviews.

Neuendorf, Kimberly A. 2002. *Content analysis guidebook*. London, UK: Sage Publications. 301p. ISBN: 0761919775 (hbk.), US \$92.95

Committee Member Review:

In this day and age of online learning with the use of email, discussion forums, blogs, and other social software, content analysis as a research methodology may seem like a natural as it is the "systematic, objective, quantitative analysis of message characteristics." One of the most useful aspects of the book is that we discover almost immediately that *quantitative content analysis*, as defined by the author and others, is not the same as *qualitative content analysis*. Both are rigorous approaches to research but they can serve different purposes. Whereas the qualitative approach may provide detailed or "deep" information about a text, the quantitative approach "uses a broader brush and can be more generalizable. As such, it is also typically less in-depth and less detailed."

Ms. Neuendorf defines various qualitative content analyses to clearly distinguish between them and the quantitative approach. The quantitative approach "is a summarizing, quantitative analysis of messages that relies on the scientific method (including attention to objectivity-intersubjectivity, a prior design, reliability, validity, generalizability, replicability, and hypothesis testing) and is not limited as to the types of variables that may be measured or the context in which the messages are created or presented. If you are looking to find causal relationships in your research, stick with the quantitative approach and continue with Ms. Neuendorf's textbook. The textbook is geared toward upper-level undergrads and grads in the social sciences and is useful for practitioners who are new to research or are unfamiliar with this particular methodology. Chapters 6 (Measurement Techniques), 7 (Reliability) and 8 (Results Reporting) remind us generally about standard practices and specifically those aspects related to the content analysis methodology. In chapter 9 (Contexts), the Web and email messages are briefly differentiated from other types of messages. Context is interpreted in a very broad sense so as to include "the status of research in many of the main areas of content analysis."

The final segments of the text are five chapter-like segments dubbed, "Resources", functioning somewhat like appendices. Resource 1 lists and annotates various message archives. Resource 2, provides tips for content analysts searching the "NEXIS" portion of "LEXIS-NEXIS". Resource 3 reviews about two dozen software programs. Resource 4 reviews a particular computer program "PRAM" which relates to intercoder-reliability and Resource 5 describes the supplemental material to be found in the Designing qualitative research online.

References and indices are also included.

- Alison Armstrong, April 2006

No published reviews.

Richards, Lyn. 2005. *Handling qualitative data: A practical guide*. London, UK: Sage Publications. 207p. ISBN: 0761942580 (hbk.), US \$124.00

Committee Member Review:

The author credits her several thousand research-methods students with giving her insights for developing practical ways to teach basic qualitative research skills. She says in her preface, "This book is for the many (out of and inside academia) who have neither access to courses on methodological issues nor time to do them, yet are confronted with a project and wish to learn how they can best deal with it." (x).

She writes as a friendly mentor, often beginning a chapter section with a question, and then succinctly answering it. She even uses exclamation marks to spur the reader on, with phrases such as, "You can do it!" The emphasis is not on teaching specific research methods (for this, she refers the reader to another book she has co-authored, *Readme first for a user's guide to qualitative method*,) as much as it is teaching the skills and understanding of the issues involved to process the data, regardless of the method used.

The book's ten chapters are divided into three parts, which include "Setting up: What's involved in starting a project"; "Working with the data: Including coding"; and "Making sense of your data: Interpreting what you have done." A unique feature of the book is the layout of each chapter using different fonts, shading, side bars, and graphics, and even icons, to produce a highly readable text. A short list of references, as well as an index is included. Recommended as a clear, practical guide for novice researchers.

- Christen Cardina, December 2005

No published reviews.

Riessman, Catherine Kohler. 1993. *Narrative analysis. Qualitative Research Methods Series*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications. vii, 78p. ISBN 0803947542 (pbk.), US \$18.95

Committee Member Review:

In this slim text, Riessman introduces narrative analysis as a means to "see how respondents in interviews impose order on the flow of experience to make sense of events and actions in their lives," (2) and to explore "why was the story told that way?" (2).

Librarians may find this a brief and engaging work to consider as they design and analyze interviews, keeping in mind Riessman's note that "in qualitative interviews, typically most of the talk is not narrative but question-and-answer exchanges, arguments, and other forms of discourse" (3). While for most this text may be an enjoyable read rather than an essential reference, novice researchers may find Riessman's artful writing and discussion particularly thought provoking when considering how they are situated as researchers; in relation their interview subjects, and as active agents in the research process. Three main sections follow the introduction: "Theoretical contexts", "Practical models," and "Doing narrative analysis". The concluding two-page section, "Use and limitations of narrative analysis", is a useful alternative starting point and the comprehensive bibliography is intended to point to additional discussions of ideas only briefly introduced.

- Merinda McLure, March 2006

Published Reviews:

Arnold, Lorin Basden. 1994. Review of *Narrative analysis*, by Catherine Kohler Riessman.

VII. Case Studies [↑](#)

Gerring, John. 2007. *Case study research: Principles and practices*. New York: Cambridge University Press. 265 p. ISBN: 052185928X (hbk.), US \$74.00

Committee Member Review:

Beginning with a concise historical overview and a detailed definition and discussion of the case study method, Gerring's cross-disciplinary textbook provides a rigorous foundation in case study research for social scientists. Readers will find illustrative examples and will learn when and how to employ case study methodologies for causal analysis in a variety of social science fields. The author's analytical arguments are of particular value for those interested in thoughtful research design.

- Ramona Islam, Jan. 2009

Published Reviews:

Barlow, R.E. 2007. Review of *Case study research: Principles and practices*, by John Gerring. *Choice* 45:3.

Cohen, Edward. 2008. Review of *Case study research: Principles and practices*, by John Gerring. *Journal of Sociology & Social Welfare* 35:2.

Hancock, Dawson R. and R. Algozzine. 2006. *Doing case study research: A practical guide for beginning researchers*. NY: Teacher's College Press. 106 p. ISBN: 0807747076 (pbk.), US \$19.95

Committee Member Review:

This handbook is geared to novice researchers in education and the health professions. Its aim is to demystify the process of planning, conducting, and reporting the results of case study research. Assuming no prior knowledge or experience on the part of the reader, Hancock and Algozzine's text serves as an invaluable introduction to the case study method.

- Ramona Islam, Jan. 2009

No published reviews.

Yin, Robert K. 2008. *Case study research: Design and methods*. Applied Social Research Methods Series 5. 4th ed. City, ST: Sage Publications. 240 p. ISBN: 1412960991 (pbk.), US \$34.95

Committee Member Review:

This new fourth edition of Robert K. Yin's popular textbook is thoroughly revised, providing in-depth instruction in the use of the case study method. Now covering over 50 case studies (a 25% increase over the previous edition), Case study research employs in-text learning aids and graphics to elucidate its discussion of various types of case study research designs, methodologies, and analyses useful for researchers in education, business, health sciences, anthropology, sociology and political science.

- Ramona Islam, Jan. 2009

Published Reviews (of the 3rd ed.):

- Antoniou, M. and B. Stierer. 2004. Review of *Case study research: design and methods*, 3rd ed., by Robert K. Lin and Donald T. Campbell. *Teaching in Higher Education* 9:377.
- Morris, M. 2006. Review of *Case study research: design and methods*, 3rd ed., by Robert K. Lin and Donald T. Campbell. *Modern Language Journal* 90:140.
- Review of *Case study research: design and methods*, 3rd ed., by Robert K. Lin and Donald T. Campbell. 2004. *Harvard Educational Review* 74:107.

VIII. Interviews [↑](#)

Mishler, Elliot G. 1991. *Research interviewing: Context and narrative*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. 189p. ISBN: 0674764617 (pbk.), US \$21.95

Committee Member Review:

In *Research interviewing*, Elliot Mishler offers new insights into the most common source of research data in the social sciences "the survey interview" and how survey data should be analyzed. Mishler posits that the survey technique should be replaced by what he refers to as the "uninterrupted narrative flow," which should then be analyzed as a text.

Mishler begins *Research interviewing* by discussing the problems typically associated with the research interview. In succeeding chapters, the interview process is broken down, and then built back up with the author's new ideas on research design, and on constructing meaning from a narrative analysis approach. Prospects for critical research are also provided. Librarians commonly use survey interviews to collect data for their research, and they would do well to consider Mishler's fresh ideas on design and analysis.

- Christopher Hollister, March 2006

Published reviews:

- Cannell, Charles. 1988. Review of *Research interviewing: Context and narrative*, by Elliot G. Mishler. *Public Opinion Quarterly* 52: 265
- Lull, James. 1988. Review of *Research interviewing: Context and narrative*, by Elliot G. Mishler. *Journal of Communication* 38: 164.
- Martin, Elizabeth. 1988. Review of *Research interviewing: Context and narrative*, by Elliot G. Mishler. *Contemporary Sociology* 17: 254.
- Nicodemus, Victoria. 1992. Review of *Research Interviewing: Context and Narrative*, by Elliot G. Mishler. *Harvard Educational Review* 62: 97.
- Review of *Research interviewing: Context and narrative*, by Elliot G. Mishler. 1990. *American Journal of Sociology* 94: 419.
- Wilson, Gerald. 1988. Review of *Research interviewing: Context and narrative*, by Elliot G. Mishler. *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 74: 351.

Seidman, Irving. 1998. *Interviewing as qualitative research: a guide for researchers in education and the social sciences*. 2nd ed. New York: Teachers College Press. 143 p. ISBN: 080773967X (hbk.), US \$19.95

Committee Member Review

In the preface to the first edition, the author indicated that the audience for this book is doctoral candidates in search of a methodology, experienced researchers who have not yet used in-depth interviewing in their research, and professors looking for a supplementary text that connects methods and techniques with qualitative research. The step-by-step approach of this text makes it useful both for individuals and classes.

This guide focuses on phenomenological interviewing, which "combines life-history interviewing...and focused, in-depth interviewing informed by assumptions drawn from phenomenology ...". This approach involves interviewers using primarily open-ended questions and building upon participant's responses to reconstruct his/her experience. The author discusses when interviewing is appropriate, how to select and contact participants, and interpreting and sharing interview material. Two chapters were expanded and revised in the second edition - the sections on informed consent and the discussion of interviewing as a relationship.

- Terry Taylor, March 2006

Published Reviews:

Dilley, Patrick. 2004. Review of *Interviewing as qualitative research: a guide for researchers in education and the social sciences*, 2nd ed., by Irving Seidman. *Journal of Higher Education* 75:127.

Wengraf, Tom. 2001. *Qualitative research interviewing: Biographic narrative and semi-structured methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications. xxvi, 398p. ISBN: 0803975015 (pbk.), US \$51.95

Committee Member Review:

Books examining the research practice of the survey are relatively common, but those on research interviewing are far more difficult to come by. Frustrated by this deficiency, the author set out to write a text dealing with the "full range of issues and practices involved in doing semi-structured interviews."

After a list of abbreviations and a preface, the book opens with a discussion of what the interview is and isn't, and what kinds of problems it can present. Thereafter, it is divided into six sections: theory questions, preparation, the interview itself, materials and data, comparison of cases, and presentation. All cited works are listed at the end in one long bibliography, and the book also includes an index.

Wengraf states in his preface that this book is aimed at "advanced undergraduates, and for postgraduates and professional researchers," but these readers would need to have a somewhat sophisticated background in research for this work to be very useful to them. Qualitative research interviewing can be a complicated subject, and this book's approach is quite comprehensive.

Fortunately, the book contains many case studies and other examples which help to clarify the text, but it still can be very dense reading.

- Anna Pilston, March 2006

Published reviews:

- Bischooping, Katherine. 2002. Review of *Qualitative research interviewing*, by Tom Wengraf. *Teaching Sociology* 30:376.
- Guillemette, F. 2003. Review of *Qualitative research interviewing*, by Tom Wengraf. *Loisir & Societe-Society and Leisure* 26:273.

IX. Surveys and Questionnaires [↑](#)

Buckingham, Alan and Peter Saunders. 2004. *The survey methods workbook: From design to analysis*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press. 309 p. ISBN: 0745622445 (hbk.), US \$74.95

Committee Member Review:

The format of this interactive book allows the reader to learn about survey methods while participating in an actual social survey. The authors assume no prior knowledge or background in sociology or experience with social surveys or statistics. A glossary of technical terms is included. The book is divided into three parts: "Research design", "Data collection", and "Data analysis".

The section on "Research design" begins by examining when and whether you should use a survey as your instrument. The authors discuss the assumption that surveys lend themselves to positivist sociology, or the belief that knowledge can come only from those claims about the world that are directly experienced. They include background from both proponents of this approach and critics. Following this is an introduction to the issues of testing hypotheses and an overview of the types of questions that would be appropriate for a questionnaire survey. Part two, "Data collection" introduces basic principles of survey design, including how to progress from research questions to key concepts and then to the identification of core variables that represent the concepts in the questionnaire. The authors present the concepts of validity and reliability, the importance of a good response rate, and ways to avoid pitfalls in designing questions. The primary method of data collection discussed is the interview. The *Workbook* looks at how to negotiate meaning, avoid bias, and codify the data in files created in statistics programs such as SPSS. "Data analysis" chapters are the most technical and discuss ways to explore and describe research findings, including specific examples and statistical tests for extrapolating the results of a sample to an entire population.

The accompanying Web site (<http://www.surveymethods.co.uk>) contains "electronic appendices" that include summaries of key findings from the example survey used in the book, additional information about research design and statistical tests, and a guide to further reading.

- Terry Taylor, March 2006

Published Reviews:

- Lang, Iain. 2005. Review of *The survey methods workbook: From design to analysis*, by Alan Buckingham and Peter Saunders. *Sociological Research Online* 10
<http://www.socresonline.org.uk/10/1/contents.html>

Conrad, F. G., & Schober, M. F. 2008. *Envisioning the survey interview of the future*. Hoboken, N.J.: Wiley-Interscience. 315 pp. ISBN 0470183366 (ebk.) \$94.95.

Committee Member Review:

Not so much of a how-to book as a conspectus on new technologies--mobile phones, instant messaging, social networks, video, etc.--and their effects on how and where surveys will be conducted, and survey participation and quality. The 14 chapters, "a dialogue between survey methodologists and communication technologists," should help librarians interested in conducting surveys where their users are. Useful for students in graduate research methods courses and practitioners.

-Roxanne Bogucka, Jan. 2009

No published reviews.

de Leeuw, E.D., J.J. Hox, & D.A. Dillman. 2008. *International handbook of survey methodology*. New York: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates. 549 pp. ISBN 0805857332 (pbk.) US \$34.95.

Committee Member Review:

This book arose from the experience of two of the editors, who co-taught a survey design course at an International Statistical Institute meeting in 2003. They found that their students have emerging needs to conduct cross-national surveys and polls, and to conduct mixed-mode surveys. The chapter authors are recognized experts in statistics and survey methods. The 26 chapters are organized under five sections: Foundations—survey psychology, non-response, ethics; Design—composing and testing survey questions, sampling; Implementation—the various modes of data collection; Data Analysis—coding, weighting, incomplete data, errors; and Special Issues. Most chapters conclude with a glossary of key concepts. An accompanying website with chapter abstracts, glossaries, further readings, and Internet resources may be viewed at <http://www.xs4all.nl/~edithl/surveyhandbook/>. Suitable for graduate-level research methods courses.

-Roxanne Bogucka, Jan. 2009

No published reviews.

Fink, Arlene. 2003. *The survey handbook*. 2nd ed. *The Survey Kit 1*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications. vii, 167p. ISBN: 0761925805 (pbk.), US \$25.95

Fink, Arlene. 2003. *How to ask survey questions*. 2nd ed. *The Survey Kit 2*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications. ix, 143p. ISBN: 0761925791 (pbk.), US \$25.95

Bourque, Linda B., and Eve P. Fielder. 2003. *How to conduct self-administered and mail surveys*. 2nd ed. *The Survey Kit 3*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications. xiv, 249p. ISBN: 0761925627 (pbk.), US \$28.95

Bourque, Linda B., and Eve P. Fielder. 2003. *How to conduct telephone surveys*. 2nd ed. *The Survey Kit 4*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications. xiv, 325p. ISBN: 0761925910 (pbk.), US \$32.95

Oishi, Sabine Mertens. 2003. *How to conduct in-person interviews for surveys*. 2nd ed. *The Survey Kit 5*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications. xiii, 209p. ISBN: 0761925708 (pbk.), US \$25.95

Fink, Arlene. 2003. *How to design survey studies*. 2nd ed. *The Survey Kit 6*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications. vii, 83p. ISBN: 0761925783 (pbk.), US \$19.95

Fink, Arlene. 2003. *How to sample in surveys*. 2nd ed. *The Survey Kit 7*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications. iv, 75p. ISBN: 0761925775 (pbk.), US \$19.95

Litwin, Mark S. 2003. *How to assess and interpret survey psychometrics*. 2nd ed. *The Survey Kit 8*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications. vi, 87p. ISBN: 0761925619 (pbk.), US \$19.95

Fink, Arlene. 2003. *How to manage, analyze, and interpret survey data*. 2nd ed. *The Survey Kit 9*.

Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications. x, 141p. ISBN: 0761925767 (pbk.), US \$24.95
 Fink, Arlene. 2003. How to report on surveys. 2nd ed. *The Survey Kit 10*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications. viii, 93p. ISBN: 0761925759 (pbk.), US \$24.95

Committee Member Review:

Rather than house all of its considerable content in one massive tome, the editors of *The Survey Kit* chose to separate each aspect of survey design and application into individual volumes. This, combined with its clear, concise writing, makes this set particularly easy to use. All technical terms are clearly defined, and the text is free of jargon.

In ten slim volumes, *The Survey Kit* provides a detailed description of the basics behind surveys of all types, along with guidance in writing survey questions, interview techniques, sampling, reporting, and many other topics. Each volume begins with two or three pages of learning objectives, leads the reader through the necessary procedures and techniques, and then concludes with a briefly annotated bibliography and glossary. The text also includes many valuable examples and cross-references to the other volumes in this series.

Practitioners and students in all fields of social sciences should find this resource accessible and useful.

- Anna Pilston, March 2006

Published reviews (of 2nd edition):

Cullen, Mairi-Ann. 2005. Review of *The survey kit*, 2nd ed., by Arlene Fink, et al. *British Journal of Educational Psychology* 75:140.

Published reviews (of 1st edition):

Albaum, Gerald. 1999. Review of *The survey kit*, 1st ed., by Arlene Fink, et al. *Journal of Marketing Research* 34:415.

Chisnall, Peter M. 1997. Review of *The survey kit*, 1st ed., by Arlene Fink, et al. *Journal of the Market Research Society* 39:294.

Hernon, Peter. 1996. Review of *The survey kit*, 1st ed., by Arlene Fink, et al. *Library & Information Science Research* 18:195.

Powaser, Patrick R. 1996. Review of *The survey kit*, 1st ed., by Arlene Fink, et al. *Personnel Psychology* 49:1019.

Review of *The survey kit*, 1st ed., by Arlene Fink, et al. 1996. *Journal of Social Work Education* 32:285.

Schnell, R. 1999. Review of *The survey kit*, 1st ed., by Arlene Fink, et al. *Kolner Zeitschrift Fur Soziologie Und Sozialpsychologie* 51:178.

Sengupta, S. 1997. Review of *The survey kit*, 1st ed., by Arlene Fink, et al. *Health Education Research* 12:151.

Fowler, F. J. 2008. *Survey research methods* (4th ed.). London: SAGE. 201 pp. ISBN 1412958417 (pbk.) US \$39.95.

Committee member review:

Fowler is a Senior Research Fellow at the Center for Survey Research, UMass-Boston. A non-technical introduction to social survey methods for researchers, undergraduate, and graduate research methods students, *Survey Research Methods* (Sage's Applied Social Research Methods Series) has particularly

useful chapters on types of errors in surveys, survey question design, and analyzing survey data. Fowler directs researchers needing more in-depth information to the works listed in nine pages of references.

-Roxanne Bogucka, Jan. 2009

No published reviews.

Gillham, B. 2008. *Small-scale social survey methods*. London; New York, NY: Continuum. 111 pp. ISBN 0826496300 (pbk.) US \$29.95.

Committee member review:

One of Gillham's several titles in the Real World Research Series, *Small-Scale Social Survey Methods* is aimed at the solitary survey researcher, covering in 15 short (none longer than 9 pages) chapters the basics--sampling, population selection, question design, data analysis, and reporting. It is most useful as a guidebook to consult before embarking on a survey research project, to get a sense of the scope of work required.

-Roxanne Bogucka, Jan. 2009

No published reviews.

Guppy, L. N., & Gray, G. A. 2008. *Successful surveys: Research methods and practice* (4th ed.). Toronto: Thomson Nelson. 223 pp. ISBN 978-0-17-610294-4 (pbk.) CDN \$62.95.

Committee Member Review:

This introductory textbook in survey design guides the novice research methods student through the steps of conducting a survey. The authors begin by framing the history and purpose of surveys, and ethical considerations. Chapters on how to conduct surveys follow, with particular emphasis on constructing researchable questions and designing survey that will answer them. Students requiring in-depth information on data analysis will need to consult other texts. Chapters conclude with exercise sets and further readings. Includes free 4-month subscription to InfoTrac® College Edition.

-Roxanne Bogucka, Jan. 2009

No published reviews.

Iarossi, G. 2006. *The power of survey design: A user's guide for managing surveys, interpreting results, and influencing respondents*. Washington, D.C.: The World Bank. 262 pp. ISBN 0821363921 (pbk.) US \$35.00.

Committee Member Review:

This text is useful both as a guidebook for conducting a survey research project and as a key for evaluating existing survey data. The author addresses in detail issues such as grammar, wording, and sequencing of survey questions, the format of questionnaires, sampling, and training of interviewers, and concludes with a 3-step method (with example) for "data cleaning." Contains numerous figures and tables, including a Gantt chart showing timeline and workflow for survey implementation. For advanced undergraduate or graduate research methods courses, and practitioners.

-Roxanne Bogucka, Jan. 2009

No published reviews.

Nardi, P. M. 2006. *Doing survey research: A guide to quantitative methods* (2nd ed.). Boston: Pearson/Allyn & Bacon. 240 pp. ISBN 0205446094 (pbk.) US \$56.20.

Committee Member Review:

This book focuses on quantitative research methods involving questionnaire surveys. It is targeted to social science students and others who perform institutional research or evaluation surveys. Written at an introductory level, cleverly, each chapter is a step in the research process beginning with an introduction to research (Chapter 1, "Why we do research" and Chapter 2, "Finding ideas to research") through to reporting results (Chapter 10, "Presenting results, making conclusions, and writing reports") with three chapters devoted to designing the research project, constructing the questionnaire, and selecting samples; and four chapters on presenting results, using statistical techniques and analyzing data.

With the step-by-step approach, *Doing survey research* would be an appropriate textbook for a research methods course; at the end of each chapter are four categories of questions and exercises: Review (key terms and concepts), Interpret (real examples to ponder), Consult (issue or problem presented to be solved), Decide (carries over from one chapter to the next and asks reader to design the next step in a research project). The "Statistical analysis decision tree" in the appendix provides a useful visual representation of data analysis.

The 2nd edition contains expanded coverage of correlation versus causation, survey research ethics, and survey design for the online environment.

- Polly D. Boruff-Jones, March 2006, Roxanne Bogucka, Jan. 2009

Published Review (of the first ed.):

2003. Review of *Doing survey research: A guide to quantitative methods*, by Peter M. Nardi. *Reference & Research Book News* 18:121.

Patten, Mildred L. 2001. *Questionnaire research: A practical guide*. 2nd ed. Los Angeles, CA: Pyczak Publishing. vi, 146p. ISBN 1884585329 (pbk.), US \$22.95

Committee Member Review:

Patten's second edition of this pragmatic text includes three new appendices and will especially serve both developing and one-time researchers in effective questionnaire design. Well formatted in a larger font size and with ample white space, chapters have the approachable feel of classroom handouts and are comprised of a series of guidelines that may be readily understood and applied by those lacking broader knowledge.

The book initiates the beginning researcher in good practice, from planning research, writing quality questionnaire items, effectively testing items and selecting a respondent population, through analyzing and communicating data through tables and figures, and crafting written reports of research. Four

chapters focus specifically on the writing of quality questionnaire items (for collecting factual and demographic information, measuring attitudes, and evaluating products, services, and programs): it is these chapters that particularly make the book an essential for novices. Each chapter's content is presented through a balance of succinct text and clear examples, closing with a review exercise. The book concludes with a very useful checklist summary of the guidelines presented throughout.

Appendices include information on additional computational procedures, a brief discussion of statistical significance, a useful table of random numbers, and several sample questionnaires.

- Merinda McLure, March 2006

No published reviews.

Orcher, L. T. 2007. *Conducting a survey: Techniques for a term project*. Glendale, CA: Pyrczak Pub. 140 pp. ISBN 1884585728 (pbk.) US \$34.95.

Committee Member Review:

This title is a step-by-step guide for students who are completely new to survey research methods and statistics, and presents a guide to conducting the one-semester survey project. Presents very basic information, in easily digestible nuggets, and reinforces it with exercises at the end of each chapter. Orcher discusses identifying survey topics, writing literature reviews, selecting samples, finding or creating instruments, and analyzing and reporting the data. The book contains particularly handy sections on standards for surveys, and workflows and timelines for survey projects, and includes a chapter on searching literature databases. Appendices cover research proposals, reliability and validity, statistical significance, and free statistical web resources.

-Roxanne Bogucka, Jan. 2009

No published reviews

Ritter, L. A., & Sue, V. M. 2007. *Using online surveys in evaluation*. New Directions for Evaluation, no. 115. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass. 69 pp. ISBN 0470221365 (pbk.) US \$29.00.

Committee Member Review:

The authors assume that users of this volume are grounded in survey research essentials, and particularly address evaluators who believe that an online survey is the best method for assessing their programs. The focus is on designing and administering online surveys, and includes chapters on planning, sample selection in the online environment, question construction, recruitment, and data management and analysis, plus a case study of an online survey. Useful text for rapid deployment of online surveys.

-Roxanne Bogucka, Jan. 2009

No published reviews

Sapsford, R. 2007. *Survey research* (2nd ed.). London; Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage Publications. 276 pp. ISBN 1412912326 (pbk.) US \$44.95

Committee Member Review:

Survey Research is a treatment of the theoretical, technical, and ethical aspects of surveys, aimed at an audience of upper-level undergraduates and above. Part A-Introduction covers survey and problem/topic definition. Part B-The Size of the Problem covers sampling theory, including statistical techniques and errors. Part C-Opinions and Facts covers measurement operationalization and validation, and interpretation of survey results. Part D-Exploring Data is a technical section on analysis and presentation of survey data. Part E-Finishing Up addresses how to decide whether a survey is needed, survey validity, and reporting survey results. Most chapters conclude with a summary and further readings.

-Roxanne Bogucka, Jan. 2009

Published Reviews:

Norrie, P. 2007. Review of *Survey research*. *Nurse Researcher* 14,3:94.

Schuman, H. 2008. *Method and meaning in polls and surveys*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press. 214 pp. ISBN 0674028272 (hbk.) US \$39.95.

Committee Member Review:

Rather than a straightforward textbook, *Method and Meaning in Polls and Surveys* is a reflection on the purposes and goals of surveys and survey researchers, by a Professor of Sociology and Research Scientist, emeritus, at the University of Michigan's Survey Research Center. In seven chapters, Schuman discusses how different kinds of questions humans ask, and what can be made of the answers; effects and analysis of open attitude questions, closed attitude questions, or a combination of the two; poll and survey context effects; linking survey results to other evidence; interpretation of and confidence in survey data. Contains extensive notes and references.

-Roxanne Bogucka, Jan. 2009

Published Reviews:

Smith, Tom W. 2008. Review of *Method and Meaning in Polls and Surveys*. *Field Methods* 20(4):413-415.

Schonlau, Matthias, Ronald D. Fricker, Jr., and Marc N. Elliott. 2002. *Conducting research surveys via e-mail and the web*. Santa Monica, CA: Rand. 118 pp., ISBN: 0833031104 (hbk.), US \$22.00

Committee Member Review:

Are Internet-based surveys faster, cheaper, easier to conduct, better? Conducting research surveys via e-mail and the web begins by addressing these questions. The book is written at an introductory level that is understandable to the novice researcher, but comprehensive enough to be a useful resource for experienced researchers. Whether you have already decided to administer an Internet survey and are seeking guidance on survey design and implementation or you are debating whether an e-mail or Web survey is appropriate for your particular research, this book is a valuable tool. Focusing on several important considerations for survey planning: sources of errors, response rates, data quality, cost, and timeliness; the authors discuss the advantages and disadvantages of using Internet surveys. Topics include background on the survey process, defining objectives, choosing among different types of Internet surveys, determining the appropriate sample and sample selection, creating and testing the

survey instrument, contacting respondents and follow-up, data collection, and analysis.

Notable highlights are a literature review of Internet surveys and a comparison of Internet-based surveys with more "traditional" survey methods (telephone and mail) in Chapter 3 and case studies that present examples of actual surveys incorporating a variety of sample populations and difference types of Internet surveys (Chapter 6).

- Polly D. Boruff-Jones, March 2006

Published Review:

Schall, Matthew. 2003. Review of *Conducting research surveys via e-mail and the web*, by Matthias Schonlau, Ronald D. Fricker, Jr., and Marc N. Elliott. *Library Quarterly* 73:238.

Sue, V. M., & Ritter, L. A. 2007. *Conducting online surveys*. Los Angeles: Sage Publications. 194 pp. ISBN 1412937542 (pbk.) US \$36.95.

Committee Member Review:

This "supplemental text for advanced undergraduate and graduate courses in survey research methods across the social, behavioral, and health sciences, ..." requires no foreknowledge of statistics or research methods. While it does address some universal survey issues, the focus is on topics peculiar to the email and web environment, such as: workflows and timelines for online surveys; sampling techniques and errors in online surveys; question format and phrasing; recruitment, response rate, and duplication prevention; online survey ethics. Appendix A contains extensive list of survey software and web survey vendors.

-Roxanne Bogucka, Jan. 2009

Published Reviews:

Diamond, Wayne. 2008. Review of *Conducting online surveys*. *Development in Practice* (June) 18,3:463-465.

ACRL Instruction Section Research & Scholarship Committee 2005-2006:

Alison Armstrong (Intern), Polly Boruff-Jones, Christen Cardina, Nancy Dewald, Wendy Holliday, Christopher Hollister, Merinda McLure, Anna Pilston (Chair), Mark Spasser, Terry Taylor, and Robert Withers.

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