

## PREFACE

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Instructors of research methods courses face a major challenge: how to cover the necessary theoretical foundations adequately and provide enough practical help to guide students through a research project. This book is designed to accomplish both goals. The foundations of research design and methods are covered (e.g., how the nature of the research question determines the research design that is used; correlational, experimental, and qualitative designs), but there is a good deal of attention to the practical issues involved in research: finding measures, writing questionnaire items, and using online survey software such as Qualtrics®; obtaining participants and ethical review; statistical analysis; and ultimately writing a report of the research based on the format of the American Psychological Association (i.e., in APA style). Research is increasingly influenced by the availability of the Internet to conduct studies, and this book covers not only online survey software but also crowdsourcing platforms like Amazon Mechanical Turk® as a source of participants. Many research methods books overlook the practical aspects of doing research. The information in this book will enable students to conduct a research methods project in a single semester.

This book can be used in a variety of social and behavioral science departments, from Psychology and Behavioral Neuroscience to Human Development, Education, and Social Work; Sociology, Criminology, and Political Science; Environmental Studies; and Communication. In addition, because research is increasingly a part of the practice of architecture, the book could be used in architecture studio courses where research is discussed. The book could be used in research methods courses taught in one or two semesters. Although statistics are covered in the book, the text is better suited for courses taught after an introductory statistics course.

The practical emphasis in the book is a major feature, and several appendices provide easily understandable summaries of fundamental issues: (a) research approaches, scale types, and associated statistical analyses; (b) a decision tree for statistical analyses (i.e., which test for which research situation); (c) commonly used “analyze” functions in SPSS Statistics®; and (d) sample informed consent and debriefing documents.

Each chapter contains several pedagogical aids to promote understanding and retention of information. For example, three kinds of questions are included in each chapter: **REVISIT and RESPOND**; **Try This Now**; and **Build Your Skills**. The **REVISIT and RESPOND** questions are considered review questions; the **Try This Now** questions push you to expand your understanding of the information just presented in the

chapter; and the **Build Your Skills** questions at the end of the chapter are typically more activity-based and invite you to practice some skill introduced in the chapter (e.g., write your own survey questions). The book also contains glossary definitions in the chapter margins when a term is introduced in the text.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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I would also like to thank my research methods students at Connecticut College. The material in this book is the foundation of my research methods class, and the students' sense of accomplishment when they present their research projects at the end of the semester motivated me to share this material with others. Repeatedly students tell me how much they learned in the class and how often they refer to the material provided in the book. After the research methods course, the book continues to be a resource for upper level individual study, honors thesis, and graduate level study.

I would also like to acknowledge the thoughtful, thorough, and constructive feedback from my wonderful reviewers: Charles Baker, Delaware County Community College; Jerry L. Cook, California State University, Sacramento; Douglas P. Cooper, Johnson C. Smith University; Mark W. Dewalt, Winthrop University; Kerri Modry-Mandell, Tufts University; Stephanie Rahill, Georgian Court University; Michael J. Rovito, University of Central Florida; Pauline S. Sawyers, Oakwood University; Jill K. Schurr, Austin College; Christina S. Sinisi, Charleston Southern University; Jeannine Callea Stamatakis, Lincoln University; Angela L. Walker, Quinnipiac University; Deidre L. Wheaton, Jackson State University; and Tina M. Zottoli, Montclair State University.

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