Methods in Educational Research: From Theory to Practice, by Maguerite G. Lodico, Dean T. Spaulding, and Katherine H. Voegtle. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2006.

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One of the key questions an author asks himself when writing a research article or textbook is "Who is the audience?" This is also an important question to keep in mind when reviewing a book. If the book is intended for incoming masters students, it is inappropriate to consider how well suited the material is for advanced doctoral students. The intended audience for the book *Methods in Education Research: From Theory to Practice* are graduate students who are also current practitioners including classroom teachers and principals. This is very clear throughout the book. For example, on page 127, there is a reference to teachers, "As teachers, many of you are familiar with grading rubrics." Additionally, the discussion questions at the end of each chapter are designed with practitioners in mind. I specifically note the audience for this book because it frames my review. This is an introductory textbook for students entering the world of research and thus the content and level of the book should reflect the intended audience. Thus in my review I consider (1) if the content of the book is appropriate for practitioners pursuing an advanced degree, and (2) if the material is clearly and correctly conveyed in the book.

The first criteria relates to the content of the book. First, I applaud the authors for their attempt to cover a wide range of material. Chapter 1 provides an overview of the different philosophies and approaches to education research. Chapters 2 and 3 present a framework for identifying research topics, conducting literature reviews, and writing proposals. Chapters 4 and 5 discuss measurement in quantitative and qualitative studies. Chapters 6 and 7 focus on sampling in quantitative and qualitative studies. Chapters 8, 9, and 10 cover research designs and analysis for experimental and non-experimental studies while Chapters 11, 12, and 13 cover the same topics for qualitative and mixed methods studies. This is an enormous amount of information and is difficult to cover in one book. The coverage of so many topics means that each topic is only discussed in a brief and sometimes generic fashion. Although the book is meant to introduce the readers to education research, I think introducing fewer topics with greater depth would help the readers gain more from the text.

The second criteria I use to review this book is whether or not the material in the book is clearly and correctly conveyed. The organization of the book and frequent use of figures, tables, checklists, and additional resources helps clarify the text and point the readers towards more information. For

example, Chapters 2 and 3 provide useful checklists for students performing literature reviews and putting together research proposals. Although the additional resources are intended to provide resources for the reader to clarify and advance understanding, the additional resources provided in many of the chapters were outdated. For example, Chapter 8 deals with experimental research but the references failed to include some of the key authors of books on experimental research including the well-known book by Shadish, Cook, and Campbell, *Experimental and Quasi-Experimental Designs*.

The straightforward language of the book helps make the material understandable for readers. However, I found some of the language to be overly simple and in some cases outdated. One of the goals for students in an introductory research methods course is to become strong consumers of research. Therefore, the language in the book should represent the language that is typically used in research proposals and articles. In some cases, the language in the chapters on quantitative research did not reflect terms currently used in the field. For example, in Chapter 9, the authors introduce causal comparative studies, relationship studies, and prediction studies. These terms are not frequently used in education research studies.

The correctness of the text was also an issue in the quantitative sections. For example, on page 185, the authors state, "A common type of experimental study, called a quasi-experimental study, involves random assignment of whole group to treatment." This statement simply is not correct. A quasi-experiment lacks random assignment. What they describe as a quasi-experiment is actually a group randomized experiment in which entire groups are randomly assigned to treatment or control. This is a major flaw in the book as the distinction between experimental studies, quasi-experimental studies, and non-experimental studies is definitely something that all graduate students and consumers of research should know. In fact, Chapters 8, 9, and 10, which deal with the research design and analysis of quantitative data, contained several errors and misused terminology.

To summarize, I do not recommend this entire book for use in introductory research methods courses for practitioners. I think there are some chapters in this book that would be useful for an introductory course, such as the materials from Chapters 2 and 3, which focus on doing literature reviews and writing proposals in an introductory course. However, the book as a whole tries to cover too much material. In addition, the incorrect information in the quantitative sections makes those chapters unusable.

References

Shadish, W. R., Cook, T. D., & Campbell, T. D. (2002). *Experimental and quasi-experimental designs for generalized causal inference*. Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Company.