

INTRODUCTION TO RESEARCH METHODOLOGIES

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There is a distinction in the research methods literature between two key terms. These are *method* and *methodology*. The term *Method* can be understood to relate principally to the tools of data collection or techniques such as questionnaires and interviews. *Methodology* has a more philosophical meaning and usually refers to the approach or paradigm that underpins the research. This would include, for example, positivism, post-positivism, critical, postmodern and so forth.

This introductory package explores four main paradigms of research *methodology*. These are: positivism, interpretivism, critical and postmodern. These paradigms form different ways in which we understand social reality and the nature of knowledge. We all have theories about how the world works, what the nature of humankind is and what it is possible to know and know know. The usefulness of the term paradigm is that it offers a way of categorizing a body of complex beliefs and world views.

POSITIVISM

This is the view that social science should mirror, as near as possible, procedures of the natural sciences. The research should be objective and detached from the objects of research. It is possible to capture, through research instruments, 'real' reality.

Positivism is critiqued because studying social life is considered, in many ways, to be different from studying chemicals in a laboratory. For example, the social research is

imbued with values, experiences and politics that cannot be separated from the data that the research produces. In addition, there are many questions raised about the nature of social reality - is there a 'real' reality (facts) that we can objectively know?

THE LANGUAGE OF POSITIVISM

Discuss the following questions in terms of: *significance, generalizability, reliability, validity, objectivity, causality.*

1. Does watching violence on television and film encourage children to be violent?
2. Does smoking kill?
3. Does learning pay?
4. Will mass participation in higher education increase the economic competitiveness of the UK?

What kind of research design would be needed to answer these questions?

INTERPRETIVISM

The interpretivist approach looks for culturally derived and historically situated interpretations of the social world. Interpretivism is often linked to the thought of Max Weber (1864-1920) who suggests that in the human sciences we are concerned with *Verstehen* (understanding) in comparison to *Erklaren* (explaining) Process rather than 'facts'. Interpretivism has many variants - eg hermeneutics, phenomenology, symbolic interactionism.

INTERPRETIVISM

TASK

Your task is to undertake an observation of 15 minutes.

During this observation you should record what is happening.

When you return you will be asked to *explain* the social 'reality' that you have observed.

CRITICAL SOCIAL RESEARCH

Critiques the paradigms of positivism and interpretivism. Critical inquiry [is not] a research that seeks merely to understand [it is] a research that challenges ... that [takes up a view] of conflict and oppression to bring about change. Included in this category would be feminism, Marxism, anti-racist approaches.

CRITICAL SOCIAL RESEARCH

CAN SOCIAL RESEARCH CHANGE THE WORLD?

The case of Oral Testimony and Development in

Participatory Action Research*

- ***Ethical/Political/Methodological Stance***: research based on oral history and oral testimony can be very effective in ensuring that the voices of those we research are heard. Reverse common expert-novice relations so that development workers/researchers are novices and local people experts.
- ***Project Aims***: help development workers/researchers improve their listening and learning skills; value the knowledge, experience, culture and priorities of local people.
- ***Methods***: oral evidence (songs, legends, stories, plays, traditional accounts of community or family history passed down the generations, personal stories, recollections and memories).

* Source: Slim, H and Thompson, P (1993) **Listening for a Change: Oral Testimony and Development**, London, Panos

Researchers' Training

- A focus on the conceptual and cultural dimensions of interviewing so that developmental workers/researchers were sensitive to 'customary modes of speech and communication and allow people to speak on their own terms'.
- Need to know the local culture and issues *before* the fieldwork is embarked upon. 'If the narrator senses that the interviewer is ignorant of the most basic features of his or her lifestyle, this is not conducive to a good relationship'.
- Need to recognise a number of types of interview (one-to-one, family-tree, single testimony, diary interviews, group, community interviews).
- Also be sensitive to local customs eg one-to-one interviews are not always acceptable (eg when interviewing women alone or where interviewer/interviewee are different sexes) or of value (eg when interviewing children who may communicate better in groups).
- Need to use a range of methods for facilitating oral testimony (walkabouts, role play, diagrams, making models, maps, time-lines, land-marks, photographs, talking through puppets, draw pictures).
- Practice interviews are undertaken as part of the training.

What happens with all the data?

Collected 500 interviews amounting to 600 hours of tape. Many oral history projects get stuck after the collection phase. What to do with those boxes of tape, those untidy transcripts, how to interpret them, how to publish them, how to return them to the informants?

- Need to recognise the value of the process of collection itself. Forced participating agencies to create the time to listen with the result that project workers had a new understanding and respect for traditional knowledge. Interviewers themselves discovered they had little knowledge of their own culture and their parents' generation.
- Some of the interviews were returned directly through a literacy programme.
- Informants were able to influence developments in the area. An immediate benefit was that 'someone was paying respectful attention to strongly held opinions and beliefs. Some projects were able to act on new, technical, information about, for example, half-forgotten irrigation techniques.
- Publication included: bound, indexed and searchable interviews for other researchers and development workers; monograph to reach wider audience; all interviews were published in English and organised by country on a computer disk, together with computerised and hard copy index.

POST-MODERN

Advocates of postmodernism have argued that the era of big narratives and theories is over: locally, temporally and situationally limited narratives are now required.

Postmodernism is a contemporary sensibility, developing since World War II, that privileges no single authority, method or paradigm.

What the postmodernist spirit has brought into play is primarily an overpowering loss of totalising distinctions and a consequent sense of fragmentation. The boundary between elite and popular culture, between art and life, is no more. Along with that boundary has gone the mesianic sense of mission that modernists have allowed themselves.

WHAT *IS* POST-MODERN RESEARCH?

An 'introduction' typically offers an overview narrative of a work and directs the reader's attention to the key issues, creating a semblance of a coherence that progresses through a story or argument. I cannot, however, provide any submission of this sort. I can offer, instead, a simulacral story, that is, a story of something that never existed. I can also offer several arguments, perhaps even a family resemblance of arguments, though some of them are unruly and contradict each other. I could imply, even subtly, that I have gained, risen, improved, grown theoretically and personally. I could suggest that I have made sharp, carefully worded, clear arguments, never violating their logical trajectories. However, none of these are suitable. Instead, I have wavered and mis-stepped; I have gone backward after I have gone forward; I have drifted sideways along a new imaginary, forgetting from where I had once thought I had started. I have fabricated personae and unities, and I have sometimes thought I knew something of which I have written. However, caveat emptor, all that follows is never that which it is constructed to appear, an apt description, in my opinion, of all writing. (Scheurich, 1997: 1)

'... Opening ...'

Deconstruction, if such a thing exists, should open up. (Derrida, 1987: 261)

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Think of the title at the top of this page as a picture. An opening, a beginning, that is also not one, because insinuated into something else. A crack? Or perhaps a violent opening such as a rupture or an incision. Perhaps a dangerous opening in some ground or structure: an abyss. Or perhaps the opening marks the space where some of the dots in the line that stretches before and after it have been rubbed out. An erasure. Or it might even be blocking a space where something else might have emerged.

Then again, maybe the opening is holding something together rather than dividing it. A suture or a scar, then. But perhaps the opening is not really a breach in the line at all, but just a kind of complication of it. A sort of fold or pocket. Now forget about the title being a picture, and think of it again as **writing**.
(Stronach and MacLure: 1997: 1)

Some Issues

The text is a very crowded place (Rath, 1999). There is you. There is me. There are the research participants. And there are the host of other voices we are in dialogue with as we write, and read. These include the authors of other texts, our colleagues, other research participants, funders and so forth. Some of these voices are quite evident. As part of empirical research, the text offers voice to the research participants. After all, what is the point of it all, if not to re-present their views, their lives, their ambitions, their problems and, with them, to work for social change or improve practices?

The citation system allows us to acknowledge other voices. Those, of course, whom we re-collect or we have access to. Those others, who have also contributed to how we know our topic, simply mark us with the guilt of their lack of public recognition or remembrance. In these more reflexive days, the researcher too may be in view through the use of the personal pronoun or through the short biographic note of what, in another vein, Butler (1990) refers to as their embarrassed etcetera's. That is, their sex, their class and their 'race'.

Feminism has always been concerned with who author-izes the text. Writing women in, however, has proved to be insufficient. As both the signs of difference and poststructuralism have taught us, in giving voice to Others we may merely be giving voice to ourselves. In so doing, we are replicating traditional knowledge hierarchies. As an emancipatory movement, such thoughts strike deeply into our feminist hearts. To know oneself as coloniser or as an imperialist powerbroker is an

uncomfortable ethical position. Can it be resolved?

There have been three main responses to this question. First, there has been the need to recognise authorial presence. Thus, authors of text now write themselves into their work through a range of reflexive and autobiographical devices. Yet the balance between omniscient authorial silence and omniscient authorial presence is a difficult one to get right.

Second, one can take up a political and ethical framework that refuses to occlude the messy power relations that exist between author and authored. The feminist commandment that research should not be 'on women' but 'for women' becomes translated into researching 'with women.' At its simplest level, this means developing a dialogic relation between researcher-researched from the outset. Such a position goes beyond respondent validation. Here the aim is more concerned with having research respondents guarantee the authenticity of the account. Rather the aim is to recognise the multi-layered levels of meaning created through research acts.

Third, alongside the linguistic turn in social science thinking, we also find the textual turn in social science production. This has given rise to a greater research consciousness of narrative devices and strategies of persuasion. In consequence, this has led to much more risk taking and experimentation in the presentation of research data.

The linguistic-textual turns come together through poststructuralism's challenge to the idea that there exists 'a single, literal reading of a textual object, the one intended by the author' (Barone, 1995: 65). Whilst some readings are certainly more privileged than others, interpretation cannot be controlled. Whilst this can present problems for authors who seek to convey specific or unitary analyses, multiplicity is also a strength. It can signal new ways of knowing and new ways of being. (adapted from Hughes, 1999b)

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*For useful summaries of different epistemological positions
see:*

Patti Lather (1991) *Getting Smart*, p 191 and

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Garrick, J (2000) (Mis)Interpretive Research, in J Garrick and C Rhodes (Eds) **Research and Knowledge at Work**, London, Routledge, p206)

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SOCIAL REALITY

WHAT ARE MY ASSUMPTIONS AND PRE-SUPPOSITIONS?

A GLOSSARY OF TERMS

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*...every human being as a human being - including creators of knowledge - carries around certain **ultimate presumptions** ... about what his or her environment looks like, and about his or her role in this environment. These presumptions are normally quite unconscious and very difficult to change, at least in the short run. Our ultimate presumptions will have a bearing both on how we look at problems and on how we look at existing and available sets of techniques and at knowledge in general. (Arbnor and Bjerke: 1997: 7)*

If you agree with Arbnor and Bjerke that our ultimate presumptions will influence what we think is social reality and also will influence what we believe are appropriate ways of knowing (and even changing) that social reality, then use the

glossary provided here to begin further follow-up reading.

Constructionism

`It is the view that all knowledge, and therefore all meaningful reality as such, is contingent upon human practices, being constructed in and out of interaction between human beings and their world, and developed and transmitted within an essentially social context... In the constructionist view, as the word suggests, meaning is not discovered by constructed' (Crotty, 1998: 42)

`Realities are apprehendable in the form of multiple, intangible mental constructions, socially and experientially based, local and specific in nature (although elements are often shared among many individuals and even across cultures) and dependent for their form and content on the individual persons or groups holding the constructions ... The investigator and the object of investigation are assumed to be interactively linked so that the `findings' are *literally created* as the investigation proceeds ... Methodology ...hermeneutical and dialectical' (Guba and Lincoln, 1994: 110-111)

Critical Inquiry

`The term *critical theory* is (for us) a blanket term denoting a set of several alternative paradigms, including additionally (but not limited to) neo-Marxism, feminism, materialism and participatory inquiry. Indeed, critical theory may itself usefully be divided into three substrands: post-structuralism, postmodernism, and a blending of the two. Whatever their differences, the common breakaway assumption of all these variants is that of the value-determined nature of inquiry - an epistemological difference. Our grouping of these positions into a single category is a judgement call: we will not try to do justice to the individual points of view.' (Guba and Lincoln, 1994: 109)

Critiques the paradigms of positivism and interpretivism as ways of knowing the social world. 'Critical inquiry [is not] a research that seeks merely to understand [it is] a research that challenges ... that [takes up a view] of conflict and oppression ... that seeks to bring about change' (Crotty, 1998: 112). Included in this category would be feminism, Marxism, anti-racist approaches.

'For all practical purposes the structures *are* real ... the values of the investigator (and of situated 'others') inevitably influencing the inquiry. Findings are therefore *value mediated* ... Methodology ... dialogic and dialectical' (Guba and Lincoln, 1994: 110)

Epistemology

'The theory of knowledge embedded in the theoretical perspective and thereby in the methodology ... An epistemology ... is a way of understanding and explaining how we know what we know' (Crotty, 1998: 3)

Epistemologies are theories of knowledge that address questions such as 'who can be a 'knower', what can be known, what constitutes and validates knowledge, and what the relationship is or should be between knowing and being (that is, between epistemology and ontology)' (Stanley and Wise, 1990: 26).

Hermeneutics

A form of interpretivism. The focus is on written and unwritten sources, human practices, events and situations, in an attempt to 'read' these in ways that brings understanding.

'Hermeneutics is an approach to the analysis of texts that stresses how prior understandings and prejudices shape the interpretive process' (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994: 15)

Interpretivism

A positivist approach would follow the methods of the natural sciences and, by way of allegedly value-free, detached observation, seek to identify universal features of humanhood, society and history that offer explanation and hence control and predictability. The interpretivist approach, to the contrary, *looks for culturally derived and historically situated interpretations of the social life-world*. Interpretivism is often linked to the thought of Max Weber (1864-1920) who suggests that in the human sciences we are concerned with *Verstehen* (understanding). This has been taken to mean that Weber is contrasting the interpretative approach (*Verstehen*, understanding) needed in the human and social sciences with the explicative approach (*Erklaren*, explaining), focused on causality, that is found in the natural sciences. Hence the emphasis on the different methods employed in each, leading to the clear (though arguably exaggerated) distinction found in the textbooks between qualitative research methods and quantitative research methods. (Crotty, 1998: 67)

Interpretivism has many variants - hermeneutics, phenomenology, symbolic interactionism.

Objectivism

'Objectivism - the notion that truth and meaning reside in their objects independently of any consciousness - has its roots in ancient Greek philosophy, was carried along in Scholastic realism throughout the Middle Ages and rose to its zenith in the age of the so-called Enlightenment'. The belief that there is objective truth and that appropriate methods of inquiry can bring us accurate and certain knowledge of that truth has been the epistemological ground of Western science' (Crotty, 1998: 42)

Ontology

'Ontology is the study of being. It is concerned with 'what is', with the nature of existence, with the structure of reality as such. ... it would sit alongside epistemology informing the theoretical

perspective, for each theoretical perspective embodies a certain way of understanding *what is* (ontology) as well as a certain way of understanding *what it means to know* (epistemology)' (Crotty, 1998: 10)

Phenomenology

'Phenomenology is a complex system of ideas associated with the works of Husserl, Heidegger, Sartre, Merleau-Ponty and Alfred Schutz' (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994: 15)

A form of interpretivism. Culture is treated with a good measure of caution and suspicion. Our culture may be enabling but paradoxically it is also dis-enabling. Culture allows us entry into a comprehensive set of meanings but it also shuts us off from an abundant font of untapped significance (adapted from Crotty, 1998).

Positivism

This is the view that social science should mirror, as near as possible, to procedures of the natural sciences. The researcher should be objective and detached from the objects of research. It is possible to capture, through research instruments, 'real' reality.

Positivism is critiqued because studying social life is considered, in many ways, to be different from studying chemicals in a laboratory. For example, the social researcher is imbued with values, experiences and politics that cannot be separated from the data that the research produces. In addition, there are many questions raised about the nature of social reality - is there a 'real' reality (Guba and Lincoln, 1994) that we can objectively know as positivism implies? Guba and Lincoln (1994: 108) note that positivism is 'the "received view" that has dominated the formal discourse in the physical and social sciences for some 400 years.' 'Positivism asserts that objective accounts of the world can be given' (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994:

15). Take care, however, if you think that there is only one perspective called positivism. As Crotty (1998) points out, there have been as many as twelve identified varieties of positivism.

Postmodernism

'Postmodernism is a contemporary sensibility, developing since World War II, that privileges no single authority, method or paradigm' (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994: 15)

'What the postmodernist spirit has brought into play is primarily an overpowering loss of totalising distinctions and a consequent sense of fragmentation. The boundary between elite and popular culture, between art and life, is no more. Along with that boundary has gone the mesianac sense of mission that modernists have allowed themselves. Under the influence of post-structuralism, even the clear distinction between different texts has gone, with intertextuality inviting us to move at random between them and to read one into the other. What were formerly regarded as clear-cut differences in style appear to have vanished too. Where, in the past, artists and writers were seen to create particular styles, which could then be parodied, this is no longer the case. All art is repetition. ... Yet, if parody has lost its funniness, there is still a playfulness and carnival spirit in postmodernist work - the ludic element. Irony is forever to the fore, along with allegory, artifice, asymmetry, anarchy' (Crotty, 1998: 212-213)

'Advocates of postmodernism have argued that the era of big narratives and theories is over: locally, temporally and situationally limited narratives are now required' (Flick, 1998: 2).

Post-positivism

This is a response to the criticisms that have been made about positivism. It maintains the same set of basic beliefs, for example, that there is a reality external to us but that we can

only know this imperfectly and probabilistically. Objectivity remains an ideal. There is an increased use of qualitative techniques in order to 'check' the validity of findings. 'Postpositivism holds that only partially objective accounts of the world can be produced, because all methods are flawed' (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994: 15)

Post-Structuralism

Builds on the work of Saussure who argued that language is structured in terms of oppositional categories. 'According to poststructuralism, language is an unstable system of referents, thus it is impossible ever to capture completely the meaning of an action, text or intention' (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994: 15)

Realism

'realism (an ontological notion asserting that realities exist outside the mind) is often taken to imply objectivism (an epistemological notion asserting that meaning exists in objects independently of any consciousness)' (Crotty, 1998: 10)

Semiotics

'Semiology brings the study of language into contact with the study of culture, redefining what can be taken as a legitimate topic of study in the social sciences. In order to understand how language affects social scientific practice, the semiological approach highlights the need to take on the broader issue of how linguistic signs make sense with the cultural way of life of those interpreting them. Moreover, the concerns of semiologists range across the forms of representation which are part of our lives: from television programmes to magazine advertisements, from reading a novel to participating in mass spectator events and from the public understanding of science to the critical analysis of the role of soap operas in contemporary society' (Smith, 1998: 240)

`Semiotics is the science of signs or sign systems - a structuralist project' (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994: 15)

Symbolic Interactionism

Building on the work of George Mead (1863-1931) who was an North American social psychologist. He tried to explain how the human mind, the self, and self-consciousness come into existence. He argued that meaning is primarily a property of behaviour and only secondarily a property of objects themselves. (Adapted from Arbnor and Bjerke, 1997: 34).

`... different ways in which individuals invest objects, events, experiences, etc. with meaning form the central starting point for research. The reconstruction of such subjective viewpoints becomes the instrument for analysing social worlds. ... the methodological imperative is drawn to reconstruct the subject's viewpoint' (Flick, 1998:17-18 passim)

Subjectivism

`Subjectivism comes to the fore in structuralist, post-structuralist and postmodernist forms of thought (and, in addition, often appears to be what people are actually describing when they claim to be talking about constructionism). In subjectivism, meaning does not come out of an interplay between subject and object [as in constructionism] but is imposed on the object by the subject. Here the object as such makes no contribution to the generation of meaning.' (Crotty, 1998: 9)

Introductory Texts on Research Methodology

The following list contains introductory texts that will be useful for understanding the philosophical underpinnings of research methodologies.

Arbnor, I and Bjerke, B (1997) **Methodology for Creating**

Business Knowledge, London, Sage (Second Edition)

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This has an extremely useful chapter that sets out the distinctions between paradigms and methodology. It also contains summaries of six categories of knowledge: reality as concrete and conformable to law, a structure that is independent of the observer; reality as a concrete determining process; reality as mutually dependent fields of information; reality as a world of symbolic discourse; reality as social construction; reality as a manifestation of human intentionality.

The authors note that the more we approach the lower numbers the more:

a. reality is considered to be objective and rational

b. the relations to philosophy are decreased

c. knowledge as explanation is seen as the lodestar

d. results that are general and empirical are sought

On the other hand, the more we approach the higher numbers the more:

a. reality is considered as subjective and relative

b. the relations to philosophy are increased

c. knowledge as understanding is seen as the lodestar

d. results that are specific and concrete, but eidetic, are looked for

Crotty, M (1998) The Foundations of Social Research: Meaning and Perspective in the Research Process, London, Sage

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This text gives a detailed overview of interpretivism (symbolic interactionism, phenomenology, hermeneutics), constructionism, critical research (Marx, Habermas, Freire and feminism), positivism and post-positivism and post-modernism and post-structuralism.

Cohen, L and Manion, L (Eds) (1994) **Research Methods in Education**, London, Routledge

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This is a 'classic' introductory text that draws its examples from school based research. The text covers the main methods of social research (case study, interviews, action research, etc). It includes a useful introduction to the varied ways that social reality is construed.

Danaher, G, Schirato, J and Webb, J (2000) **Understanding Foucault**, London, Sage

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As the title implies, this is a basic introduction. Of course you should also read Foucault in the original!

Garrick, J and Rhodes, C (Eds) (2000) **Research and Knowledge at Work: Perspectives, case-studies and innovative strategies**, London, Routledge

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This is not strictly a methods text but much more of an exploration of knowledge and research. It has a strong postmodern perspective. It is extremely useful because it introduces you to the implications of postmodernism for research; it is (mostly) written in a very accessible style (particularly the chapters by Usher and Edwards); and 'learning' is the central concept explored.

Griffiths, M (1998) **Educational Research for Social Justice:**

Getting off the fence, Buckingham, Open University Press

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This text is written for 'all researchers in educational settings whose research is motivated by considerations of justice, fairness and equity'. In so doing the text provides a set of principles for research that strives to achieve social justice. The text addresses questions of 'taking sides', issues of truth and method and power-knowledge.

Hammersley, M (Ed) (1993) **Social Research: Philosophy, Politics and Practice**, London, Sage

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This is a useful text because it brings together some 'classic' previously published journal articles. It addresses purposes of social research, issues of 'race', gender and power, politics and ethics, and validity and relevance of research.

Hood, S, Mayall, B and Oliver, S (Eds) (1999) **Critical Issues in Social Research: Power and Prejudice**, Buckingham, Open University Press

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This edited collection focuses on research as a political activity. It explores the relations between researchers, funders and policymakers through a series of case examples.

Hughes, C (2002) **Key Concepts in Feminist Theory and Research**, London, Sage

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This text will enable you to understand the varied ways through which key terms (equality, difference, choice, time, experience, care) are conceptualised.

Hughes, J (1990) **The Philosophy of Social Research**, London, Longman (Second Edition)

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This is another 'classic' in terms of a broad introduction to philosophical issues underpinning research. It is accessible and chapters focus around positivism and interpretivism.

Kendall, G and Wickham, G (1999) **Using Foucault's Methods**, London, Sage

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Designed as an introduction to Foucault, this text will help you understand Foucaultian principles of archeology and genealogy as well as the central significance of discourse. As I have said before, you should also read Foucault in the original. Do not rely totally on secondary sources.

Layder, D (1998) **Sociological Practice: Linking theory and social research**, London, Sage

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This text is designed to highlight the linkages between theory and research. The text is important because it highlights the role of analysis as an on-going feature of research rather than something that occurs at the end of a data collection period. The text contains discussions of concept-indicator links and introduces an approach the author describes as 'adaptive theory'.

Mason, J (2002) **Qualitative Researching**, London, Sage, Second Edition

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Whilst addressing researchers who are interested in qualitative approaches, this text is more generally useful as it explores aspects of ontology and epistemology in an accessible way using the metaphor of the 'intellectual puzzle'.

May, T and Williams, M (Eds) (1998) **Knowing the Social World**, Buckingham, Open University Press

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Contains a series of chapters that address various ways that we 'know' the social world. This includes feminism, naturalism, relationism, quantitative and qualitative.

Punch, K (1998) **Introduction to Social Research: Quantitative and Qualitative Approaches**, London, Sage

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The chapter 'Some Central Issues' addresses issues of social reality. The rest of the text gives detailed expositions on the variety of quantitative and qualitative approaches to research.

Ramanazanglu, with Holland, J (2002)

Smith, M (1998) **Social Science in Question**, London, Sage/Open University

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This Open University text offers a very accessible introduction to the nature of social reality and the key debates that have informed understandings of this. It is designed to provide a guide to the approaches to knowledge from positivism to postmodernism.

Tuhiwai Smith, L (1999) **Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples**, London, Zed Books

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If you are interested in research that is designed to be participatory and seeks to facilitate critical social change, then this text is essential. It explores the implications for researchers/methods from a post-colonial perspective. It begins by noting that from the vantage point of the colonized, the term 'research' is inextricably linked with European colonialism; the way in which scientific research has been implicated in the worst excesses of imperialism remains a powerful remembered history for many of the world's colonized peoples.

Warburton, N (1999) **Philosophy: The Basics**, London, Routledge

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There are two chapters that are especially useful: the external world and science.

Journals

There are a growing number of methodology journals. The following are either dedicated wholly to discussions and developments in research methodologies or methodologies form a strong component in the journal. For example: International Journal of Social Research Methodology; International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education; British Educational Research Journal; Educational Research; Ethnography; Qualitative Inquiry; Qualitative Research; Sociological Methods and Research; Sociological Research Online.