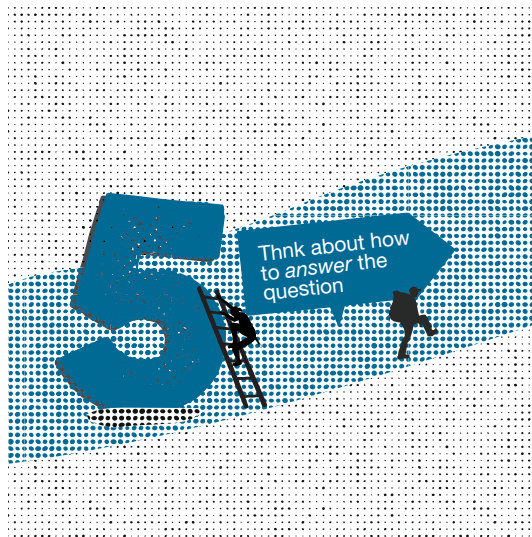


5

METHODOLOGY PART 1: DECIDING ON AN APPROACH



Chapter Table of Contents

Research design

Research approach

Frameworks for thinking about the social world – paradigms

Paradigms and research approach

From purposes to questions to approaches to data gathering

This chapter will help you figure out how to . . .

- Choose an inquiry approach for answering your research question.
- Understand different ways of viewing the world and different understandings about how knowledge is sought and gained in social inquiry – positivism and interpretivism – and think critically about them and your question.
- Tie up your purposes and your questions with these considerations about knowledge and ‘ways of finding out’.
- Decide on a ‘design route’ that takes account of your purposes, questions, approach and methods.

For extra help, check out these other resources:

Brookfield, S.D. (1995) *Becoming a Critically Reflective Teacher*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass. A thoughtful book on reflective teaching, encouraging readers to question the implicit assumptions they hold.

Cohen, M. (2015) *Critical Thinking Skills for Dummies*. Chichester: Wiley. Surprisingly thorough, covering the gamut of thinking-skills issues.

Crotty, M. (1998) *The Foundations of Social Research*. London: Sage. Nicely written overview of the interpretivist approach.

Etherington, S. (2004) *Becoming a Reflexive Researcher: Using Ourselves in Research*. London: Jessica Kingsley. About the realities of bringing yourself to research. Contains sections on heuristic inquiry, keeping a reflective research journal, autoethnography and more.

Fuller, S. (2007) *The Knowledge Book: Key Concepts in Philosophy, Science and Culture*. London: Acumen. An A–Z of key concepts, refracted through Fuller’s refreshingly unusual mind.

MacIntyre, A. (1985) *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory*. London: Duckworth. See Chapter 8 of MacIntyre’s book for his devastating critique of the social sciences.

Oakley, A. (2000) *Experiments in Knowing: Gender and Method in the Social Sciences*. Cambridge: Polity.

Ann Oakley is a feminist scholar, and this book includes her take on gender bias in social science. She looks at the historical development of methodology in the social and natural sciences and argues that they have been subject to a process of ‘gendering’. Arguing, like so many others, that the divide between quantitative and qualitative should be played down, she says that we should not play down experimental ways of knowing in the social sciences.

- Pring, R. (2015) *Philosophy of Educational Research* (3rd edn). London: Continuum. Excellent – especially on the invalidity of a quantitative–qualitative divide in inquiry.
- Sacks, O. (1996) *An Anthropologist on Mars*. London: Picador. A lovely collection of essays. Sacks is in fact a neurologist, not an anthropologist, and the people he talks with and observes (e.g. people with autism and Tourette's) are particularly interesting for those researching with people who are in any way different.
- Schön, D. (1983) *The Reflective Practitioner: How Professionals Think in Action*. London: Temple. This is the key text on reflective thinking and practice.
- Seale, C. (2003) *Social Research Methods: A Reader*. London: Routledge. A fine collection of classic papers on method, including pieces from Wright Mills, Durkheim, Flanders, Feyerabend, Kuhn, Geertz and others.
- Thomson, A. (2005) *Critical Reasoning: A Practical Introduction*. London: Routledge. This is industrial-strength critical thinking, but clearly explained. If you can use and understand this, you are up in the premier league of critical thinkers.
- Wei, L. and Moyer, M. (2008) *The Blackwell Guide to Research Methods in Bilingualism and Multilingualism*. Oxford: Blackwell. Take a look at this if you are interested in the kind of research 'Angharad' is doing.

CHAPTER 5 CHECKLIST

You may find it helpful to copy this table and write down the answers to the questions. Have you ...

	Notes	
1 ... thought about how your research question may lead into a particular <i>kind</i> of research?		☐
2 ... made a list of what you will need, practically and personally, to complete research of a particular kind?		☐