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Researching Children's Lives and Social Situations with Respect and Integrity

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Abstract

In *Research with children: Theory & practice*, Michelle O'Reilly, Pablo Ronzoni and Nisha Dogra engage the readers in navigating the successes and hurdles of researching with diverse children. The book, which is meant for "researchers who are new to research with children" presents engaging descriptions on how to link in culturally sensitive ways the overall research process involving the lives and social situations of children who are participants in qualitative and quantitative research projects. Furthermore, the book balances the theory and practice of research with children through the activities used and the practical examples provided, some of which are drawn from the authors' own work

Keywords

Research with Children, Vulnerable Research Participants, Culture and the Research Process, Novice Researchers

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Researching Children's Lives and Social Situations with Respect and Integrity

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In Research with children: Theory & practice, Michelle O'Reilly, Pablo Ronzoni and Nisha Dogra engage the readers in navigating the successes and hurdles of researching with diverse children. The book, which is meant for "researchers who are new to research with children" presents engaging descriptions on how to link in culturally sensitive ways the overall research process involving the lives and social situations of children who are participants in qualitative and quantitative research projects. Furthermore, the book balances the theory and practice of research with children through the activities used and the practical examples provided, some of which are drawn from the authors' own work. Key words: Research with Children, Vulnerable Research Participants, Culture and the Research Process, Novice Researchers

Drawing on their academic and clinical experiences that involve interactions with children as well as doing research with children, Michelle O'Reilly, Pablo Ronzoni, and Nisha Dogra engage readers in a journey that positively blends their experiences with issues that are pertinent in conducting research that serves the interests of children. In the process, the theory and practice of doing qualitative and quantitative research with children are elucidated in the examples that the authors share drawn from their research projects.

The importance of engaging in culturally sensitive or appropriate research practices/processes is acknowledged and given prominence in this text. In addition to Chapter 2 being devoted to "cultural and diversity issues," these issues are integrated in various chapters throughout the book. This corresponds to the authors' view that "sensitivity to cultural issues needs to be considered at each stage of the research process" (p. 22). As a lecturer who often teaches a graduate level course on qualitative research, it reminds me of how the students often react when I engage them in dialogue on the intersections between the research process, culture and informed consent considerations. Some of them often struggle with the role of parents and guardians in seeking for permission for students (in primary and secondary schools) to participate in the research process. "If the school head and the teachers have given me permission to conduct research that should be sufficient," they often articulate. Hence, I believe that this book can be a good resource for creating awareness on research ethics for both graduate and undergraduate students.

The organizational features of the twelve chapters in this book are informative and guide readers to make sense of what researching with children entails. The chapter outlines and learning outcomes that appear at the beginning of each chapter provide a "road map" for readers to navigate each chapter. Likewise, the chapter summaries and list of additional resources that appear at the end of each chapter are useful tools for readers (like me) who wish to explore further the issues raised in this book. Activities provided in each chapter are resourceful to researchers, students in research courses as well as their instructors. For example, as an instructor who often teaches a course on qualitative research methods, I find the activities and the answers provided at the end of the book insightful for engaging the students with the concepts and knowledge that they are learning. As a researcher, I find the

activities productive because they open possibilities for me to reflect on the knowledge that I have on conducting research and in the process re-learn how it applies to research with children. The fact that the authors continuously draw the reader's attention to how the different chapters are interconnected adds value to the organization of information in this book. Moreover, even though the glossary provided at the end of the text is not exhaustive, it is useful for guiding readers to understand how the concepts that are defined are used in this book. Similarly, the glossary opens possibilities for students in research courses in particular to understand and interrogate the basics of the research process.

Research methodology textbooks often marginalize/place less emphasis on the safety of the researcher in the overall research process. I credit the authors of this text for having taken this issue into consideration in their discussion of the theory and practice of research with children. Although very brief the succinct section on "safety of the researcher," which is part of the chapter "Planning to do research with children," identifies the risks researchers can encounter as well as the precautionary measures researchers can take to ensure their safety.

In conclusion, Michelle O'Reilly, Pablo Ronzoni and Nisha Dogra contribute significantly to what it means to conduct research that privileges the interests and concerns of diverse children. They demonstrate a clear understanding of the key issues involved in conducting research with children. As a result, they produce a detailed, practice-oriented book that is indeed beneficial to "researchers who are new to research with children" (p. xii) and which at the same time reminds experienced researchers to conduct research with children in ways that value their lives and social situations. They achieve this by using language that is accessible to various audiences, including graduate and undergraduate students.

Reference

O'Reilly, M., Ronzoni, P., & Dogra, N. (2013). *Research with children: Theory & practice*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications Inc.

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