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Review: research methods in education

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- This is a book review of the book, Research methods in education (7th edition) by Louis Cohen, Lawrence Manion and Keith Morrison.

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Review

Research Methods in Education

Title:	Research Methods in Education (7th Edition)
Authors:	Louis Cohen, Lawrence Manion, and Keith Morrison
Publisher:	Routledge
Price:	£28.99
Reviewed by:	Nigel Zanker
ISBN:	978 0 415 58336 7 (paperback)
Orders:	www.routledge.com



Research Methods in Education should be no stranger to professional researchers and students of education at undergraduate and postgraduate levels. Since its first publication in 1980, it has achieved a well-deserved reputation as a widely recommend text to help plan, conduct, analyse and use research. This rewritten, expanded and updated 7th edition, published March 2011, builds securely on this reputation and is well-placed to continue as the market leader.

My first connection with this text was in 1991 as a research associate. Help was needed to design and conduct an enquiry to evaluate, and report on, a Local Education Authority's curriculum provision across 80 schools and colleges. Louis Cohen, as Professor of Education in the department in which I was employed provided that help, the support and a copy of the 3rd Edition of *Research Methods in Education*. In April of this year, he contacted me to send me a copy of the new 7th Edition. This review is part of acknowledging that help, which I do so with pride in light of the career path which followed. I believe that *Research Methods in Education*, through its seven revisions, will have been a guiding beacon for many researchers in education and associated fields within social science. This new edition will remain a significant resource to researchers of all levels of experience.

The revisions in the 7th edition are extensive, making the whole text more comprehensive. It covers (probably) all paradigms of research in an accessible manner with strong links to their relevance in educational research. The text is very clear in the pros and cons of mapping specific methods to methodologies or to associated paradigms. Indeed, the opening chapter to the first section provides a discursive commentary on the nature of enquiry in the context of educational research. This leads to questioning whether mixed methods in educational research are a new or a 'young' paradigm.

New chapters cover:

- Causation, critical educational research, evaluation and

the politics of research, including material on cross-cultural research, mixed methods and participatory research.

- Choosing and planning a research project, including material on sampling, research questions, literature reviews and ethical issues.
- Meta-analysis, research syntheses and systematic reviews.
- Virtual worlds and internet research.
- Using and analysing visual media and data in educational research.
- Organizing and presenting qualitative data, content analysis, coding and computer analysis, themes, narratives, conversations and discourses, grounded theory.
- Understanding and choosing statistical tests, descriptive and inferential statistics, multi-dimensional measurement and factor analysis.

Throughout the 38 chapters of the text there are supporting illustrative examples. There is also an impressive interactive companion website, www.routledge.com/textbooks/cohen7e. There are PowerPoint presentations for every chapter, which contain an outline of the chapter structure followed by a thorough summary of the key points making them ideal for use by both lecturers and students. There are additional documents for 16 of the chapters. Very good examples of the synergy between the text and the companion website are the information on 'grounded theory' (chapter 33), and for 'inferential statistics' (chapter 36) for which the website materials include a manual on the use of SPSS. These examples, alone, make the text good value for money.

Research Methods in Education is an impressive resource because of its style, its indexing and its tight reference to other sources of research literature. I recommend this book without reservation as an essential resource for all connected with educational research. This especially includes, but not solely, those students on 'M' level teacher training courses and qualified teachers undertaking research for higher degrees and their supervisors.