

Book Review

Innovation and Reflexivity in the Research Process

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Alexander Jungmeister (Editor) (2016) Innovation and Reflexivity in the Research Process, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 182 pages, hardcover, ISBN: (10)1-4438-4377-6 / (13) 978-1-4438-4377-5, \$ 205.54 CAD

Innovation and Reflexivity in the Research Process provides novices in the field of research with a powerful tool to navigate this broad and challenging discipline. A field that requires fast pace learning and a successful mastering of research skills supported by an accurate understanding of what reflexivity is, its role, and how it should be applied in research. This book presents a compilation of research processes, conveying the basic understanding novice researchers must have to lapidate their research skills in a timely fashion. Jungmeister's language is objective, easy to understand, and adorned with practical illustrations, making the book accessible to a wide variety of readers, including junior researchers whose first language is not English.

This book may significantly contribute to the development of new researchers as it offers a baseline understanding of the groundwork on reflexivity necessary to better support current research. It starts with a brief historical overview of the theory of reflection, an excellent and helpful guide to new researchers in developing their research skills, and further locating themselves in research with a more tangible understanding of where they stand. Jungmeister takes complex theories of reflection, which often are the result of many years of experience and deep understanding in the field and make them more accessible to those who are new or less experienced researchers. He dissects what reflection is, why it is important, and how it should be used with authenticity and

skillfulness.

The book has sixteen chapters. The chapters are short but well-developed and objective, and practical examples complement the conceptual content. Overall, I recommend that readers read the entire book, however, for this review, I would point out three chapters that stand out and are mostly compelling of our understanding of the implications of reflexivity in the fieldwork of research: Chapter one, chapter three, and chapter four.

In the first chapter, Jungmeister provides a helpful overview of the history of the theory of reflection. The information is oriented towards new researchers that are working on developing the ability to ask questions and make sense of large amounts of dense literature that requires a preliminary understanding of foundational knowledge rooted in the history of the theory of reflection. The historical summary of reflection is quite helpful to set the context to what comes next in the book.

In chapter three, Jungmeister makes a distinction between structured and unstructured reflection. Questions such as 'is autoethnography an opinion?' 'Is reflection critical thinking?' 'What is the role of reflection in research?' 'What is the importance of the who in research?' 'What is the role of context?' are discussed and exemplified. Jungmeister's explanatory discussion on the intersection between the thinking and the doing in well-designed research processes can be potentially applied to many different areas of research.

Another interesting point is found in chapter four, where the author's remarks on self-reflection as being a vital part of the researcher's growth. Jungmeister argues that self-reflection is a starting point to develop the ability to ask and answer questions. It requires that one relies on their own accumulated knowledge and/or the ability to skillfully search, convey and contextualize other sources of information. He also suggests that the research process can greatly benefit from the researcher's being able to 'place themselves in other persons' shoes'. Jungmeister (2016) argues that

Junior researchers with little research experience will have fewer questions than a professor with 20 or more years of research experience. However, according to Freedman (2013), junior assistants can quickly become more reflective with early training of reflection processes, and thus significantly improve their research results. (p. 21)

Jungmeister understands the slight nuances that distinguish good

research and poor-quality research work. His book is set around the importance of reflexivity in research, laying out to the reader a sense of what reflexivity is and how it can be used to further expand our perceptions of 'findings'. It may also contribute to a deeper and more proficient examination of results in research.

The author notes that a major problem found in some research projects, whether these projects are term papers, articles, studies, or even research thesis, is that they often fall short on innovation and reflexivity, even though they are of acceptable quality. In other words, if less experienced researchers had a better foundation on reflexivity, many research projects could be craftily expanded, which would have a plausible impact on the overall research quality.

Ultimately, the book takes a structured approach to intentionally guide new researchers in developing the critical understanding necessary to purposely do innovative and high-quality research. Jungmeister speaks to a shortage of materials on reflexivity and this book is designed to support a wide range of beginner research writers as its content can be applied in a variety of fields.

In conclusion, Jungmeister provides a significant overview of reflexivity, which is explained and exemplified in an accessible format. That is to say, it is a refreshing approach and a positive contribution to the current literature on reflexivity, and the development of the art of reflecting on research processes and its application in the field of research. It is a baseline, a starting point for anyone seeking to develop the fine skills necessary to carry out high-quality innovative research work. This book is ideally suited to junior researchers; However, it might not be as relevant for experienced researchers.

REFERENCES

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