

Foreword

As research in a field progresses, new models emerge as possibilities for future research and practice. On a grand scale, research on our Universe unveils new models for images of solar systems. Until recently it was thought that the basic structure of our own solar system and distribution of mass within it would be replicated in other solar systems as we discovered exosolar planets around stars other than our Sun. But as details of those other solar systems emerged, they looked much different from our own in terms of number of planets, mass distribution of the planets and the size of their star. While this opened doors to new research, it also required a reinvestigation into the assumptions and explanations of the evolution of solar systems including our own. Questions emerged about why some stars were larger or smaller than ours. New explanations are emerging about why some planets were certain distances from their star or why solar systems had the larger planets closer to their star which is the reverse of planetary distribution of our own home solar system. New research tools and methodologies needed to be developed and traditional ones needed to be reconsidered and readapted to answer these questions.

Educational researchers face similar challenges and opportunities. They might have a favorite methodology, but throughout their careers it is important to explore other techniques. This all happens against a background of the world around us. In early 2020, the emergence of a global pandemic forced everyone to expand, reorder, reevaluate and reassess assumptions and methodologies, personal philosophies, and comfortable practices.

This book will assist in addressing this huge challenge. Whether a researcher or practitioner, this volume will nudge new ideas and creative practices to lead us forward to a post-pandemic world that is far enhanced from the one that we closed the door on in spring, 2020. But because of this “great pause” in our formerly hectic lives, our minds are freer to roam with fewer constraints into an open space of imagination and innovation and intensity. A speaker at a recent webcast reminded us of two historical events with happy endings. After the devastating plague of the 1300’s came the Renaissance. When Cambridge University closed in the mid 1600’s due to a plague, Isaac Newton was forced to retreat to his home which many consider gave him the time to do his best work.

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Now is the time to assess how we can do our best work. This new world will require applying and adapting traditional methods to address current issues such as social justice, anti-racism, and the empowerment of specific populations in the design and implementation of research and teaching and learning practice. This book explores these issues and provides examples of techniques and traditional and emerging research designs to take into account these current societal issues and prompt new ideas for decision making across varying venues and global populations. Contributions to this volume come from across the United States but also from as geographically near-by locations as Barbados and as distant as Australia, India, and Turkey.

This book will provide us with the foundation to propel us forward. It will be useful for researchers and practitioners alike in the Social Sciences, Humanities Information Technologies, Education and International and Intercultural Studies and anyone ready to move our world into a new educational renaissance.

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