



This is “Preface”, article 4 from the book [Psychology Research Methods: Core Skills and Concepts \(index.html\)](#) (v. 1.0).

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# Preface

The research methods course is among the most frequently required in the psychology major—and with good reason. Consider that a cross-cultural psychologist and a cognitive neuroscientist meeting at a professional conference might know next to nothing about the phenomena and theories that are important in each other’s work. Yet they would certainly both know about the difference between an experiment and a correlational study, the function of independent and dependent variables, the importance of reliability and validity in psychological measurement, and the need for replication in psychological research. In other words, psychologists’ research methods are at the very core of their discipline.

At the same time, most students majoring in psychology do not go on to graduate school. And among those who do, only a fraction become cross-cultural psychologists, cognitive neuroscientists, or researchers of any sort. The rest pursue careers in clinical practice, social services, and a wide variety of fields that may be completely unrelated to psychology. For these students, the study of research methods is important primarily because it prepares them to be effective consumers of psychological research and because it promotes critical thinking skills and attitudes that are applicable in many areas of life.

My goal, then, was to write a book that would present the methodological concepts and skills that are widely shared by researchers across the field of psychology and to do so in a way that would also be accessible to a wide variety of students. Among the features I tried to incorporate to help achieve this goal are the following.

- **Straightforward Writing**—I have kept the writing simple and clear, avoiding idiosyncratic terminology and concepts that rarely come up in practice.
- **Limited References**—Instead of including several hundred references (which would be typical), I have limited the references to methodological classics and to sources that serve as specific examples.
- **Minimal Digressions**—I have tried to minimize technical and philosophical digressions to avoid distracting students from the main points. (The instructor’s manual, however, includes ideas for incorporating such digressions into lecture.)
- **Diverse Examples**—I have used a variety of examples from across the entire range of psychology—including plenty of examples from clinical and counseling psychology, which tend to be underrepresented in research methods textbooks.

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- Traditional Structure—By and large I have maintained the overall structure of the typical introductory research methods textbook, which should make it relatively easy for experienced instructors to use.

This book evolved from a series of handouts that I wrote for my own students because I was frustrated by the cost of existing textbooks. This is why I am especially excited to be publishing with Unnamed Publisher. I hope you find that *Research Methods: Core Concepts and Skills* serves your own purposes...and I look forward to hearing about your experiences with it.

Paul C. Price