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ABSTRACT

A study was done of current practices in teaching educational research, particularly the extent to which feminist perspectives on research are included in topics, in research methods textbooks, and in professors' use of instructional techniques responsive to feminine "ways of knowing". Seventy-one members of the American Educational Research Association Special Interest Group, Professors of Educational Research, completed a five-page questionnaire on demographic data, background information, topics covered in classes, and teaching techniques. A sub-sample of 18 professors was interviewed using a semi-structured interview guide. Demographic data revealed that professors of educational research were over 75 percent male and that 85 percent received their degrees in a field other than educational research. These factors may contribute to lack of knowledge of feminist perspectives. The most frequently taught topics identified were consistent with earlier research and did not include feminist epistemology or feminist approaches to research. Ideas of gender in relation to research design and analysis were also lacking. None of the textbooks examined for the study mentioned feminist approaches to research or discussed gender as an issue in research methodology development. Regarding teaching techniques, 65 percent of those surveyed said they spent some time with their students discussing the students' attitudes toward research. The survey instrument is appended. (Contains 15 references.) (JB)

An Analysis of the Integration of the Feminist Perspective in Research Methods Classes: Current Practices

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An Analysis of the Integration of the Feminist Perspective in Research Methods Classes: Current Practices

Much of what has been written about the feminist perspective in research has come from the fields of sociology and psychology with little of this perspective finding its way into the educational research methodology literature. Although feminist methodology is in the process of becoming and is not yet a fully articulated stance (Cook & Fonow, 1990); inclusion of this perspective would provide students with a more comprehensive understanding of the research process. The inclusion of the feminist perspective in research methods classes incorporates the total teaching process, i.e., what is taught in the classroom, materials that are used by students, and instructional strategies used to teach research classes.

One of the areas of concern in this study was what topics are taught in educational research classes. Do professors of educational research include topics related to gender and feminist approaches to research in their methods courses? Current data are not available as to what are the most commonly taught topics in educational research classes though Todd and Reece (1988) did investigate the usefulness of 20 skills that are typically taught in educational research classes for graduates in later work. This research gives some insight into what the graduates found to be helpful but does not give a picture of current practices in teaching. The present study addresses this issue.

A second area of concern in this study was whether the most widely used educational research textbooks include any discussion of the feminist perspective. No literature directing itself to this question has been located.

A third area of interest in the current study centers around the instructional strategies used by professors of educational research. Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, and Tarule (1986) explored women's ways of knowing. Through their extensive interviewing of women, they were able to identify ways in which women learn and how they know what they know. These ways of learning can be translated in techniques for teaching female students. In a study conducted by Karp (1991) instructional techniques that create more equitable classroom instruction and school organization for teachers of mathematics were explored. While her work was based within the context of mathematics, many of her recommendations for improving the equity of instruction apply to the teaching of research as well.

Teachers of educational research can benefit from the current study by learning about (a) major trends in teaching and (b) the extent of the treatment of feminist issues in research methods classes. They can use this information to modify their teaching of those classes. Their students (especially women students) would benefit from inclusion of this perspective and the use of appropriate instructional strategies.

The purpose of the present research was to identify the current practices in teaching educational research. Specifically, topics that are typically included in educational research classes were examined along with an analysis of educational research textbooks and what instructional strategies are used to teach research methods courses. The following research questions were investigated:

1. To what extent are issues reflecting the feminist perspective to research included in the topics that are taught in educational research classes?

2. To what extent are issues reflecting the feminist perspective to research included in the most frequently used educational research methods textbooks?

3. To what extent do professors of educational research use instructional techniques that are responsive to women's ways of knowing?

Methodology

Subjects

The subjects of this study consisted of members of the American Educational Research Association (AERA) Special Interest Group (SIG): Professors of Educational Research. For the descriptive portion of the study, a sample of 71 members was obtained. For the interview portion of the study, a sub-sample of 18 members was interviewed. The AERA SIG: Professors of Education Research consists of 135 members. As the purpose of this study was to examine the teaching practices of professors of educational research, this SIG was deemed an appropriate body to survey. AERA is generally considered to be the leading professional organization in the field of educational research; thus, it was expected that a representative sample of professors of educational research could be obtained.

Instrument

A five page questionnaire was developed to solicit information on the teaching practices of professors of educational research (see Appendix A). The survey consisted of several components including sections on demographic data, background information, topics covered in educational research classes, and teaching techniques. The section on topics was constructed in a modified Likert scale format. The section on teaching techniques was provided in a checklist format. The survey instrument was field tested by five teachers of educational research and revisions were made accordingly. A semi-structured interview guide was used to conduct the interviews.

Procedure

After reviewing the literature on educational research, feminist approaches to research, and the research on how women tend to learn, a questionnaire was developed to solicit responses regarding topics that are taught in educational research courses and teaching techniques that are used to teach educational research classes. The instrument was field tested and revised and then mailed out to 133 of the 135 members of the AERA SIG: Professors of Educational Research. (Two members of this SIG were involved in the development of the instrument and thus were excluded from the mailing to SIG members.) One month later the survey was mailed out a second time to increase the return rate. A cover letter and pre-addressed, stamped envelope were included in each mailing. Four surveys were returned by the U.S. Postal Service as undeliverable. A total of 83 surveys were returned by SIG members, representing a return rate of 64%. Twelve of these surveys were unusable, generally returned because the SIG member did not teach educational research. A total of 71 usable surveys were analyzed for this study.

Telephone interviews were conducted to examine in greater depth issues that were touched upon in the survey instrument. A sub-sample of the 71 respondents was selected for this purpose. Respondents who had identified themselves as willing to participate in a telephone interview were then assigned to one of two categories depending upon their responses to key survey items. These categories were "integrates the feminist perspective" and "does not integrate the feminist perspective". All nine of the respondents who indicated that they did integrate the feminist perspective into their research classes were interviewed. A random sample of nine interviewees was selected from the remaining category. These 18 respondents represent a sub-sample of 25% of the study sample. Interviews were unstructured and varied in length of time from approximately 15 minutes to approximately 45 minutes. Respondents were informed that the purpose of the interview was to obtain more in-depth information on some of the interviewees responses to items on the questionnaire. Of particular interest were the items that asked to what extent, if any, the respondent addressed topics reflecting the feminist perspective in research. Respondents who reported teaching about such concepts were asked to describe the content and teaching strategies that they associated with the feminist perspective in research. They also were asked about their motivation for including that topic. Those who indicated that they did not teach that concept were asked about their interpretation of the concept, their receptivity to the idea of a feminist perspective in research, their teaching methods, and their desire to know more about it. Appropriate probes were used with both types of respondents.

Data Analysis

The data obtained from this study were analyzed according to the nature of the data. For the demographic data and the background information a descriptive analysis was conducted. A descriptive analysis also was conducted on the topics taught in educational

research classes as reported in the survey. To further examine the topics presented in educational research textbooks, a content analysis was conducted. Descriptive analysis was used to examine the teaching techniques used by professors of educational research. A content analysis was used to analyze data acquired from the telephone interviews. The interview data were analyzed using *Ethnograph* (Qualis, 1988) and the constant comparative analytic approach (Guba & Lincoln, 1989) which involves continuous and simultaneous analysis and processing of data, comparing initial hypotheses and emerging themes with each additional piece of information as it was gathered.

Results

The results section of this study is organized into five sections: (a) demographic data and background information, (b) topics covered in educational research courses, (c) the textbook analysis, (d) instructional strategies used to teach educational research, and (e) interview data.

Demographic Data and Background Information

Of the 71 respondents who participated in this study, 16 were female (22.5%) and 54 were male (76.1%). There was one "no response" (1.4%).

In response to the question, "In what academic field did you receive your terminal degree?", the most frequently cited field was educational psychology with 20 responses (28.2%). The next most widely cited field was education with 16 responses (22.5%). Educational research received the third largest number of responses with 11 (15.5%). Other fields included measurement (9.9%), psychology (7.0%), statistics (2.8%), educational administration (2.8%), and other (4.2%). Seven percent of the respondents did not respond to this item.

When queried about years of teaching experience, 30 respondents (42.4%) reported that they had over 20 years of teaching experience and 12 respondents (16.9%) had between 16 and 20 years of experience. The remainder of the respondents had 15 years or less of teaching experience: 7 (9.9%) had between 11 and 15 years, 12 (16.9%) had between 6 and 10 years, and 9 (12.7%) had between 1 and 5 years.

When asked if they taught at the Master's level, the doctoral level, or both, 39 respondents (54.9%) reported that they taught at the Master's level. Eighteen respondents (25.4%) taught at the doctoral level. And, 14 respondents (19.7%) taught at both the Master's level and the doctoral level.

The number of students per research class varied with 8 respondents (11.3%) reporting classes with 6 to 10 students, 17 respondents (23.9%) teaching classes that contained 11 to 15 students, 12 respondents (16.9%) having between 16 and 20 students, 13 respondents (18.3%) teaching classes with 21 to 25 students, 10 respondents (14.1%) reporting classes of 26 to 30 students, and 9 respondents (12.7%) teaching classes with over 30 students. Two respondents (2.8%) did not provide any data for this item.

Regarding the major focus of the educational research class, 31 respondents (43.7%) reported that they aim their classes at doers of educational research whereas 29 respondents (40.8%) aimed their classes at consumers of research. Ten respondents (14.11%) aimed their classes at both doers and consumers of research.

Topics Covered in Educational Research Courses

In a modified Likert scale format, from 0 for "No Coverage" to 5 for "Extensive Coverage", respondents were presented with 48 topics that represent topics traditionally taught in educational research courses and topics that represent the feminist perspective as it applies to research. The range, mean, and standard deviation of each of these topics is presented in Table 1. With ranges from 0 to 5, the three most extensively taught topics were "internal validity of research" with a mean of 4.15 (SD=1.07), "developing a research plan" with a mean of 4.10 (SD=1.21), and "external validity of research" with a mean of 4.09 (SD=1.05).

The three least extensively taught topics were "feminist approaches to research" with a range of 0 to 4 and a mean of .35 (SD=.77), "feminist epistemology" with a range of 0 to 3 and a mean of .39 (SD=.80), and "photographs and artifacts in research" with a range of 0 to 5 and a mean of .73 (SD= 1.04).

Textbook Analysis

A number of different textbooks were reported as primary or supplementary texts used in educational research courses. The most frequently reported text was Borg and Gall's text *Educational Research: An Introduction* with 10 respondents stating that this text was used in their course as either a primary text or as a supplemental text. The second most widely used text was Ary, Jacobs, and Razavieh's *Introduction to Research in Education* and Gay's *Educational Research: Competencies for Analysis and Application* both of which were reported six times. A more detailed list is presented in Table 2. Seven respondents reported that they did not use any specific text.

Topic	Range	Mean	Std Dev
Internal Validity of Research	0 - 5	4.15	1.07
Developing a Research Plan	0 - 5	4.10	1.21
External Validity of Research	0 - 5	4.09	1.05
Experimental/Quasi-Experimental Research	0 - 5	3.94	1.13
Formulating a Hypothesis	1 - 5	3.86	1.18
Evaluating Research Reports	0 - 5	3.77	1.31
The Correlational Method of Research	1 - 5	3.73	.97
Writing a Research Report	0 - 5	3.66	1.26
Reviewing the Literature	0 - 5	3.57	1.52
Sample Selection Techniques	0 - 5	3.54	1.05
Objectivity and Subjectivity in Research	0 - 5	3.53	1.35
Ex Post Facto Research	0 - 5	3.46	1.19
Reliability and Validity of Instruments	0 - 5	3.46	1.29
Generalizability Issues	0 - 5	3.45	1.12
Problems in Interpreting Data	0 - 5	3.40	1.20
Measuring Instruments	0 - 5	3.40	1.19
Inferential Statistics	0 - 5	3.31	1.41
The Scientific Method	0 - 5	3.26	1.36
Descriptive Statistics	0 - 5	3.19	1.42
Library Sources of Information	0 - 5	3.19	1.49
Bias in Research	0 - 5	3.18	1.38
The Descriptive Method of Research	0 - 5	3.10	1.34
Survey Data	0 - 5	3.00	1.28
Dilemmas Researchers Face	0 - 5	2.99	1.28
Controversies in Research	0 - 5	2.85	1.34
Ethics of Research	0 - 5	2.65	1.38
Observational Data	0 - 5	2.34	1.23
Positivist Epistemology	0 - 5	2.24	1.60
Interview Data	0 - 5	2.22	1.34
Ways of Knowing	0 - 5	2.14	1.46
Qualitative Research	0 - 5	2.12	1.48
Evaluation Research	0 - 5	2.03	1.48
Ethnographic Research	0 - 5	1.79	1.47
Naturalistic Research	0 - 5	1.72	1.50
Single Subject Research	0 - 4	1.61	1.20
Naturalistic Epistemology	0 - 5	1.58	1.55
Cultural Issues in Research	0 - 5	1.56	1.38
Anecdotal Data	0 - 5	1.52	1.15
Document Analysis	0 - 5	1.40	1.46
Action Research	0 - 5	1.37	1.36
Careers in Research	0 - 5	1.28	1.28
The Historical Method of Research	0 - 5	1.22	1.26
Gender Issues in Research	0 - 5	1.18	1.26
Interpretive Inquiry	0 - 4	1.03	1.26
Oral History	0 - 4	.76	1.05
Photographs and Artifacts in Research	0 - 5	.73	1.04
Feminist Epistemology	0 - 3	.39	.80
Feminist Approaches to Research	0 - 4	.35	.77

Table 1. Topics Covered in Educational Research Courses

Author(s)	Title and Number of Times Reported
Borg & Gall	Educational Research (10)
Ary, Jacobs, & Razavieh	Introduction to Research in Education (6)
Gay	Educational Research: Competencies for Analysis & Application (6)
Kerlinger	Foundations of Behavioral Research (5)
Cook & Campbell	Quasi-Experimentation (3)
Fraenkel & Wallen	How to Design and Evaluate Research in Education (3)
Wiersma	Research Methods in Education (3)
Borg	Applying Educational Research (2)
Jaeger	Complementary Methods (2)
Mason & Bramble	Understanding and Conduction Research (2)
McMillan & Schumacher	Research in Education (2)
Moore	Developing and Evaluating Educational Research (2)
Rosenthal & Rosnow	Essentials of Behavioral Research (2)
Wallen & Fraenkel	Educational Research: A Guide to the Process (2)
Many other texts were reported a single time.	

Table 2. Textbooks Used in Educational Research Classes

A content analysis of topics related to education research was conducted on the seven textbooks that were reported three or more times. A search was made for two types of inclusion. First, the texts were examined to determine if topics of particular relevance to the feminist perspective were incorporated into the text. Second, the texts were examined to determine if methodologies frequently used by feminist researchers were presented. In each of the seven texts, the index was examined for topics that are relevant to integration of the feminist perspective into educational research texts. Terms that would indicate this integration include feminist, feminism, gender, and sex bias. The indices also were perused for evidence of methodologies and techniques used in feminist research. These methods and techniques include qualitative research, naturalistic research, interviewing, use of photographs and artifacts in research, observation, and interpretive inquiry. Additionally, the texts were examined to determine if the sections that discussed research paradigms referred to elements representative of the feminist perspective, including, but not limited to such topics as the post-positivist paradigm. The texts were examined both for explicit discussion of these topics, methods, and techniques of interest to the feminist perspective and for implicit representation.

None of the seven texts listed sex bias or gender bias either in terms of sampling bias or in terms of research bias. None of the seven texts listed gender or any gender-related issues in the index. None of the texts provided any index reference to feminist or feminism in any context. Some of the texts made reference to methodologies and/or techniques adhered to within the feminist perspective. The Borg and Gall text, the Gay text, and the Fraenkel and Wallen text all offered fairly extensive presentations of qualitative, naturalistic, and ethnographic research and discussed such techniques as observation, interviewing, and case studies. Table 3 provides a list of the seven texts along with selected terms that reflect inclusion of issues of interest to the feminist researcher. A check mark indicates a mention of the topic in the text's index. Depth of coverage of these topics is not addressed in this presentation. None of the seven texts provided any kind of discussion of feminist epistemology and, aside from a discussion of post-positivism by Borg and Gall and Cook and Campbell, no discussion that is reflective of the feminist paradigm was presented.

TOPIC / TEXT	Borg & Gall	Ary et al.	Gay	Kerlinger	Cook & Campbell	Fraenkel & Wallen	Wiersma
Bias (sex bias or gender bias in sampling or research)							
Gender (any issue relating to)							
Feminist/Feminism (any issue relating to)							
Qualitative methods	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓
Naturalistic methods	✓		✓				✓
Ethnographic methods	✓		✓			✓	✓
Field studies				✓		✓	
Anecdotal records	✓					✓	
Observation	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
Interviewing	✓		✓	✓		✓	
Oral history	✓					✓	
Case studies	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓
Post-positivism	✓				✓		

Table 3. Representation of Selected Topics in Educational Research Texts

Teaching Techniques

Provided with a checklist of 27 different teaching techniques, respondents were asked to identify all techniques used in teaching their educational research classes. The list included techniques traditionally used to teach educational research courses as well as techniques that researchers have identified as techniques that enhance learning in female students. A list of the 27 instructional techniques and the frequency with which that technique was checked is presented in Table 4. The five most frequently employed teaching strategies used by professors of educational research were lecture (cited 71 times), discussion (cited 70 times), in-class exams (cited 55 times), visual presentations (cited 54 times), and research article critiques (cited 51 times). The five least frequently reported teaching techniques were games (cited twice), role playing (cited 5 times), reflective writing (cited 14 times), alternate assessment (cited 18 times), and take-home exams (cited 19 times).

Interview Data

The purpose of the interviews was to delve more deeply into the integration or non-integration of the feminist perspective in research classes. This portion of the results section addresses the issues of topics and course content as well as instructional strategies that interviewees discussed in the interviews. Additionally, data that emerged from the interviews yet was not planned for in the study design are presented.

Topics and Course Content. Two primary categories of topic and course content emerged from the interview data: rudimentary issues and substantive issues.

Rudimentary Issues: Two basic issues were identified in the interview data — use of non-sexist language and sensitivity to attitude toward research and statistics.

1. Use of non-sexist language

Several professors indicated that they avoided the use of "he" in teaching the class when referring to the researcher, saying such things as:

"I try to have the researchers be "she". I don't say he/she, but half the time talk about male and female researchers."

"I follow APA guidelines on non-sexist language."

"I make sure that sexism is avoided about roles in research and statistics. Like if you talk about consultants to help with statistics, don't say 'he' will help you."

Teaching Technique	Frequency
Lecture	71
Discussion	70
In-Class Exams	55
Visual Presentation	54
Research Article Critiques	51
Application-Oriented Assignments	50
Discussion of Attitude Toward Research	46
Research Project	45
Literature Review	41
Small Group Discussion	41
Computer Work	38
Small Group Activities	38
Objective Exams	37
Term Papers	37
Encourage Students to Share Experiences	37
Cooperative Learning	34
Small Group Assignments	34
Oral Presentations	33
Application-Oriented In-Class Assignments	30
Guest Lecturers	26
Application-Oriented Exams	26
Simulation	21
Take-Home Exams	19
Alternative Assessment (see below)	18
Reflective Writing Activity	14
Role Playing	5
Games	2

Alternative Assessment
Research Proposal (9)
Self-Assessment (2)
Oral Exam (2)
Poster Session
Group Feedback Writing Conferences
Dissertation Proposal
Thought Papers on Specific Topics
Abstracts
Quizzes
Participation in On-Going Research Projects
Write for Publication
Observation Notes and Other Qualitative Work
Book Reviews
Students can propose a creative project
Videos
Programmed Units
Data Analysis of Data Sets
Preparation of Research Reports

Table 4. Teaching Techniques Used by Professors of Educational Research

2. Sensitivity to attitudes toward research and statistics

Several respondents mentioned that they were aware of problems female students might have with statistics because of cultural factors or "math anxiety", noting such examples as:

"In general, I try to give people the idea that people do statistics. I try to give personal touches. If a statistician is female, I try to explain that women do statistics. Also, with blacks and Hispanics."

"Also, I help women in class see the appropriateness of doing statistics. Frequently in ANOVA and MANOVA, the women think they are there to learn about it, but they won't really be doing it. I try to convince them that it is acceptable for them to do it. I tell them whatever they do is O.K. It is a start and then suggest they might try to do it differently. In the South, this is a cultural question: there are very strong gender roles in this culture. Women are not supposed to be problem solvers and clear thinkers."

"At the beginning of the course, I give students an attitude survey regarding their attitudes toward the course. I give it again at the end of the semester. I work toward increasing the students' appreciation of research. The end of course survey indicates that they do!"

Substantive Issues: Five basic issues were identified in the interview data — paradigms of research, topics viewed as feminist research, student selection of topics, distinguishing research from opinion, and methodological issues in feminist research.

1. Paradigms of research

When asked about the feminist perspective in research, a number of professors mentioned that they teach qualitative methods; however, most did not explicitly mention or fully explain the feminist perspective within the context of the post-positivist paradigm. Their comments included:

"I do use qualitative research. Some of it relates to feminism and some doesn't. I use M.L. Smith and G. Glass's book chapter on naturalistic studies. . . M. L. Smith tries to give a description of qualitative methods. I'm not sure if she addresses feminism, but I do. I address issues like: dominance, political issues, objectivity, and inter-subjectivity."

"The way I've done it . . . we talked about initial theory. I mentioned there is a body of literature on feminist methods. It depends on the students. One student asked for references, so I looked around and found some for her."

"I do have several books . . . like Sandra Harding's. I think I'm in accord with it philosophically. I don't use their writings like explaining the male, positivist model of science."

"I do teach a section on the philosophy of science. I review Dennis Philip's book and his categorization of epistemology. He lumps together feminism, hermeneutics, and literary criticism. He lumps them under the 'organicist position' in epistemology and philosophy. I discuss it from that perspective. I give them some readings to follow up on that. I don't teach the feminist perspective directly. I put myself as biased perspective. I teach a 'critical perspective' on that. It has a higher degree of faults than other perspectives. I tell them overtly when I'm not being even-handed."

2. Topics viewed as feminist research

Several professors mentioned that they integrated the feminist perspective in research by choosing as examples topics that reflect that perspective. They commented:

"The content is appropriate to the issue, like someone is studying attitudes. The classic attitude research is very sexist from the '70s. If someone wanted to study attitudes like why people don't use emergency rooms. Using the classical approach, I would ask a bunch of questions, combine the questions for a total score. I had three female nurses who were very upset by not getting at the attitude-producing elements. For example, a man with a gun shot wound was undressed by a pretty female nurse; this scared him. The class is usually about research methods. When it is contextually appropriate, we bring it in."

"She [a guest lecturer] uses a variety of examples on feminist perspective in qualitative research. She talks about things like what teaching means to a mother with kids in school who is pregnant."

"For the term project, I have students pair off and go into the field to do or replicate research. We have examined such issues as 'space invasion', that is, looking at women's space versus men's space."

3. Student selection of topics

Sometimes it was not the instructor who chose the feminist research topics, but rather the topics were included in a course because the students made that selection. Sample comments include:

"Also, I encourage students to bring studies they would like to read. Some bring in women's research. I am not militant on trying to proselytize that this should be done."

"I do this by accepting topics on gender-related issues. This seems to be a big selection criteria among counseling faculty."

"I believe methods are gender-free. . . The selection of topics is different. But the selection of topics is up to the student and the committee."

"If people are interested in asking questions using data collection, then they should do that. If that [the feminist perspective] is your interest, then you should do that."

4. Distinguishing research from opinion

One of the concerns that was expressed by a number of professors was that much of what feminists write is more opinion than research-based. This distinction can provide a basis as a teaching tool or an impediment to including the feminist perspective. Sample comments follow:

"I use a book by Bateson (Margaret Meade's daughter). I use that as spring-board. It is a narrative. Is it research or not? She does address feminist issues. But it is not really research. Some people say yes/no."

[Do you think there is such a thing as feminist research methods?] "I suppose something could convince me, but I don't think qualitative research would convince me. I could agree that, the cases selected were chosen to reflect one person's bias and if I selected them it would be different."

"There is still a problem with this [using feminist research methods in teaching] since much of the work on feminist research is opinion rather than based on research."

5. Methodological issues in feminist research

Although there is no one methodological approach that is characteristic of feminist research (Mertens & Kopriva, 1992), there are a number of methodological issues that have been associated with that perspective. The professors commented as follows:

"I discuss why qualitative methods are preferable in terms of power relationships between researchers and subject, the interpretation of research findings, and how research is conducted."

"The only time I talk about gender issues is like using Debra Tannen's book about communication between men and women. In survey research, in interviews with men and women, they express themselves differently. Things I've read about how women give more

verbal responses, like "Go on" or nodding their heads. I wouldn't call that the feminist perspective though."

"I do recognize gender issues in all the different areas and would draw students' attention to these and would demonstrate their importance to different studies and what should be the proper use of gender emphasis in such studies."

"I have introduced feminism as a new way of looking at issues that come up in research, for example, instrument construction, sampling, etc. I am also interested in multiculturalism and cultural bias. I use tests to show how such bias is presented."

"What I do in research covers two points: First, in ethics I cover the over-generalization of results. I use examples like in the study of medicine with aspirin and men. That is over-generalization of concepts. If it's spouse abuse, but really it's wife abuse, use the correct terminology. If it's a study of juvenile delinquents that are male, use specific terminology 'male juvenile delinquents'. Second, from the feminist perspective. It is so easy with MA and PhD students to include gender. Gender is so easy to measure, use a t-test on it and treat it as a biological difference, not the social construction of gender. When they see male/female differences, is it an artifact or can it be traced to another variable that is more difficult to measure? Is gender a surrogate for other more difficult-to-measure variables?"

"I spend one three-hour class period devoted to ethics. I cover human subject protection and about one-third gets into gender issues. So, part of one whole class session in ethics and part in interpretation of results of research and some in measurement. The feminist perspective is more integrated, rather than a session on 'gender'. It is integrated in sampling and interpretation."

"If you had different types of raters looking at a particular behavior, would females rate behavior differently than males?"

Teaching Techniques. Previous research (Mertens, 1993; Mertens & Kopriva, 1992) have suggested that specific teaching strategies are more sensitive to the learning styles of women. Interviewees reported using several teaching techniques that are sensitive to "women's ways of knowing". These teaching techniques include:

1. Use of guest speakers on the feminist perspective

The use of guest speakers has actually been recommended against, as opposed to the integration of, the feminist perspective in research into the entire methodology course. However, one respondent indicated that he invited a female professor to teach the unit on qualitative methods and that she included the feminist perspective in her teaching.

2. Role models

One female professor [who does not include the feminist perspective in her course] felt that she was providing a role model for female students because she taught and conducted research herself. A male professor described his methods of providing feminist role models:

"We typically have 35 to 50 students. We break them into small groups of five to seven to discuss problems in class and work on their proposals. We've had women represented in those we choose to meet with the small groups. We think these are important role models. We also use student panels. Students who have just finished or are in the process of doing their dissertations. We try to get someone who is doing work in an area of feminist concerns."

3. Small group work (cooperative learning)

Several respondents used a small group format to foster learning. As two respondents explain:

"I use small group discussion a lot. I feel that, although a student may understand something, that talking about it in a small group will help make things even more clear. When studying hypotheses, I have students meet in pairs to work on writing hypotheses and identifying what type they are. I use this same format when working on identification of research studies to determine what type of research is used in a study. I use paragraphs that describe a research problem and the students identify the type of research and the dependent and independent variables, strengths and weaknesses, etc. When working with computers, I pair an experienced person with a novice."

"I use groups. Team members learn from each other. I organize the session for the groups by first presenting a concept, then having them read a chapter in the text, then discuss the material. The groups synthesize the material."

4. Hands-on activities

As mentioned under topics that represent feminist research, one professor has the students conduct small-scale research studies around a feminist topic. She gave as an example how men and women use space differently.

5. Professors working together

One problem encountered in including the feminist research perspective is the lack of available literature and the seemingly fugitive nature of much of that literature. One

professor's institution addressed this by having the professors who teach research get together. She commented:

"Different professors who teach educational research at my institution get together as a study or focus group. Some of the readings that are assigned to classes are the same across professors and some are different. Also, some things form a core for all classes while others are specific for each disciplinary area."

Unplanned for Data that Emerged from the Interviews. In addition to the information on course topics and content and teaching techniques, two unplanned for categories of data emerged from the interviews. These categories include motivation for including the feminist perspective in research courses and barriers to the inclusion of the feminist perspective in research courses.

Motivation for including the feminist perspective in research courses: Respondents identified a number of motivators for including the feminist perspective in their educational research courses. These motivators, along with example statements, include:

1. Self-reflection

"I am trying to come to grips with it. I think students get more of myself. How do I feel about it? How do I think about it? I struggle with myself; reflecting with students."

"When NCATE pushed for multiculturalism to be represented in the curriculum, I began to reflect about the different issues."

2. Students asking for more information on the feminist perspective in research

"My students have come to me and they have learned feminist theory in other classes. They want to know more about it in research."

"My students with that background [women students with feminist backgrounds] keep me honest."

"I get sex-role people in my program who are always looking for you to make a slip, looking for ways to show you're wrong and I'm right."

3. Personal motivations (family, church)

"I have a wife who has been working on me to raise my consciousness. And, it has been a focus at our church. We have two boys, but we tried to bring them up as feminists."

"It goes to two daughters and their experience in school. One was superior in math, never got less than an 'A' in an advanced placement program at the university for high school kids. She took accelerated math and calculus and they offered her a math scholarship. She told the math department chair that math was not a career for girls (she was 18). He did not ask her to explain herself. But I knew she had learned that around here. The other one won science contests. She was interested in electronics and built a robot that could move and recharge itself. She wanted to enter it in a science contest in seventh grade and the teacher told her it was ugly. She said she'd go to the principal. The teacher told her to cover the wires to make it 'look more like a mouse and be more cuddly'. She got the message. Both girls gave up on science and math and headed toward Spanish and journalism."

"My wife is also a professor and she writes in educational administration from the feminist perspective and so I'm sensitized."

4. Principles of fairness and equality

"My motivation: truth and justice. It is an issue. Every time you turn around, there is an issue of over-generalization."

"I like to think of myself as being fair to people of different genders and races."

"I believe in being unbiased and in equality."

5. Harassment

"Harassment is very operative at my institution where there is a good old boy's network going on. I had a personal encounter with this, but I came out okay in the end; still, it was distasteful."

6. Variety of perspectives

"We wanted to have a variety of perspectives because they're specialists in their area and represent different perspectives."

7. Own research

"I do research on gender bias."

"I'm doing writing now on student evaluations. Male/female differences on certain questions. As I was looking at these, some teaching characteristics maybe more gender specific than we thought. You start looking at specific questions; there are massive differences. Like voice tone, you can't be high pitched and be serious."

Barriers to inclusion of the feminist perspective: Respondents identified a number of barriers to including the feminist perspective in their educational research courses. These barriers, along with example statements, include:

1. Lack of understanding/ambiguity

"It is a vague term 'feminist perspective' in research. I think it is more an avoidance of the male perspective, rather than female. I try to make it more neutral."

"It is a nebulous concept to me [the feminist perspective in research]. I am not sure what it means really. . . I must confess ignorance about the literature on the feminist perspective."

"I'm not sure what it means [the feminist perspective in research]. Probably because I haven't done the reading."

"I don't really understand. I don't know what to think. I am not aware of feminist research methods literature."

"That's an interesting idea [the feminist perspective in research]. I never thought much about it. It could mean more research regarding questions about women. That's one meaning. I don't know. It also might mean that the person doing the research from a feminist view would have to be a female having a feminist view."

2. Doubts about depth of understanding of research

"I have looked into people's understandings of the world, making meaning of the world. You use language to explain what you understand. Some people use the language we're used to. Others are more comfortable to express themselves with math symbols or visual arts. I am wondering if some of it is just a distinction in processing. We have different cognitive strengths. There's a great separation of humanists who are on the side of feminists; there are those math people who get along with people in the visual arts. Is your approach to research an expression of your cognitive performance? People have different modes of information processing. There's always a group who likes qualitative studies more: usually the elementary teachers. And another group who prefers the scientific research. One is clearer and easier to access for them. I've been wondering about this. Students who like the qualitative research, do they really understand all of it? Or, do they just understand part of it, but they can read it (like Rembrandt's pictures). But, if you look at something mathematical, you have to think about it more (like abstract art)."

3. Not in text books or journals

"My textbook does not include this perspective. I will put it on the list for revision." [By respondent who authored a text book.]

"I don't have a problem . . . just no interest. If someone gave me some research that showed it was important, I'd probably deal with it, otherwise no." [By another respondent who authored a text book.]

"Most of the texts I've used don't hit on it."

"I guess I'm not well read, but I do read the *Educational Researcher* and it is not in there. Maybe it is an emerging area. I've reviewed a number of texts and I don't see it in there."

4. Own unrecognized gender bias

"I used selecting a harem as an example for teaching linear models in statistics. It was a published article where a king had to select a harem. I used it to attract the attention of the male students. I had a slide show. The king had to select a harem. There was a woman officer in the Air Force in the class. I was using this model of the harem to attract males' attention. Shortly after that she took offense about that. She probably had a hard time to get where she was."

5. Avoid divisiveness

"My interest is not great. I feel uncomfortable with presenting feminist issues that way. I don't like to say that 'we're different'." [By a female respondent.]

"I don't really see much value in going into the lifestyle or characteristics of individuals. I'm more interested in what they say and how they work. . . I don't want to stereotype. I don't want to assume that because they are a man or a woman, you will do research differently. I deal with the context of what they do. I don't talk about them as individuals."

6. Belief that males and females are not different

"I'm not sure that there's a difference in men and women in the way they do research."

"The methods we teach are basically empirical. I believe they are gender-free: Males and females approach the study of classrooms the same way."

"We do have a female professor. I've seen her syllabus and watched her teach and she does the same as I do."

7. Lack of time

"There is a lot I'd like to do, but I don't have time. Like there isn't time for philosophical discussions. . . We couldn't do it in a half hour activity. Probably more my ignorance and lack of time to address it fully."

"It is hard to keep up with everything new."

"I am interested in expanding the research course topics to include other issues; the problem is how do you fit everything in? I would like to include different perspectives."

"I do discuss feminism, but there is not enough time to cover everything."

8. Nature of the students

"My students are adults in business and education. I've been forced to make my course very practical. . . I had to cut out a lot. I'm not sure they could get it even if I did it."

9. Denial of gate-keepers in research community

"I do believe all individuals, no matter what, should have equal access, and ability to do research and equal psychological access. They should have a feeling, if they do good work, it will be recognized."

[Why have you chosen not to include the feminist perspective?] "I'm teaching methods, not content. When we talk about bias, I would include that as one of the issues. I haven't felt that was a problem. If you were doing research with things about attitudes where men might view it differently from us, like sexual harassment, then it could be important. I work in the School of Public Health Policy, so maybe attitudes toward family planning would be important. Maybe by doing your interview you've made me think more about it."

Discussion

The demographic data gathered from this survey reveal that professors of educational research are overwhelmingly male with over three-quarters of the respondents being male. Although some professors, both male and female, are making an effort to integrate the feminist perspective, a tradition of male teaching may contribute to the dearth of attention to the integration of the feminist perspective in research methods courses.

The survey provided data that show that 85% of the professors of educational research received their degrees in some field of study other than educational research. This finding is unsettling in that this very important field is being taught by professors who were

not trained in the field. Are professors of educational research whose primary area of specialization is a field other than research methods less committed to studying the research methods literature? If so, this could explain why many of the professors interviewed for this study were not acquainted with the feminist perspective and, generally, did not know anything about it.

With almost 60% of the professors of educational research reporting that they have been teaching for over 15 years, the question can be raised as to whether these professors have kept abreast of recent trends in the field of behavioral science research and in the field of pedagogy.

Whether or not any of the above discussed factors (sex of professor, major field of study, and years of teaching) has anything to do with knowledge regarding and willingness to include the feminist perspective in methods courses is not known, as this study did not attempt to answer this question; however, further pursuit of these issues could be addressed in future research. It should be noted that many of the individuals interviewed, even though they may have little or no knowledge of the feminist perspective in research, expressed an interest in learning more about it. Some respondents even indicated that they would like to include or integrate the feminist perspective into their research courses.

The most frequently taught topics in educational research classes identified in this study are consistent with the findings of Todd and Reece (1988) and Crawley and Ecker (1990). These include: internal and external validity of research, developing a research plan or proposal, formulating a hypothesis, selecting a sample, among others. In the current research, as in previous research, feminist epistemology and feminist approaches to research are not mentioned as topics that receive attention in the research methods classes. Somewhat surprisingly, issues of gender as they relate to research design and analysis are lacking as well. This omission is surprising in that issues of gender are relevant to many aspects of research including bias in research design, sampling, and instrumentation; sample selection; and analysis of research results. Furthermore, an examination of gender differences could be a critical component of many research questions. Finally, gender issues may have a baring on any given research setting or the conduct of the research.

The leading educational research textbooks also neglect to discuss feminist approaches to research. None of the textbooks examined for this study even mentioned that there is a feminist approach to research. Furthermore, these texts do not discuss gender as an important issue in the development of research methodology. The findings in the current study echo the conclusions of Crawley and Ecker (1990) who state that "[T]he omission of gender and race as analytical concepts in a text is a significant problems in our courses" (p. 108). At least one of the interviewees mentioned that the omission of this topic from the text served as an explanation for non-inclusion of the topic in the course. Other interviewees noted that without some guidance they were uncertain as to what was involved in this aspect

of the field of research methodology. A computer search of the literature on feminist approaches to research would provide professors with a sufficient amount of information on this topic; however, if professors are not made aware that there are complementary and alternative approaches to research and that one of these is the feminist perspective, then any individual may not be spurred to conduct a literature review on this topic to supplement the required course text.

Not only is *what* is taught important in a research methods course, but *how* it is taught is equally important. One of the objectives of the present study was identify the current practices of professors of educational research related to the instructional strategies they use in teaching their research methods courses. Belenky et al. (1986) explored women's ways of knowing and emphasized the need for quiet observation, listening to others, and personal experiences that women can relate to in the learning process. Crawley and Ecker (1990) reinforce the findings of Belenky et al. by stating that they are aware of the anxiety that many students feel when entering courses in experimental and social research courses. They allay such anxiety by discussing the sources of the anxiety at the beginning of each course and by attending to the affective reactions of students throughout the course. They also emphasize the importance of intuition, logic, and common sense in the study of research and statistics. One of the encouraging findings of the present study is that 65% of the professors surveys indicated that they spend some time with their students discussing the students' attitudes toward research.

Karp (1991) examined instructional techniques that create more equitable classroom instruction and school organization for teachers of mathematics. Although her work was based within the context of mathematics, many of her recommendations for improving the equity of instruction apply to the teaching of research as well. Some of these recommendations include developing positive attitudes toward mathematics, reflective writing, cooperative learning, and alternative assessment models. In the present study, teaching strategies that may be of benefit to students, especially female students, were used to some extent, but not to a great extent. For example, reflective writing was used only by 20% of the professors and alternative assessment was used only by 25%. Almost half of the professors used small group assignments and cooperative learning (both at 48%). Over half of the professors encouraged students to share personal experiences (52%) and used small group discussion (58%). These findings would lead one to conclude that, although many professors are not familiar with the literature on feminist pedagogy or feminist approaches to research, there are some who are nonetheless incorporating feminist approaches in their classroom teaching. With some exposure to the topic at hand, and a sensitivity to the feminist perspective, these same professors may be willing to acquaint themselves with the literature and to make a conscious effort to incorporate some of the methodological issues into their classes.

For the research methods professor who is interested in integrating the feminist perspective into methods classes, several recommendations can be made. First, on a very basic level, professors can adhere to the guidelines of using non-sexist language in the classroom and selecting materials that do likewise. Second, a sensitivity to students' attitudes toward research and statistics can be expressed by addressing student concerns and anxiety, which can be done through discussion and reflective writing. Third, professors can demonstrate a respect for personal experiences and encourage the sharing of these experiences. Fourth, professors can provide instruction in feminist approaches to research through discussion and integration of the feminist perspective throughout a course. Fifth, topics related to gender can be discussed as they arise in specific topical areas of research (such as sampling bias or gender differences). Sixth, professors can integrate the feminist perspective into presentations on all the various approaches to conducting research. Finally, professors of research methods courses can use instructional strategies, such as those discussed above, that foster learning in students.

A number of barriers to the integration of the feminist perspective in research methods classes were identified in this study. These include: a lack of understanding or ambiguity of the meaning of the feminist perspective in research, doubts about the depth of understanding about research, lack of representation of this perspective in textbooks and journals, unrecognized gender bias, avoidance of divisiveness, belief that males and females are not different, a lack of time to develop coursework to address this perspective, the nature of the students, and denial of gate-keepers in the research community. It would be a worthwhile research endeavor to investigate further the impediments to the integration of the feminist perspective in research methods classes.

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TEACHING PRACTICES OF PROFESSORS OF EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH

RESPONSE FORM

Demographic Data

Gender: Female ☐ Male ☐

In what academic area did you receive your terminal degree? _____

How many years have you been teaching educational research? _____

Background Information

Note: If you teach an educational research course at more than one level (e.g., a master's level course and a doctoral level course), please respond to the items on this questionnaire with respect to the highest level course that you teach.

What is the title of the educational research methods course that you teach?

_____

Is this a master's level course ☐ , a doctoral level course ☐ , or other ☐ ?
If "other", please specify. _____

Approximately how many students do you have in an average class? _____

Would you say that the major focus of the class is one of teaching research for **consumers** of research ☐ or for **doers** of research ☐ ?

What is/are the primary text(s) that you use for this course (please give author and title)?

_____

What supplemental readings do you use? Please list or attach a copy of your reading list.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Topics Covered in Your Educational Research Course

Please identify all topics that you cover in your educational research course; identify the coverage of these courses along the continuum of **0** for no coverage or **1** (slight coverage) to **5** (extensive coverage).

	No Coverage	Slight Coverage				Extensive Coverage
	0	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
Ways of knowing	___	___	___	___	___	___
The scientific method	___	___	___	___	___	___
Positivist epistemology	___	___	___	___	___	___
Naturalist epistemology	___	___	___	___	___	___
Feminist epistemology	___	___	___	___	___	___
Ethics of research	___	___	___	___	___	___
Library sources of information	___	___	___	___	___	___
Reviewing the literature	___	___	___	___	___	___
Formulating a hypothesis	___	___	___	___	___	___
Developing a research plan	___	___	___	___	___	___
Sample selection techniques	___	___	___	___	___	___
Measuring instruments	___	___	___	___	___	___
Reliability and validity of instruments	___	___	___	___	___	___
Gender issues in research	___	___	___	___	___	___
Cultural issues in research	___	___	___	___	___	___
Bias in research	___	___	___	___	___	___
Internal validity of research	___	___	___	___	___	___
External validity of research	___	___	___	___	___	___
Objectivity and subjectivity in research	___	___	___	___	___	___
Interview data	___	___	___	___	___	___
Anecdotal data	___	___	___	___	___	___
Observational data	___	___	___	___	___	___

	No Coverage	Slight Coverage				Extensive Coverage
	0	1	2	3	4	5
Survey data	___	___	___	___	___	___
Document analysis	___	___	___	___	___	___
Oral history	___	___	___	___	___	___
Photographs and artifacts in research	___	___	___	___	___	___
The historical method of research	___	___	___	___	___	___
The descriptive method of research	___	___	___	___	___	___
The correlational method of research	___	___	___	___	___	___
Ex post facto research	___	___	___	___	___	___
Experimental/quasi-experimental research	___	___	___	___	___	___
Single subject research	___	___	___	___	___	___
Action research	___	___	___	___	___	___
Evaluation research	___	___	___	___	___	___
Qualitative research	___	___	___	___	___	___
Naturalistic research	___	___	___	___	___	___
Ethnographic research	___	___	___	___	___	___
Interpretive inquiry	___	___	___	___	___	___
Feminist approaches to research	___	___	___	___	___	___
Descriptive statistics	___	___	___	___	___	___
Inferential statistics	___	___	___	___	___	___
Generalizability issues	___	___	___	___	___	___
Problems in interpreting data	___	___	___	___	___	___
Controversies in research	___	___	___	___	___	___
Dilemmas researchers face	___	___	___	___	___	___
Evaluating research reports	___	___	___	___	___	___
Writing a research report	___	___	___	___	___	___
Careers in research	___	___	___	___	___	___

Teaching Techniques

Please identify all teaching techniques that you use in your educational research course.

___ Lecture
___ Discussion
___ Visual presentation
___ Role playing
___ Simulation
___ Games
___ Discussion of attitude toward research
___ Reflective writing activity about experiences with research
___ Encouraging students to share personal experiences
___ Cooperative learning
___ Guest lecturers
___ Small group discussion
___ Small group activities
___ Small group assignments
___ Application-oriented assignments
___ Application-oriented in-class activities
___ Computer work
___ Oral presentations
___ Term papers
___ Literature reviews
___ Research article critiques
___ Research project
___ In-class exams
___ Take-home exams
___ Objective exams
___ Application-oriented exams
___ Alternative assessment (e.g., portfolios, self-assessment, activities) — please specify:

_____

_____

_____

_____

We would like to explore in more depth the topics taught and teaching techniques used by teachers of educational research. If you would be willing to participate in a telephone interview, please indicate this willingness below. All information obtained from a telephone interview will be held in confidence.

☐ I am willing to participate in a telephone interview.

Please provide your name and telephone number as well as days and times when it would be most convenient to call you.

Name: _____

Telephone Number: (Work) _____

(Home) _____

Best days and times to call: _____

_____

_____

Please return this questionnaire in the stamped, pre-addressed envelope provided with this mailing or send to:

Dr. Susan D. Lopez
Dept. of Ed. Fdns. & Research
Fowler Hall, Room 410
Gallaudet University
800 Florida Avenue, N.E.
Washington, D.C. 20002

Thank you for the time and effort that you spent in completing this questionnaire!