
9-22-2016

Foundations of Education Research: Understanding Theoretical Components – A Book Review

Crista K. Banks

University of South Florida, cristabanks@mail.usf.edu

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Banks, C. K. (2016). Foundations of Education Research: Understanding Theoretical Components – A Book Review. *The Qualitative Report*, 21(9), 1739-1740. <https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2016.2653>

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Abstract

The volume of researchers interested in pursuing qualitative methods of research continues to grow. However, the foundational components of qualitative research in education are often confusing and overwhelming for the novice researcher and can often pose challenges for more experienced researchers. Egbert and Sanden (2014) offer an easy to follow format in explaining the foundations and theoretical components of research for all levels of learners.

Keywords

Qualitative Research, Theoretical Components, Education Research

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Foundations of Education Research: Understanding Theoretical Components – A Book Review

Crista K. Banks

University of South Florida, Tampa, Florida, USA

The volume of researchers interested in pursuing qualitative methods of research continues to grow. However, the foundational components of qualitative research in education are often confusing and overwhelming for the novice researcher and can often pose challenges for more experienced researchers. Egbert and Sanden (2014) offer an easy to follow format in explaining the foundations and theoretical components of research for all levels of learners. Keywords: Qualitative Research, Theoretical Components, Education Research

The theoretical components of research can be confusing to all levels of researchers. Egbert and Sanden (2014) lay out the foundations of research and the process in an easy to follow format with the intentions of clarifying the terms and ideas for the novice. There are also opportunities for more experienced researchers to build on their understanding and deepen their knowledge about qualitative education research.

This book offers seven chapters that discuss the topics of conceptual frameworks, epistemology, paradigms, theory, theoretical frameworks, methodologies and methods. Each chapter follows a uniform set-up starting with a first person synopsis of the chapter topic from the novice followed by the expert point of view. Next, the text outlines questions and topics that will be addressed in the chapter and provides reflection question(s) for the reader to tackle. The meat of the chapter explains the topic in simple language with real world examples with charts and diagrams to help further illustrate the information. Once the authors finish the chapter information with a conclusion, they wrap up the section by providing a few guided practice activities as well as resources for further reading and references.

Strengths of this book include the easy to read format and real world application that the authors apply to each research component. Not only do Egbert and Sanden (2014) explain the components, they provide opportunity to practice that new knowledge with guided practice questions and exercises. One area of perceived weakness is the lack of a digital companion. There are guided practice sections in each chapter of the book, however unless the reader is part of a course or book club, it is difficult to know if you are addressing some of the questions they pose appropriately. An online forum or Q&A area where readers could post their thoughts and discuss the guided practice sections from the chapters would help researchers make sense of the process and deepen their understanding through professional dialogue.

For novice researchers, this book aims to clarify the terminology of education research in a practical way and would make a useful companion guide to a text in a basic research course. The experienced researcher will find an abundance of additional resources they may use in their own research through the guided practice exercises and additional suggested sources.

References

Egbert, J., & Sanden, S. (2014). *Foundations of education research: Understanding theoretical components*. New York, NY: Routledge Taylor and Francis Group.

Author Note

Crista K. Banks is a Partnership Resource Teacher with Hillsborough County Public Schools in Tampa, Florida. She currently supervises elementary education interns and teaches elementary education courses at the University of South Florida. Ms. Banks is currently working on her Ph.D. in curriculum and instruction in elementary education at the University of South Florida and hopes to work and research in the field of global education. Correspondence regarding this article can be addressed directly to: crisatabanks@mail.usf.edu.

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Article Citation

Banks, C. K. (2016). Foundations of education research: Understanding theoretical components – A book review. *The Qualitative Report*, 21(9), 1739-1740. Retrieved from <http://nsuworks.nova.edu/tqr/vol21/iss9/12>
