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In the introduction to *Research Methods for Librarians and Educators: Practical Applications in Formal and Informal Learning Environments*, the editors emphasize the role of librarian-practitioner research in creating knowledge as opposed to mere curating or acting as a researcher-support resource. They write,

> Librarians and other educators are finding that in order to prove their value, it is not enough to just conduct research that provides evidence, rather they must collect quality research, using rigorous research methods. (4)

This book serves as a broad overview of research methods aimed at a diverse population of librarians and educators, from institutions of higher education and public library systems to teacher librarians. Small and Mardis are both professors in library education programs in the United States, and their interests vary but intersect with a focus on school librarians. The chapters are authored by a varied range of scholars and library professionals who bring a unique perspective to the research process.

The book is not meant to be a comprehensive examination of any one type of research method; rather, it is intended for librarians and educators who may be new to the research process. The chapters are written for beginners. They include a useful research glossary at the end of each chapter, and each section is framed with a clear research scenario that clarifies the concepts. The book opens with a section called “Framing a Study,” which is a succinct introduction to various aspects of research that are necessary for any exploration of a research topic, such as how to articulate effective research questions and how to develop a focused literature review. The chapters that delve into the specific methods, such as interview and focus group research, action research, observational studies, and mixed methods, all follow the same structure, making it seamless for the reader to compare the different methods. Each method chapter concludes with a useful summary chart that can aid the
beginner researcher in quickly choosing a method that is feasible for their question, institution, or skill level.

The use of scenarios in the book are an effective way to link the methodological descriptions to practical purposes. The scenarios are all written by authors with varying professional backgrounds, such as Lynn Hoffman, director of operations at a public library system, and Mirah Dow, a professor and director of a PhD program. These scenarios reflect the research background and educational experience of the writers and are picked up and analyzed through the lens of the writers of the accompanying chapters. While the use of the scenarios to frame research methods is an effective tool that grounds the methodological descriptions for the novice researcher, some of the scenarios had to be modified by the authors of the corresponding chapters to meet the unique qualities of the methods themselves. In the introduction, the editors address the collaborative nature of the scenarios and target the research to practical problems that librarians and educators may face in their practice.

The methodological approaches examined in this book were intentionally chosen to provide a broad spectrum of research methods used. They range from traditional methods, such as focus groups and interviews, to newer developing methods, such as design-based and action research. The chapters are short and are meant to act as an introduction to the methods as opposed to a comprehensive dive into the approaches. As a result, more-experienced researchers may find that the book does not delve deeply enough into any one methodology.

The consistent approach of the chapters helps make the information tangible, and the concluding section of each chapter provides the reader with a list of resources for further reading. Based on the structure of each chapter and the range of information, this book is suitable for any survey research-methods course or for any professional who may be new to the practice and may want an overview of selected methods prior to commencing a research project.

As stated previously, the scenarios and research approaches that the chapter authors apply to the scenario are highly collaborative. This is reflective of the collaborative nature of research itself and suggests that researchers do not operate independently. By applying this collaborative approach, the reader can see the practical, real-world applications of their own practice and modify the methods as needed.

Stylistically speaking, the language used is simple enough for a professional who is new to research, without being over simplistic. Even an experienced researcher may find value in the clear descriptions of the methods and justifications for the choices that the authors make in applying the scenarios. The glossaries at the end of
each chapter and collected at the end of the book are a useful tool for the researcher, and the extensive bibliography can aid the reader who is looking to develop their knowledge in any of the research methodologies or themes.

Books written about research methods can be problematic publications, as some readers may want a deeper analysis of fewer methods while others appreciate an introductory view of more methods. With an often overwhelming array of methodological choices, a librarian or educator new to research may struggle to select the one most appropriate to their needs. This book provides the novice researcher with a background to some of the research methods that meet the needs of library and educational research.