

## RESEARCH METHODS

## A Tool For Life

## THIRD EDITION

*Research Methods* is an introduction to the importance of scientific research in everyday life and uses familiar examples to keep students engaged. The text analyzes controversies in psychology to stimulate student interest while explaining crucial methodological concepts. It presents ethical issues related to research, as well as social and cultural factors that might affect it, and provides a comprehensive introduction to a wide variety of methodologies. Through this book, students will learn how to generate research questions and select appropriate methodology, as well as to write a successful research report.

Bernard C. Beins is Professor of psychology at Ithaca College. He has been President-elect of the New England Psychological Association and the Society for the Teaching of Psychology.

# Research Methods

A Tool For Life

Third Edition

Bernard C. Beins

*Ithaca College, New York*



CAMBRIDGE  
UNIVERSITY PRESS

## CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

University Printing House, Cambridge CB2 8BS, United Kingdom

One Liberty Plaza, 20th Floor, New York, NY 10006, USA

477 Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne, VIC 3207, Australia

4843/24, 2nd Floor, Ansari Road, Daryaganj, Delhi – 110002, India

79 Anson Road, #06–04/06, Singapore 079906

Cambridge University Press is part of the University of Cambridge.

It furthers the University's mission by disseminating knowledge in the pursuit of education, learning, and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

[www.cambridge.org](http://www.cambridge.org)

Information on this title: [www.cambridge.org/9781108436236](http://www.cambridge.org/9781108436236)

DOI: 10.1017/9781108399531

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This book was previously published by Pearson Education, Inc. 2004, 2009, 2013.

Reissued by Cambridge University Press 2017

Printed in the United Kingdom by Clays, St Ives plc

*A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library.*

ISBN 978-1-108-43623-6 Hardback

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*Once again, I dedicate this book to Simon, Agatha, and Linda who always provide me with inspiration and love.*

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## PREFACE

It would be tempting to think that research methods never change and that last year's model is perfectly good this year. In some ways that is true. Psychological research follows predictable paths, including predictable methodologies.

However, sometimes the emphasis and focus of research undergoes change, even as the basic principles remain the same. This edition of *Research Methods: A Tool for Life* reflects some changes that have emerged in our discipline. There is a chapter on cultural and individual differences in the research enterprise; it is an updated version of the chapter that has appeared in the two previous editions of the book.

Furthermore, in this edition, I have tried to embed more culturally focused research within each chapter, hoping that one focus of contemporary psychological research, cultural and cross-cultural issues, becomes more apparent in the discussions of different kinds of research. It is important to recognize that cultural issues in research do not belong only in a single chapter.

Rather, we need to attend to the importance of culture in our approaches to research and in the conclusions we draw. Thus, cultural and cross-cultural issues do not stand apart from the rest of psychology. They are in and of themselves an important aspect of our discipline. So, as you read each chapter, you will see descriptions of research that go beyond Guthrie's (2004) sentiment that "even the rat was white."

In addition, there is new material on ethics in research. Over the past several years, issues of ethics have surfaced that tell us that we still have to pay attention to the welfare of the people who volunteer for our studies and that ethical issues have an impact on us all.

In addition, there are other updates to the presentation, with research that reflects the current nature of scientific psychology. And as with the previous editions, I have tried to show how the sometimes abstract principles of research actually do have an effect on our lives outside the laboratory. In the long run, empirical research is the best basis for making decisions about our lives. That doesn't mean that we can be simplistic—no single laboratory study ever settles an argument. But, in the long run, the body of research on many topics has been shown to be a highly effective means of guiding our behaviors.

### INSTRUCTOR AND STUDENT SUPPORT PACKAGE

**MySearchLab with eText** (<http://www.mysearchlab.com>) can be packaged with this text by ordering ISBN 0205903878, or purchased separately online. MySearchLab includes the full eText, glossary flashcards, chapter quizzes that report directly to an instructor gradebook, a full suite of writing and research tools, access to a variety of academic journals, census data, Associated Press newsfeeds, and discipline-specific readings. MySearchLab also includes a set of online experiment simulations to show students research in action.

**Operation ARA** (Acquiring Research Acumen), an online smart game that teaches critical thinking and research methods skills, is available within MySearchLab, as well as standalone (<http://ara.pearsoncmg.com>). This simulation features a “save the world” plot that requires students to learn and apply critical thinking skills and scientific principles to uncover and foil an extraterrestrial plot to colonize Earth. The game includes an embedded critical thinking assessment, provided in two forms so that it can be used as a pre- and a post-test, to assess critical thinking outcomes. Operation ARA was authored and developed by Keith Millis, Northern Illinois University; Art Graesser, University of Memphis; and Diane Halpern, Claremont McKenna College.

**Research Methods Laboratory Manual** (ISBN 0205741703), authored by Barney Beins and Jeffrey Holmes, both from Ithaca College, contains laboratory activities that are similar to a number of published psychological studies. The purpose of this book is to give students the opportunity to experience psychological research from the point of view of both the participant and the researcher. Each lab contains directions on collecting data, a summary of the research underlying the lab, instructions for performing various statistical analyses on the data, critical thinking questions, and questions to help students think about how they might extend the research into a research project. Ethical guidelines and a bibliography are also provided for each lab.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

My mentors throughout my educational years prepared me for a career that has allowed me to address interesting questions and to work with generations of motivated and very likable students. These mentors included the late Jim Kwiatkowski, John Jahnke, and Arthur Reber, all of whom had a role in my ability to mentor my own students.

I’d like to thank the reviewers of the second edition of this text for their input: Heather Hill, University of Texas at San Antonio; Merry Sleigh-Ritzer, Winthrop University; C. Mark Wessinger, University of Nevada; and Bonnie Wright, Gardner Webb University.

I am also grateful for the continued help that Stephen Frail and Maddy Schricker have provided throughout this project. In addition, I am thankful to Anand Natarajan for his excellent attention to detail in the editing phase of this project.

Finally, as always, I am eternally thankful for my wonderful family, Linda, Agatha, and Simon.

## Reference

Guthrie, R. V. (2004). *Even the rat was white: A historical view of psychology* (2nd ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education.