In this book David E. Gray introduces readers to the essential aspects of the research process, covering topics ranging from best approaches to the design of appropriate research tools, to issues of data collection, analysis, and writing up. The author skilfully explains complex and daunting concepts in an unpretentious manner that simultaneously demystifies the research process and illuminates the complexity and messiness of actual research, writes Christina Dobson.


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real triumph. There are introductory videos in which Gray covers the ‘take home messages’ most relevant to that chapter, and there are also links to papers, book chapters and YouTube videos which focus on specific themes in greater detail. This content is available to all who purchase the book however, you are also able to purchase 12 months access to the interactive e-book, alongside the printed text, useful if fieldwork demands a lot of travel.

A lot of time and thought has been invested in the format of this book, from the online resources and author videos, to the structure of the text as well. Chapter objectives, top tips, and summaries help the reader to consolidate their learning throughout, and the real life examples simultaneously demystify the research process and illuminate the complexity and messiness of actual research. The text provides a lot of practical, adaptable information, which will further support inexperienced researchers, i.e. through the inclusion of an example consent form, gantt chart, and links to literature databases by discipline.

Gray skilfully explains complex and daunting concepts, such as the philosophy of research, in an unpretentious manner, and as the book progresses, builds the readers confidence in their own knowledge and abilities. The interactive nature of the book and its use of videos is a real strength, making it easier to engage with and, along with the quality of the content, appealing.

Although the text provides advice about the PhD viva, this book is probably more suited to undergraduate and masters students, because of the breadth of topics covered. That is not to say the book holds no value for a PhD student, but that it would be better used as a springboard to further texts, as well as a means of understanding and contextualising the method and results of others’ research. *Doing Research in the Real World* would also support early career researchers as a resource for teaching, as not only does it offer a clear and concise introduction to different approaches, which would work well with undergraduate teaching, it also provides online resources for lecturers.

This book is a valuable resource for those undertaking research in the social sciences and therefore deserves a place on the bookshelves of undergraduates and post graduates alike, as well as those involved in their teaching.

Christina Dobson is a PhD student in the School of Medicine, Pharmacy and Health at Durham University, for which she is looking at the effect of social support on time to presentation among patients with colorectal or respiratory symptoms. Christina has been involved in a number of studies within the department, prior to commencing her PhD, which have largely focused on the early diagnosis of cancer. [Read more reviews by Christina](#).