Conducting Qualitative Research of Learning in Online Spaces

Hannah R. Gerber
Sandra Schamroth Abrams
Jen Scott Curwood
Alecia Marie Magnifico

Conducting Qualitative Research of Learning in Online Spaces

"Throughout their book, the authors effectively explain, describe, analyze, apply, evaluate, synthesize, modify, support, refute, and extend many issues relevant to the emerging dialogue on online research in general and online qualitative research in particular. The importance of the information that they provide in their book cannot be overstated."

—**Anthony J. Onwuegbuzie**, Sam Houston State University

"Since the birth of online learning, researchers and students have sought guidelines and standards to follow as they conduct their work. Finally, we have Conducting Qualitative Research of Learning in Online Spaces to answer our questions about organizing our efforts, ethics, tools, and definitions. This publication is for the bookshelve researcher, and student."

—**Robert G**

"In a rapidly evolving field, this book stands as a valuable point of reference. It offers a timely, thoughtful, and critical commentary on learning in online spaces, and challenges readers to do the same. The authors offer an agenda to advance the field further, identifying the foundational issues and approaches to studying these which will shape new work in the years ahead."

—**Martin Oliver**, University College London

Qualitative researchers have grappled with how online inquiry shifts research procedures such as gaining access to spaces, communicating with participants, and obtaining informed consent. Drawing on a multimethod approach, Conducting Qualitative Research of Learning in Online Spaces explores how to design and conduct diverse studies in online environments. The book focuses on formal and informal learning practices that occur in evolving online spaces. The text shows researchers how they can draw on a variety of theoretical frameworks, methodological approaches, and data sources. Examples of qualitative research in online spaces, along with guiding questions, support readers at ever phase of the research process.

SAGE www.sagepublishing.com
Los Angeles | London | New Delhi | Singapore | Washington DC | Melbourne

SUSTAINABLE FORESTRY INITIATIVE
Certified Sourcing
www.sfiprogram.org
SFI-00453

ISBN 978-1-4833-3384-7
9 781483 333847 90000

Thinkstock

Gerber • Abrams
Curwood • Magnifico

Conducting Qua esearch of Learning in Onli

2I-C3-0098
B00086875

SAGE

Conducting Qualitative Research of Learning in Online Spaces

Hannah R. Gerber
Sam Houston State University

Sandra Schamroth Abrams
St. John's University

Jen Scott Curwood
University of Sydney

Alecia Marie Magnifico
University of New Hampshire

藏书章

SAGE

Los Angeles | London | New Delhi
Singapore | Washington DC | Melbourne

FOR INFORMATION:

SAGE Publications, Inc.
2455 Teller Road
Thousand Oaks, California 91320
E-mail: order@sagepub.com

SAGE Publications Ltd.
1 Oliver's Yard
55 City Road
London, EC1Y 1SP
United Kingdom

SAGE Publications India Pvt. Ltd.
B 1/I 1 Mohan Cooperative Industrial Area
Mathura Road, New Delhi 110 044
India

SAGE Publications Asia-Pacific Pte. Ltd.
3 Church Street
#10-04 Samsung Hub
Singapore 049483

Copyright © 2017 by SAGE Publications, Inc.

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced or utilized in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or by any information storage and retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publisher.

Printed in the United States of America

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Gerber, Hannah R., author. | Abrams, Sandra Schamroth, author. | Curwood, Jen Scott, author. | Magnifico, Alecia, author.

Title: Conducting qualitative research of learning in online spaces / Hannah R. Gerber, Sandra Schamroth Abrams, Jen Scott Curwood, and Alecia Magnifico.

Description: Thousand Oaks, California : Sage Publications, Inc., 2016. | Includes bibliographical references and index.

Identifiers: LCCN 2015038929 |
ISBN 9781483333847 (pbk. : alk. paper)

Subjects: LCSH: Web-based instruction—Research—Methodology.

Classification: LCC LB1044.87 .G47 2016 | DDC 371.33/44678—dc23 LC record available at http://lccn.loc.gov/2015038929

This book is printed on acid-free paper.

Acquisitions Editor: Helen Salmon
Editorial Assistant: Anna Villarruel
Production Editor: Olivia Weber-Stenis
Copy Editor: Ellen Howard
Typesetter: C&M Digitals (P) Ltd.
Proofreader: Sally Jaskold
Indexer: Diggs Publication Services
Cover Designer: Candice Harman
Marketing Manager: Nicole Elliott

SFI Certified Sourcing
www.sfiprogram.org
SFI-00453

16 17 18 19 20 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

此为试读,需要完整PDF请访问: www.ertongbook.com

Conducting Qualitative Research of Learning in Online Spaces

For my parents, who instilled in me a love for inquiry.
Hannah

For my children, who help me to see the world through ever-changing perspectives.
Sandra

For my son, as always.
Jen

For my parents, my earliest teachers in the art of observation and questioning.
Alecia

Foreword

Conducting Qualitative Research in the Moment

According to Denzin and Lincoln (2011), qualitative research has undergone the following nine moments that span from the beginning of the twentieth century to the present:

(1) *traditional (1900–1950)*, wherein many researchers who rejected logical positivism gravitated towards qualitative research;

(2) *modernist or golden age (1950–1970)*, wherein attempts were made to legitimize qualitative research (e.g., via grounded theory) by making its methods as rigorous as quantitative research; many textbook authors attempted to formalize qualitative research; and new interpretive theories emerged (e.g., ethnomethodology, critical theory, critical race theory, feminism, phenomenology in various forms [e.g., descriptive phenomenology, interpretive hermeneutic phenomenology]);

(3) *blurred genres (1970–1986)*, wherein qualitative researchers possessed a full arsenal of philosophical stances and methods; early forms of computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software programs became generally available to assist the analysis of textual data; new worldviews became popularized (e.g., poststructuralism); several qualitative research journals were launched; and naturalistic, postpositivist, and constructionist paradigms gained prominence;

(4) *crisis of representation (1986–1990)*, wherein qualitative research and writing became more reflexive, culminating in research questions being posed regarding issues of gender, race, class, sexuality, and other issues that previously had been considered to represent taboo research topics; quality criteria used by quantitative researchers, such as reliability, validity, and objectivity, were problematized; the triple crises of representation (i.e., qualitative researchers being unable to capture lived experiences directly), legitimation (i.e., problematizing the traditional [foundational] criteria for

evaluating and interpreting qualitative research), and praxis (i.e., involving asking whether it is possible to effect change in the world if society exclusively was represented by text) were highlighted;

(5) *postmodern period of experimental ethnographic writing (1990–1995)*, which marked a struggle for qualitative researchers to make sense of the triple crises; the emergence of new methodologies for conducting ethnography (e.g., auto-ethnography); the problematizing and ensuing drastic reduction in emphasis of the passive observer; and the promotion of action, participatory, and transformative-oriented research;

(6) *post-experimental inquiry (1990–1995)*, which involved researchers whose works were driven by a quest to move towards a free and equitable democratic society; and new forms of qualitative writings being published that reflected multidisciplinary, interdisciplinary, and transdisciplinary research;

(7) *methodologically contested present (2000–2004)*, which represented a period of conflict and tension, especially between qualitative and quantitative researchers, and the emergence of a growing body of literature on paradigms and methods;

(8) *unnamed (2005–present)*, which represented a period of confronting the methodological ramifications of the promotion of evidence-based research; and

(9) *fractured future (2005–present)*, wherein methodologists would divide themselves (i.e., "gold standard" of scientific research [i.e., randomized control designs] vs. various forms of qualitative research), and the value and significance of qualitative research might become marginalized (see also Ravenek & Rudman, 2013).

Just as the field of qualitative research is situated in a cultural and historical context, so too is the Internet. Indeed, the evolution of the Internet can be mapped onto the aforementioned nine qualitative moments. Specifically, the World Wide Web was invented in March 1989 by Sir Tim John Berners-Lee, a British computer scientist. Thus, Web 1.0, representing the first generation of the World Wide Web, and which was characterized by hierarchically arranged separate and static websites with information predominantly controlled by a small group of content providers (i.e., *read-only web*), came to the fore during the end of the fourth moment and the beginning of the fifth moment.

Further, the sixth moment marked the date when the phrase *Web 2.0* was first coined on April 1, 1999, by Darci DiNucci (1999, p. 32); the seventh moment marked the date when Web 1.0 officially was switched to Web 2.0 (i.e., November 20, 2001) and marked the period during which social media websites were developed and used, including the launching of MySpace (January 1, 2003) and Facebook (February 4, 2004), as well as the hosting of the first Web 2.0 conference on October 1, 2004, by O'Reilly Media Live, which popularized the term *Web 2.0*; and the eighth and ninth moments marked the creation of resources such as Wiki Spaces (January 1, 2005) and YouTube (August 20, 2005).

Since the introduction of Web 2.0, the number of users of Web 2.0 platforms has increased exponentially—leading my coauthors and me to call for a *10th moment* in qualitative research, which we labeled as "the period of *Methodological Innovation*, in which qualitative researchers go beyond the traditional ways of collecting primary and reflexive data" (Onwuegbuzie, Leech, & Collins, 2010, p. 697). In so doing, we argued that qualitative researchers would "transcend this methodological contestation and methodological divide by taking advantage of the innovative approaches to reflexivity . . . and the latest technology and computer-mediated communication" (p. 697).

The use of Web 2.0 platforms has permeated many communities and nations—for example, with more than two billion people using the Internet worldwide. According to the Pew Research Center (2015), in the United States, the proportion of adults who use the Internet increased from 14 percent by the end of the sixth moment (i.e., *post-experimental inquiry*) to 66 percent by the end of the seventh moment (i.e., *methodologically contested present*) to 87 percent within the eighth (i.e., *unnamed*) and ninth (i.e., *fractured future*) moments—specifically, as of January 2014. Of these Internet users, the proportion of adults who use social networking sites (i.e., social media) increased from 8 percent by the end of the seventh moment to 74 percent in January 2014. Further, by April 2015, 68 percent of U.S. adults owned a smartphone, 45 percent owned a tablet computer, 19 percent owned an ebook reader, 40 percent owned a game console, and 14 percent owned a portable gaming device (Pew Research Center, 2015).

Globally, Internet use has grown by 566 percent from the beginning of the seventh moment in 2000 to deep into the eighth and ninth moments in 2012. And even though every region has reported proportionally fewer Internet users than does the United States, Internet usage worldwide still is significant—with 34 percent, on average, of the world's population using the Internet: comprising 68 percent in Oceania/Australia, 63 percent in Europe (63 percent), 43 percent in Latin America/Caribbean, 40 percent in the Middle East, 28 percent in Asia, and 16 percent in Africa (Pew Internet & American Life Project, 2013). In the parlance of quantitative researchers (cf. Peters & Van Voorhis, 1940) and some qualitative researchers (cf. Onwuegbuzie, 2003), all of these proportions represent large

effect sizes in the context of their sociocultural and geopolitical milieu. In fact, as someone who has been extremely fortunate to have travelled to numerous countries and states that represent six continents, I have witnessed first-hand the widespread and diverse use of Web 2.0 platforms—from Bedouin Arabs in Israel and Palestine (Bremaud, 2013) to members of the Masai Tribe in Kenya (Dimbleby, 2010)—to provide just a couple examples.

However, the use of Web 2.0 tools by researchers has not kept pace with the use by people in their daily lives. For example, in an article that I published as co–guest editor of a special issue in the *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, Snelson (in press) used a systematic literature review process to examine trends in qualitative and mixed methods social media research literature published from 2007 through 2013 by searching the three major databases: Academic Search Premier, Web of Science, and Google Scholar. Of the thousands of articles published during this time period, Snelson (in press) identified only 174 peer-reviewed qualitative research journal articles wherein social media played a central role. Although this represents an increase in the qualitative media research literature in recent years, this low proportion of published articles involving the study of online environments relative to the study of offline environments does not reflect the popularity of Web 2.0 platforms as a means of communication. Thus, it is not surprising that Greenhow, Robelia, and Hughes (2009) declared, "A stronger research focus on students' everyday use of Web 2.0 technologies and their learning with Web 2.0 both in and outside of classrooms is needed" (p. 246). Interestingly, Windschitl's (1998) call, made between the sixth and seventh moments, for researchers to utilize qualitative research methods in order to explore, to discover, and to describe complex changes that occur in the context of Web-based teaching and learning, as well as to understand technological, ethical, educational, professional, and/or social practices pertaining to technology use not only across people's life span, but also across a whole day (e.g., home, institutions of learning, work place, social spaces) is still very much applicable today in the ninth moment, justifying the need for the tenth moment, as stated previously.

Despite the importance of studying online spaces (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, blogs, wikis, forums, and listservs), the major research methodology textbooks focus primarily—if not exclusively—on methodologies pertaining to the study of offline spaces, with not even a chapter allocated to methodologies that are applicable to the study of online spaces. Unfortunately, the methodological tools presented in standard research methodology books for studying offline spaces are insufficient, per se, for examining many Web 2.0–related research questions. Further, of the few textbooks devoted specifically to online research methodologies, most of them were published during the early years of the eighth and ninth moments, and although they contain some useful information, they need updating, such as Fielding and Lee's (2008) excellent edited book—which

此为试读,需要完整PDF请访问: www.ertongbook.com

represents the year that the earliest forms of file hosting services (e.g., Dropbox) and Internet-based social bookmarking services (e.g., academia.edu) came to the fore. Further, very few graduate school programs provide students with the option to take formal courses on online research methods.

This lack of (current) published works in the area of online research methods coupled with the lack of formal and systematic instruction on conducting online research likely explain the relative lack of attention to the study of online spaces. And such lack of attention has dire consequences for the advancement of research methodologies in general. As an example, as noted by Leach, Kalinowski, Onwuegbuzie, and Leamons (in press), with very few exceptions (e.g., medical research), researchers representing many fields and disciplines still rely on printed consent forms to document participants' informed consent, instead of using online, or electronic, informed consent systems that "have the potential to help with logistical problems and possibly increase the consent rates among research studies because they are often more convenient to administer, to complete, and to submit" (p. xx).

Therefore, when I was asked to write the foreword for this book, I became very excited because it meant that I would get the opportunity to read a book that was much needed before it was released to the general public. And after reading it the first time, I was immediately able to declare unequivocally that this book delivered extremely effectively what the title promised! Now, I am a big fan of the most popular professional sport played in the United States, namely, the National Football League (NFL), being extremely fortunate to have attended Super Bowl XLVII between the San Francisco 49ers (my favorite team) and the Baltimore Ravens in New Orleans in 2013 (Yes, research methodologists do have a life!). Interestingly, a few weeks before I wrote this foreword, during halftime of a football game that occurred on a Monday night, while waiting for the teams to begin the second half, I decided to spend a few moments to read causally the Introduction chapter of this book. However, after reading this chapter, I found myself not being able to put the book down. Subsequently, I ignored completely the whole second half of the football game (which turned out to be an excellent game from the highlights that I watched later) and, instead, ended up reading the book from cover to cover. Those who know me would be surprised that I would give up a whole half of an NFL game to read *any* book—let alone a research methodology textbook—in its entirety and giving 100-percent attention to the task, at a time when I did not have to read it. As someone who has taught research methodology courses for more than two decades (Yes, this demonstrates how old I am!), I love reading about research methodology; however, I love football even more. And so my unconscious decision to read this book instead of watching the football game is a testament to how captivating the book is.

Throughout the book, the authors effectively explain, describe, analyze, apply, evaluate, synthesize, modify, support, refute, and extend many issues relevant to the emerging dialogue on online research in general and online qualitative research in particular. The importance of the information that they provide in their book cannot be understated, bearing in mind the aforementioned significant increase in the use of Web 2.0 tools worldwide and the corresponding lack of recent publications on online research methodologies.

Each of the eight chapters begins with guiding questions that motivate readers to think critically from the onset. Similarly, the questions at the end of each chapter help readers to reflect back on the information provided in that chapter as well as help them to situate the discussion within their own research. I particularly like what the authors call *spotlight boxes*, which reside at strategic places within each chapter and showcase an array of research studies by summarizing the methodologies, methods, frameworks, tools, concepts, findings, and/or meaning making that were described by the researchers.

A perusal of their reference list makes it quickly obvious that these authors respectfully stand on the shoulder of methodological, theoretical, and conceptual giants—building on their classic works. Further, each chapter is beautifully written using an appropriate combination of old, emerging, and new terminology related to both methods and online spaces. And, despite the fact that this book involves the work of four authors, it is presented in a seamless way wherein each chapter connects to both the chapters before and those that follow.

In a book wherein every chapter makes an important contribution to the dialogue on conducting research in online spaces, the chapter on ethical research is particularly noteworthy. Among the array of excellent information provided in this chapter, the authors provide thoughtful recommendations for obtaining approval from ethics review boards. It is clear that driving their discussion throughout this chapter is the importance of researchers maximizing non-maleficence (i.e., not causing harm to others); beneficence (i.e., working for the benefit of others); (social) justice (i.e., making decisions based on universal principles and rules, in an impartial and warranted manner in an attempt to guarantee fair and equitable treatment of all people), and fidelity (i.e., demonstrating loyalty, faithfulness, and commitment), as well as professional competence (i.e., recognizing limitations and undertaking tasks within the researcher's set of skills and knowledge of the topic explored and the results reported); integrity (i.e., being fair, honest, and respectful of others' data and representing their data appropriately); scholarly responsibility (i.e., adhering to best practices through documentation [i.e., leaving an audit trail] and reflecting on the methodological choices made); social responsibility (i.e., applying awareness of the social dimensions of the underling topic); and respecting rights, dignity, and diversity (i.e., striving

to eliminate bias for misrepresenting others' data and not discriminating participants based on their exceptionalities) (cf. Onwuegbuzie & Frels, 2016)—the sum of which provide a pathway for researchers to be *meta-ethical*, which implies adherence to *virtue ethics* (i.e., referring to the *character* of the researcher as the impetus for ethical behavior, as opposed to focusing on rules) and *pragmatic ethics* (i.e., using the standards set by communities under the assumption that communities are progressing morally in line with the progression of scientific knowledge).

I close by commending the authors for writing such a visionary methodological primer that is both reader-friendly and far-reaching. Indubitably, these authors move forward the conversation on conducting qualitative research of learning in online spaces in an appropriate direction and pace. In so doing, they will help researchers "to pursue understanding of those opportunities and challenge existing barriers that prevent us (scholars, teachers, administrators, students, and families) from taking a step toward discovery" (Greenhow et al., 2009, p. 256). Simply put, this unique book provides a much-needed guide to help researchers consider their methods, tools, roles, affect, positionality, and, above all, humanness in the qualitative research process pertaining to the study of learning in online spaces. This seminal book begins to fill a void such that it will make a significant contribution to both the research methodology and online literatures. The biggest endorsement that I can give the book is that I intend to use it in my own research methodology courses because it provides a framework for helping researchers conduct research *in the moment*—specifically, the *Methodological Innovation* moment.

Anthony J. Onwuegbuzie
Sam Houston State University

References

Bremaud, J. (2013, May 9). Bedouins sitting around the fire listening to mobile phones [video file]. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RmhIKeiUd8A

Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2011). Introduction: The discipline and practice of qualitative research. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Sage handbook of qualitative research* (4th ed., pp. 1-25). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

DiNucci, D. (1999). Fragmented future. *Print, 53*(4), 32, 221–222.

Fielding, N. G., & Lee, R. M. (2008). *The Sage handbook of online research methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Greenhow, C. M., Robelia, E., & Hughes, J. (2009). Web 2.0 and classroom research: What path should we take now? *Educational Researcher, 38*, 246–259. doi:10.3102/0013189X09336671

Leach, L. F., Kalinowski, K. E., Onwuegbuzie, A. J., & Leamons, C. G. (in press). Investigating the efficacy of a basic online informed consent system in educational research. *International Journal of Multiple Research Approaches*.

Onwuegbuzie, A. J. (2003). Effect sizes in qualitative research: A prolegomenon. *Quality & Quantity: International Journal of Methodology*, 37, 393-409. doi:10.1023/A:1027379223537

Onwuegbuzie, A. J., & Frels, R. K. (2016). *Seven steps to a comprehensive literature review: A multimodal and cultural approach*. London, England: Sage.

Onwuegbuzie, A. J., Leech, N. L., & Collins, K. M. T. (2010). Innovative data collection strategies in qualitative research. *The Qualitative Report*, *15*, 696–726. Retrieved from http://www.nova.edu/ssss/QR/QR15-3/onwuegbuzie.pdf

Peters, C. C., & VanVoorhis, W. R. (1940). *Statistical procedures and their mathematical bases*. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.

Pew Internet & American Life Project (2013). *Demographics of Internet users (April–May 2013)*. Retrieved from http://www.pewinternet.org/Trend-Data-%28Adults%29/Whos-Online.aspx

Pew Research Center. (2015). *Internet user demographics*. Retrieved from http://www.pewinternet.org/data-trend/internet-use/latest-stats/

Ravenek, M. J., & Rudman, D. L. (2013). Bridging conceptions of quality in moments of qualitative research. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, *12*, 436–456. Retrieved from https://ejournals.library.ualberta.ca/index.php/IJQM/article/view/11192

Snelson, C. L. (in press). Qualitative and mixed methods social media research: A review of the literature. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*.

Windschitl, M. (1998). The WWW and classroom research: What path should we take? *Educational Researcher*, *27*(1), 28–33.

Preface

For over two decades, researchers have been grappling with online inquiry, including gaining access to spaces, communicating with participants, and obtaining informed consent. Before the advent of Web 2.0, online research primarily examined static, heavily text-based forms and spaces, such as email, chatrooms, and websites. Though studies of the primitive Internet often were focused on content analysis or involved offline methods to clarify online data, such as face-to-face individual interviews (Reid, 1994; Turkle, 1995), near the end of the twentieth century, online spaces began to gain recognition as vehicles for recruiting and communicating with participants (Gaiser, 1997). More recently, researchers have conducted a range of online studies of behavior and meaning making, from examinations of teamwork and leadership in massively multiplayer gaming to investigations of youth literacy and writing development through fanfiction (Chen, 2012; Lammers, 2012).

In this book, we acknowledge the evolving nature of online spaces and advocate for a pragmatic approach to data collection and analysis that will support a rich understanding of meaning making in these environments. As such, *Conducting Qualitative Research of Learning in Online Spaces* provides guidance for researchers who wish to design and conduct diverse studies of learning in online contexts.

As researchers advance investigations of learning in online spaces, contemporary studies often target dynamic spaces that are user-driven, social, and collaborative, which we refer to as **networked field sites.** To capture the interactions within these sites, researchers can draw on a variety of theoretical frameworks, methodological approaches, and data sources to better understand learning in online spaces. For instance, methods for collecting data in online environments often include observation, in-depth interviews, focus group interviews, surveys, and artifact analysis. Though the examination of learning in online spaces may have features similar to traditional face-to-face approaches, some researchers have suggested that "online qualitative research cannot be considered a reproduction of traditional techniques on the Internet but is a different set of tools, with its own peculiar advantages and limitations" (Graffigna & Bosio, 2006, p. 68). Participants' experiences are informed by both the online and offline world, so it is important for researchers to consider how to attend to data that are drawn from both online and offline spaces.

In many ways, these points are related to Matthew Williams's (2007) questions about the role of the researcher in online spaces. He has challenged the field to consider these questions:

> To what extent is the researcher able to write in a convincing way about the people studied when anonymity inherent in Internet interactions casts doubts upon the identities of

> research participants? How does the participant observer manage his or her identity in settings mediated by text and graphics, and what impact might this have on data collection? How are researchers to conceptualize the boundaries of online settings and the experiences of those observed? (p. 8)

Williams's prompts suggest that we need to do more than just select the appropriate method for accessing and collecting data. As online researchers, we argue that:

- we need to understand relationships between researchers' mental models and participants' experiences (see Chapter One);
- we need to grasp how researchers can trace learners' meaning making across various networked field sites, thereby initiating ways to extend the boundaries of knowledge and traditions (see Chapter Two);
- we need to consider how our theories of learning influence the studies that we design and conduct (see Chapter Three);
- we need to place greater emphasis on the complicated aspects of researchers' reflexivity, bias, and positioning as research tools (see Chapter Four);
- we need to determine how multiple data sources can be assembled and analyzed to capture richer pictures of online meaning making (see Chapters Five and Six);
- we need to support and conduct ethical research in online environments (see Chapter Seven); and
- we need to continually rethink research methods in light of evolving spaces and practices (see Chapter Eight).

These concepts have led us to contemplate how researchers approach online learning and advocate for moving beyond tradition; in order to understand multidimensional and multi-sited learning, researchers need to be creative in their approaches to data collection and analysis. Such a pragmatic stance is not about a cavalier disregard for tradition; rather it is about responding to an evolving learning landscape that supports not only new and creative forms of meaning making, but also more expansive research designs. As such, we see the future of research in online learning as requiring multiple approaches. Extending ideas from the mixed methods tradition, John W. Creswell (2015) proposed that multimethod approaches allow researchers to collect and analyze multiple forms of qualitative data to better understand a given study. By supporting a multimethod approach, we contend that researchers will be able to describe how people make meaning in online environments.

此为试读,需要完整PDF请访问: www.ertongbook.com