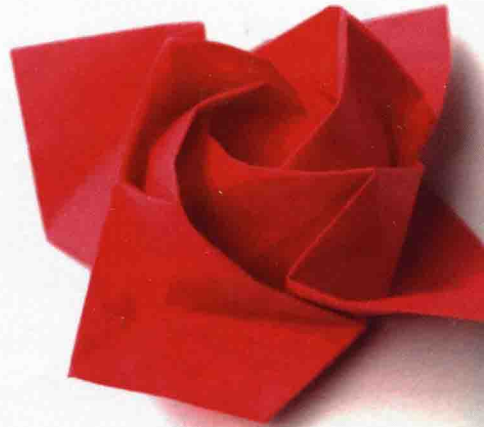


# CONSTRUCTIVIST APPROACHES AND RESEARCH METHODS

A PRACTICAL GUIDE TO EXPLORING  
PERSONAL MEANINGS

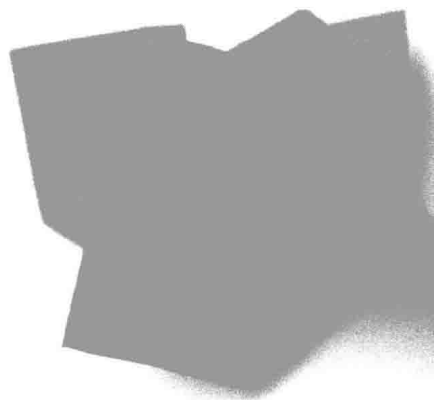
PAM DENICOLO  
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# CONSTRUCTIVIST APPROACHES AND RESEARCH METHODS

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*We would like to dedicate this book to our families, particularly to our partners Vincent, Nikki and Todd, who not only tolerated that our time and energies over the last year have been devoted to the construing of others but also provided the succour needed to maintain our stamina through the process.*



# About the authors

**Pam Denicolo**, now professor emerita at the University of Reading and consultant/visiting professor at the University of Surrey and other universities worldwide, was a founder member and long-term Guidance Panel member of the European Personal Construct Association (EPCA).

Her academic and organisational research has included developing the research skills of her 60-plus successful doctoral researchers, their colleagues in the graduate school she developed and led, and their subsequent students and colleagues. She continues to provide workshops for researchers, while the focus of her consultancy is on improving doctoral education and training, working with students, supervisors, examiners and senior staff in higher education. With colleagues she organises the Postgraduate Interest Network of the Society for Research into Higher Education and was a long-serving member of the executive of the UK Council for Graduate Education.

Using constructivist techniques, she contributed to the research base and co-authored the Research Councils UK Researcher Development Framework. She is a prolific author of guidance texts for researchers in the SAGE series *Success in Research*, contributes chapters on constructivist techniques to other books, and co-edits and contributes to the Sense series *Critical Issues in the Future of Learning and Teaching*.

**Trevor Long** has 30 years' experience in education and consultancy in the UK and in many countries around the world. He is on the associate faculty with several leading UK business schools, designing, facilitating and supervising research and consultancy projects on MBA, MSc and executive education programmes. His areas of interest include strategy, leadership, organisational and personal development with a particular focus on psychological dynamics, and areas that are especially open for constructivist exploration.

Trevor's doctoral research employed personal construct psychology (PCP) techniques in a work setting to investigate the inner experience of meaningfulness and personal engagement. He is passionate about the use of constructivist techniques and continues to develop models and educational offerings to demonstrate the power of PCP for both academic and in-company research and application in practice.

He has balanced his academic activities with consultancy projects in a wide range of service and manufacturing organisations primarily focused on the impact of change on people, and the introduction of new processes. These have often



involved the development and implementation of complete projects which, in a practical setting, have required pragmatic interventions whilst being based on rigorous underpinning theory.

**Kim Bradley-Cole** is a Chartered Psychologist and an Associate Fellow of the British Psychological Society. She has a PhD in Leadership and Organisational Behaviour from the University of Reading, and an MSc in Occupational and Organisational Psychology from the University of Surrey. Kim retrained as a psychologist after a successful career in fast-moving consumer goods marketing and innovations, working on developing some of Britain's best-loved brands, including Heinz, Bisto, Mr Kipling and Twinings. She has held marketing and human resources roles in large organisations, as well as working agency-side in market research and as a freelance work psychologist and coach. She actively uses constructivist methods in both academic and practitioner contexts and has taught MSc and PhD students how to effectively develop, apply and analyse different tools in their own research. Her award-winning PhD was funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) and used constructivist techniques to bring greater clarity and depth to an important, but contested, theoretical field by exploring managers' implicit beliefs concerning authentic leadership. Kim currently works as a coaching psychologist and is a Teaching Fellow at the University of Surrey and principally teaches in the fields of work psychology, organisational behaviour and qualitative research methods at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels.

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Brian Gaines, who has provided in Appendix B an update of internet resources and sources of support and who, with his wife Mildred Shaw, has made a significant contribution in many ways to the global PCP community.



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