



Framing Research as Evaluation and Assessment

Introducing CORDA

Paul Conway, University of Michigan
Jennifer Gunter King, Emory University



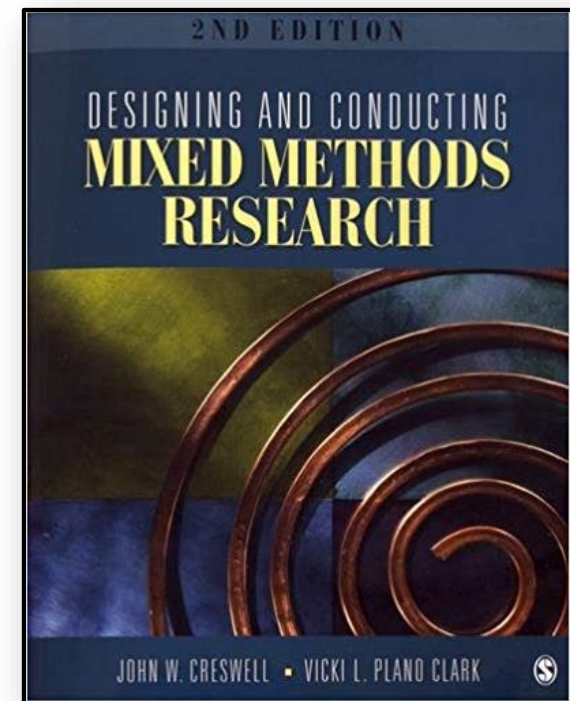
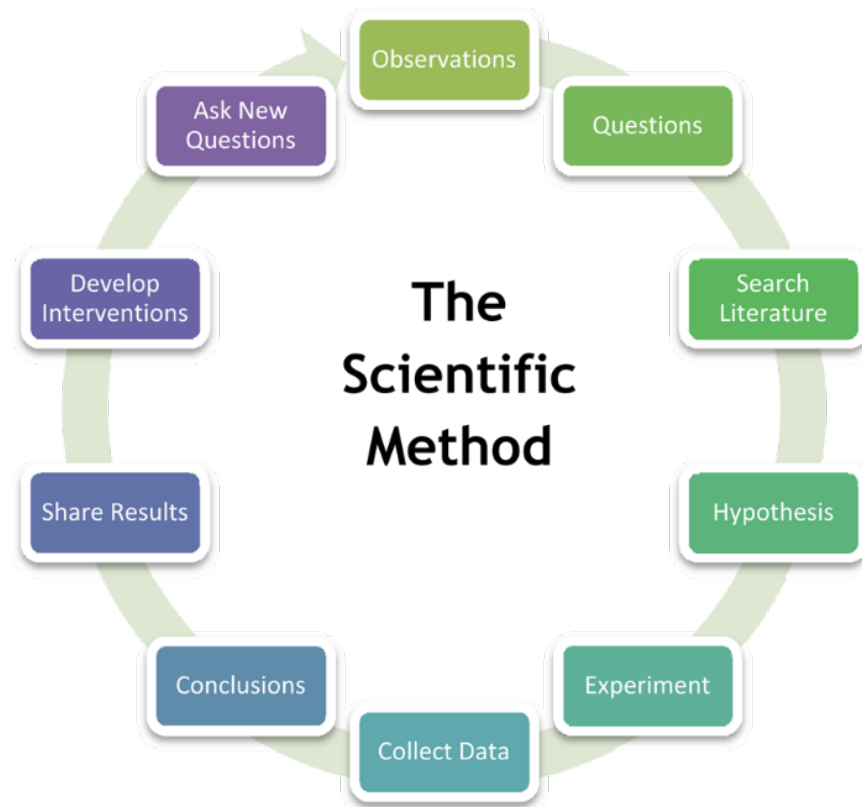
Provocative Ideas

Archivists don't do research and rarely ever have.

Archivists have a long tradition asking and answering good questions about of what we do, who we serve, and our impact in the wider world.

Archivists need better tools for doing rigorous assessment and evaluation and then saving and sharing the results (widely).

What is Research?



John W. Creswell

The Archival Knowledge Base

■ Published literature

- A growing number of journals – peer review, commitment to open access
- Decades of publishing in book form – sole author, multi author, chapter books, text books, assembled works

■ Counting and measuring

- From Ernst Posner (1956) forward – surveys and censuses
- Reporting, framing, agenda setting

■ Planning and Building

- Goals and Priorities (in earnest since mid-1980s)
- Agenda setting for the profession and SAA

Research Issues and Methods

- Cox (1992) and Conway (2013)

Table 2. Research Methodologies in North American Archival Journals, 1970–92

Qualitative	
Historical	42
Systems	6
Experimental	5
Literary	2
Legal	1
<i>Subtotal</i>	<i>56</i>
Quantitative	
Survey	22
Citation/bibliometric	8
Financial analysis	2
<i>Subtotal</i>	<i>32</i>
Total	88

Table 6. Research Strategies and Methods

Qualitative	102
Historical	43
Archival	25
Case and Field	25
Action	2
Developmental	2
Other	5
Quantitative	40
Correlational	2
Quasi-experimental	2
Survey research	36
Mixed	5
	147

Three Waves of Research Agendas

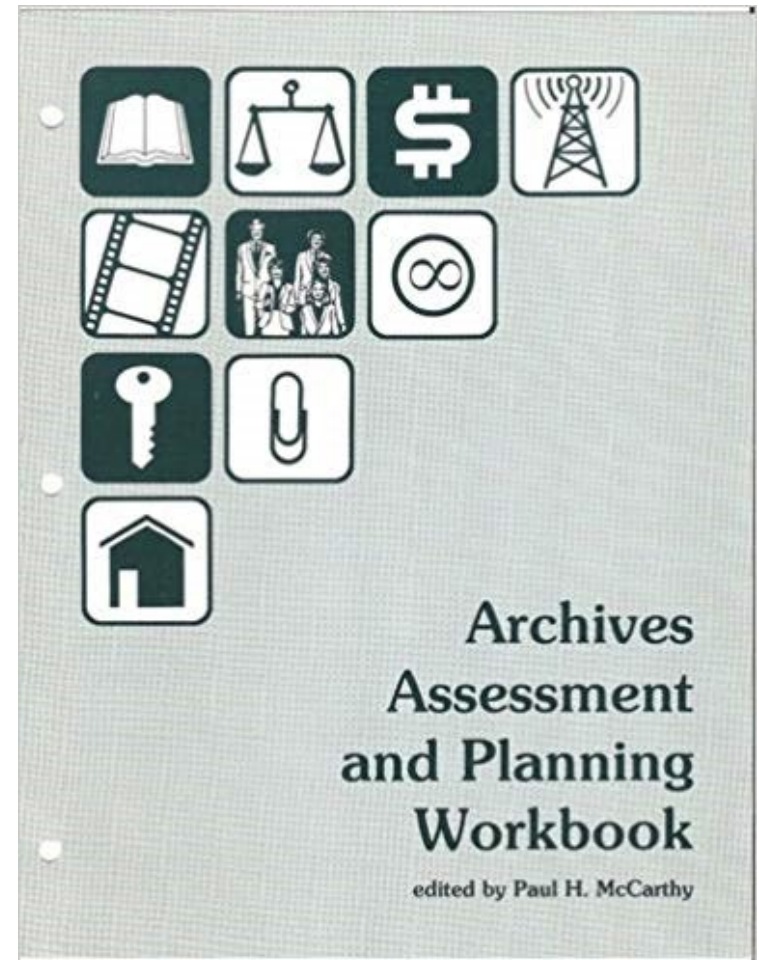
- The Archival Profession – 1986-1991
 - Appraisal – Richard Cox and Helen Samuels
 - Management – Paul H. McCarthy
 - Users and Use – Lawrence Dowler
 - Electronic Records – Margaret Hedstrom
- Research and Education (2000 to present)
- SAA Task Force – CORDE (2017- to present)
 - Diversity & demographics; Metrics and institutions; Functional needs assessment; Inclusive collaboration; Audience building

Research for/in Archival Education

- Eric Ketelaar: Archivistics saving the profession (2000)
 - “Education needs research, and research needs education” (333).
- Archival Education and Research Initiative — 1980s to present
 - Building a cadre of faculty (Burke, Conway, and onward)
 - Yakel, Gilliland and McKemmish on research infrastructure
- Research and Archival Education Curricula – (2000 onward)
 - Multiverse, DigCCur and digital curation, etc.
- Graduate Education Guidelines
 - Avoiding accreditation but supporting archival identity

Institutional Evaluation – Ebb and Flow

1. Legal Authority and Purpose
2. Governing Authority and Administration
3. Financial Resources
4. Staff
5. Physical Facilities
6. Building Archival and Manuscript Holdings
7. Preserving Archival/Manuscript Holdings
8. Arrangement and Description
9. Access Policy and Reference Services
10. Outreach and Public Programs



A Pitch for Evaluation & Assessment

- Principles-based – requiring a framework of issues but no explicit agenda.
- Bottom up – finding priorities from the needs of the profession
- Practice-based – rigorous and systematic but not dependent on hypotheses
- Open, transparent, and shared – most likely through a flexible digital repository platform
- Two-way collaboration with the academy – modeled on the research-clinic system
 - Respectful of the wall/moat between formal scholarship and assessment activities
 - Realistic about the grand challenges of the archival community
 - Pragmatic about archives as a site of inquiry
 - Strategic about contracting for studies with the academy

CORDA Origin Story

- 2016: Dennis Meissner SAA presidential address, “Bare Necessities”
- 2016: President Meissner Proposal for a Committee on Research and Evaluation (CORE)
- May 2017: SAA Council charged the *Task Force on Research/Data and Evaluation* (TF- CORDE)
 - comprised of Chair Michelle Light and member Sarah Buchanan, Mahnaz Ghaznavi, Dennis Meissner, Daniel Noonan, and Stacie Williams
- November 2018: SAA Council establishes **Committee on Research, Data and Assessment**
- March 2019: CORDA launched



The CORDA Charge

The Committee on Research, Data, and Assessment provides access to significant and useful data and research

- about SAA, American archives, and their users
- that evidence the value of archives for society
- and help us improve our services to SAA members and to our consumers.

The Committee will work to conduct or support relevant research and to create, gather, and preserve data by directing and engaging in several areas of activity:



CORDA Members

- Paul Conway, University of Michigan (co-chair)
- Jennifer Gunter King, Emory University (co-chair)
- * Sarah Buchanan, University of Missouri Columbia
- Courtney Dean, University of California, Los Angeles
- Amanda Hawk, Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge
- Cristina Horak, Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas
- Chris Marino, Environmental Design Archives, UC Berkeley
- * Dennis Meissner, Retired
- Erin Passehl Stoddart, University of Oregon
- Sarah Pratt, Simmons University
- Ricky Punzalan, University of Maryland

* Member of Task Force-CORDE



CORDA Priorities

- **Standardized Tools** for gathering and analyzing data
- **Centralized repository**
- **Training** on gathering, analyzing, interpreting and using data
- **Up-to-date basic facts and figures** about archives and archivists
- **Research Priorities**



CORDA Priorities – A Three Year Plan

- We hope you will join the Committee on Research, Data and Assessment
 - Join us on Sunday from 12:00 – 1:15 pm for a noon-time forum and brown bag to discuss priorities for
 - Year 1
 - Year 2
 - Year 3 – and beyond
- We will share more on how you can be involved and participate!



Thank you!

Contact us: corda@archivists.org

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