**Manuscript Formatting Checklist**

As you write your manuscript, please keep in mind these formatting guidelines, as they depict the state in which your final manuscript should be submitted. Making sure your manuscript adheres to these guidelines as you work on the draft ensures not only a faster turnaround in handing it over to Production and Marketing, but also saves you the hassle of removing any problematic formatting ahead of submission.

Additionally, please keep in mind that your final submission should include **all proposed chapters**, any **preliminary material** (dedications, acknowledgements, table of contents *with chapter titles and the first level of subtitles*, list of tables/figures, author bio/photo, contributor notes if relevant, preface, foreword) and **end matter** (references, glossary).

Finally, please keep in mind that ***no significant changes*** can be made to the manuscript once you submit the final version for production. It will be copyedited, and you will have a chance to respond to any queries and make minor corrections, but the copyeditor will not be content-editing; the submitted version is final.

**General Text Guidelines**

* Documents are Microsoft Word (no PDF submissions)
* Documents have 2.54 cm (1 inch) margins and are double-spaced
* Times New Roman or Calibri, 12 point, unjustified font has been used
* Headers and footers have been avoided
* Endnote has been disengaged
* Consistent referencing has been maintained throughout the manuscript
* Different levels or types of headings are clearly and consistently differentiated
* All agreed pedagogical features are in good shape and are applied and labelled consistently across all chapters
* Spelling and terminology choices are consistent throughout the manuscript
* Work from outside sources has been cited clearly and accurately and noted in a permissions log

**Artwork Guidelines**

* All figures, tables, boxes, and other features must be labelled appropriately ([Chapter Number].[Item Number])
* Figures, tables, and other artwork have been removed and placed in a separate document. ‘[Insert Figure/Table Number]’ must be placed in the text to indicate where these features should be inserted during the typesetting process. All of these visual elements should also be titled, and these captions should appear in the separate document as well as in the text below the [Insert] box.
* All figures, tables and boxes must be supplied along with the manuscript, even if it’s a new edition.
* Boxes should be signposted in the text with ‘[start box]’ at the beginning of the box and ‘[end box]’ at the end of the box. They should not contain any additional formatting (borders, shading, object palette features, etc.). If you have different types of boxes or unique learning features, you should label these differently to help the typesetter distinguish which type of feature that text box is.
* Images and photographs must be high resolution (i.e. minimum 300 dpi)

For an example of a well-style manuscript excerpt, please look at the following few pages.

And yet, in the context of research, theory plays a vital role in assisting us to formulate our research questions, highlighting what might be pertinent aspects of the phenomena we are interested in. In our interpretation of research data, theory points us towards identifying factors or elements which are noteworthy or of significance. Theory offers us ways of using language and defining terms so that we can communicate with others holding a similar theoretical perspective. They offer us signposts or frames for reflection and critical appraisal, and importantly, may direct us towards seeking rival explanations or understandings of the meaning or relevance of what we discover. In fact, research may be driven by a wish to prove or demonstrate or refute a particular theory, or even reveal understanding that enables us to generate new theory.

Theory, put simply, is an organised set of concepts and ideas which can play a number of roles in social work and social care research, either as an ‘input’ or as an ‘output’. Grbich (1999) describes research as being either theory driven or generating (as per Glaser and Strauss 1967). See Figure 2.1.

[Insert Figure 2.1]

Figure 2.1: Theory Driven vs Generating Research

According to Grbich’s (1999) perspective, research that is driven by theory has, at its foundation, a clear theoretical framework, and a knowledge base, which shapes the view of knowledge generated, the design of the study, and the questions or hypotheses developed. So, as researchers, we can examine a problem through a particular theoretical lens. It shapes how we see, what we see and what we propose. This type of research approach is much more likely to be conducted in an academic setting.

[start box]

*Box 2.1: Title (if appropriate)*

An academic study with a theoretical framework: As an Honours student, Catherine completed a small study which was a feminist investigation of women’s addiction to benzodiazapines. This study was conducted in the 1980s - a time when thinking about addiction was developing, as was critique of dominant medical ideas. This research was in response to these debates and sought to specifically utilise a feminist theoretical framework, by examining the impact of social role expectations in benzodiazapine dependence. A feminist critique of women’s social roles formed the lens through which the problem was defined and examined.

[end box]

[start thought bubble]

If you have a topic you are considering or working on now, are you aware of any theoretical discussions/constructions of this?

[end thought bubble]

More recently a less deterministic approach to theory as an input has been described: theory-oriented research. This approach is one which begins intentionally with an overt theoretical or ideological viewpoint, but the degree to which this orientation will influence the research process varies, as you can see with the example of Alexis’ study below.

[start box]

*Box 2.2: Title (if appropriate)*

Alexis, a student researcher, was preparing for a study of women’s experiences of hospital treatment after miscarriage. In her review of previous research she found that this had typically relied on quantitative data which ‘hid’ the voices of participants. In response, she developed and utilised a feminist-informed methodology and sought to gather qualitative data solely from women about their views and experiences of their miscarriage treatment. In this case the theoretical orientation shaped the development and implementation of the study, but did not bring a theoretical analysis to the research focus or the resulting data (see McLean & Flynn, 2013).

[end box]

We would describe this as theory which provides the scaffolding for the research. To take the building analogy a step further, whilst scaffolding is not central to the building itself, it is needed to do the work, and has an impact on how the building (or in this case, the research) takes place.

Research can also be theory generating; and to a degree, all of us are engaged in this process – developing concepts for broader application. Perhaps the most influential and well known approach is ***grounded theory***, first posed by Glaser and Strauss (1967), and then taken on divergent paths by these researchers individually (and developed by scholars such as Charmaz, 2006). From this general viewpoint, the research journey begins from a point of ‘not knowing’, and endeavours to enter the field relatively clear of preconceptions or expectations; with the aim being to build theory upon fresh observations. Patton identifies the foundational question of this approach as: ‘What theory emerges from systematic comparative analysis and is grounded in fieldwork so as to explain what has been and is observed?’ (2015:109). The focus, therefore, is on constructing theory, not comparing to, or proving or disproving existing theoretical constructs. A major criticism of this type of approach suggests that without ongoing reflection, it can serve to merely reaffirm the researcher’s own biases and unacknowledged assumptions.

**Social work theory: understanding social problems**

Social work has evolved a wide range of theories, many of them borrowed from other social science disciplines because of their capacity to shed light on and to strengthen understanding and practice. For example, social constructionist theory has informed narrative interventions, while strengths based practice relies on theories of human development from biology and psychology. But social work’s foundational perspective of person-in-environment has proved vital to the profession’s development as well as useful to other disciplines. Person-in-environment draws on systems theory in order to account for the ways in which individual human lives both shape and are shaped by social phenomena and social structures. In relation to social work research, it directs our attention to research designs which incorporate multiple methods to gather data at micro, meso and macro ‘levels’.

Contemporary developments of systems theory have led to the emergence of Complexity Theory (CT) which constitutes a new way of thinking about the world, holding particular resonance for social work as well as other areas of social practice. This is evident in the work of, for example Byrne, 1998; Green & McDermott 2010; Pycroft & Bartolas 2014; McDermott 2014; Sanger & Giddings, 2012; Wolf-Branigin 2009). With regard to social work, Wolf-Branigin (2009:124) has noted: ‘…(a)pplying complexity is about developing our knowledge, skills, and ability to understand the interconnectedness and exigencies present within our clients’ systems’. Complexity Theory is particularly valued by researchers because it provides mental models and strategies for working collaboratively and purposefully across disciplinary divides, and in partnership with service users. Trans- or cross-disciplinary approaches differ from multidisciplinary perspectives in that they propose the transcending of traditional disciplinary boundaries in order to find new and innovative solutions which integrate knowledge from the social, natural and biological sciences (Choi & Pak, 2006; Leavy, 2012), as well as that contributed by service users (Abma, Nierse & Widdeershoven, 2009; Truman & Raine, 2001). As Complexity Theory is an explanatory theory, explaining the changing construction of different systems identified and studied within the natural, biological and social sciences disciplines, it is a theoretical perspective which holds promise for providing a shared theoretical basis for social science and trans-disciplinary research, with the potential to extend our understanding of the world and the way it works (Green & McDermott, 2010).

**Ontology and Epistemology**

Central to what the researcher brings to the task is a perspective on or understanding of the social world. As we noted above, social work and many other social science-based professions recognise that human life is embedded in and shaped by what we might think of as many ‘spheres’ of reality, impacting at the micro, meso and macro ‘levels’. The undoubted complexity of the interactions of these human, social and natural ecological systems, co-evolving and adapting whilst simultaneously creating that context, challenges any researcher who ‘dares’ to study it! Sometimes we know about these impacts, and sometimes we are unaware of them, but whether or not we are aware of them they are influencing all aspects of our lives, and in turn we are influencing them whether or not we are aware of so doing.

So, we can start by asserting that as researchers we are aware that we are working in a complex, multidimensional and always-interacting world. But in order to study this world and the people in it, we need to decide exactly *what* it is we are studying, and from this basis *how* we propose to research it. This takes us on a brief excursion into ontology and epistemology, which we introduced in Chapter 1.

***Ontology*** is the science of being, that is, the study of what it means to *be.* In the social sciences in particular, researchers are for the most part studying humans as social beings, asking all kinds of questions about the nature of human experience and the ways in which social reality influences, changes and mediates human life and behaviour. Starting out to do research provides a somewhat rare opportunity to think about what we consider characterises ‘human being’. One way to tease out our own understanding of this fundamental question is to pose it. You might want to take a bit of time now to brainstorm a response to this question

[start thought bubble]

What do you think are the defining characteristics of human beings?’ or

What do you think it is to be human?

[end thought bubble]