

Transforming Research Methods in Health Services Psychology:
Applications for the Advocate ~ Practitioner ~ Scientist

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BOOK COVER

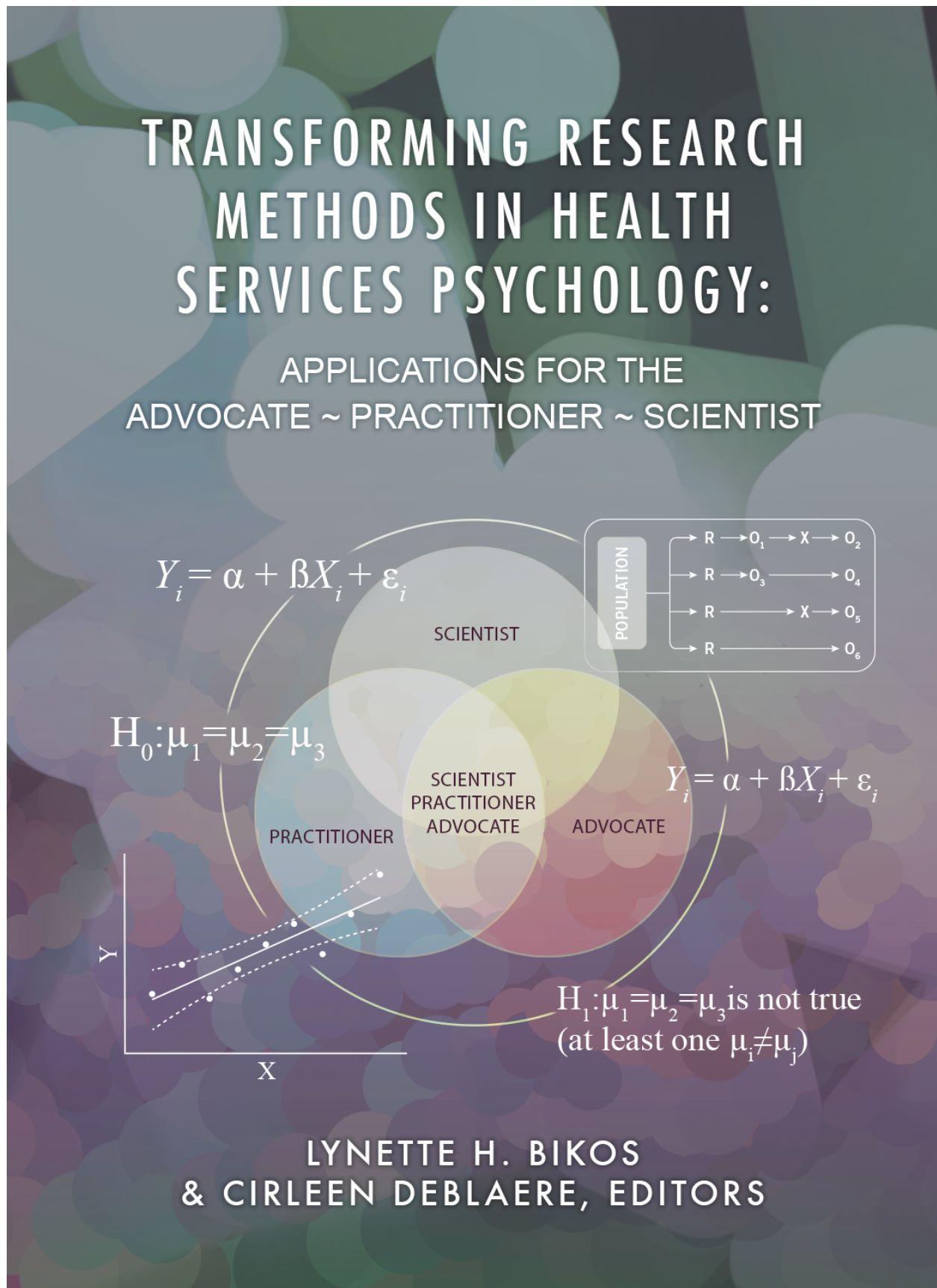


Figure 1: An image of the book cover. Description to follow

WRITING EMPIRICAL MANUSCRIPTS

Chapter 1

The APA Style Manuscript

[Screencasted Lecture Link](#)

This lesson focuses on APA style. While a significant portion of the material focuses on the mechanics of APA style, I also consider:

- APA style as epistemology – and its relationship with power, privilege, and racism.
- JARS: Journal Article Reporting Standards
- Section by section
- Consideration of writing as a developmental process that occurs throughout grad school and into the profession
- Stylistic issues
- Hallmarks of APA style
- Reducing bias

1.1 Navigating this Lesson

There is about 1 hour and 45 minutes of lecture.

The R markdown file used to create this lecture as well as all of the figures are available at the [OER's GitHub site](#).

1.1.1 Learning Objectives

Learning objectives from this lecture include the following:

- Identify the cultural characteristics of APA style.
- Identify two ways that Thompson (2004) has suggested that APA style perpetuates Whiteness and patriarchy in the academy.
- List the components of an abstract.
- Describe why JARS matters.
- Begin memorizing the minutia of APA Style for writing empirical manuscripts/journal articles (no particular order).

1.1.2 Readings & Resources

In preparing this chapter, I drew heavily from the following resource(s). Other resources are cited (when possible, linked) in the text with complete citations in the reference list.

- American Psychological Association. (2020). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association: The official guide to APA style. (Seventh edition.)*. American Psychological Association.
 - I’m guessing you’ll use this more days than not, for the rest of your education.
- Tran, A. G. T. T., & Lee, R. M. (2014). You speak English well! Asian Americans’ reactions to an exceptionalizing stereotype. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 61(3), 484–490. <https://doi.org/10.1037/cou0000034>
 - I use this article in several analyses in the ANOVA series as well as in this lesson when I compare/contrast it to the requirements of APA Style. This article was pubbed in 2014; but I will compare it to the 7th edition (2019) standards.
- Cooper, H. (2020). *Reporting quantitative research in psychology: How to meet APA style journal article reporting standards (Second edition, revised.)*. American Psychological Association. <https://alliance-primo.hosted.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/f/rpqmv/CP71332049420001451>
 - The e-text version of this may be available at your library. This resource offers section-by-section instruction of the reporting standards and provides numerous examples of writing APA empirical manuscripts.
- Madigan, R., Johnson, S., & Linton, P. (1995). The language of psychology: APA style as epistemology. *American Psychologist*, 50(6), 428–436. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.50.6.428>
 - Madigan et al. (1995) argued that as we learn APA style we are inculcating the professional values of our discipline (and we do this without awareness).
- Thompson, A. (2004). Gentlemanly Orthodoxy: Critical Race Feminism, Whiteness Theory, and the APA Manual. *Educational Theory*, 54(1), 27–57. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.0013-2004.2004.00002.x>
- Critiquing the 5th edition of the style manual (we’re now on the 7th) Thompson (2004) pointed out how aspects of APA style contribute to preserving Whiteness.
- Appelbaum, M., Cooper, H., Kline, R. B., Mayo-Wilson, E., Nezu, A. M., & Rao, S. M. (2018). Journal article reporting standards for quantitative research in psychology: The APA Publications and Communications Board task force report. *American Psychologist*, 73(1), 3–25. <https://doi.org/10.1037/amp0000191>
 - Yet another copy of the most current JARS. You can also find them in the style manual and on their own website: <https://apastyle.apa.org/jars/glossary>
- *White Supremacy Culture*. (n.d.). DRworksBook. Retrieved August 8, 2020, from <https://www.dismantlingracism.org/white-supremacy-culture.html>
 - Identifies characteristics of White Supremacy Culture in organizations (often used to describe academia).

1.2 APA Style as Epistemology (or Worse)

A 1995 article (?) in the *American Psychologist* compared APA style to that of other disciplines (history, literary criticism) and argued that APA Style is its own writing genre characterized by (among other things):

- A story schema: introduction, method, results, discussion – Seems so linear; but this is rarely the case (research is messy)
- A depersonalized language of disagreement that focuses on the empirical process and away from investigators as individuals (e.g., “The primary criticism is that the threshold-setting procedures used in previous experiments are not adequate to ensure that...”). The goal is a collaborative, cumulative endeavor based on research data.
- Hedged conclusions: balancing a need to have substantive conclusions that do not extend beyond the data. We use the words, “tend,” “suggest,” and “may.” See Table 1.
- A system of headings/subheadings (rather than narrative transitions)
- Paraphrasing rather than directly quoting other works. – Giving authors more flexibility in representing others’ perspectives.
- Multiple authors (perhaps contributing to “more subdued prose”).
- Heavy use of citations introduction and discussion so that the research is placed within an ongoing stream of empirical studies.
- Language that “does not call attention to itself.” It can be described as: self-effacing and low-profile.

The style manual has grown from its 7-page writers guide in the *Psychological Bulletin* (1929) to 427 in the 7th edition (2019), today. Madigan et al. (?) suggests that the process of mastering APA style, one is enculturated into psychology. That is, we learn APA style – we inculcate empiricist values (i.e., “unarticulated practices that reflect fundamental attitudes and values of psychologists” (p. 428). As such, APA style is epistemological.

Nearly a decade later, Thompson (?) examined APA style through the lens of critical race feminism and Whiteness Theory. Thompson argued that the expectations regarding clarity precision, appropriateness, sensitivity, and objectivity likely contribute to the academy’s investments in Whiteness and patriarchy. While her focus was on APA Style, she suspected that her critique would generalize to other style guides (e.g., Chicago, MLA).

Thompson’s (?) article focused around the gender/sexuality and race values codified by the APA manual (at the time of her article it was the 5th edition). She conducted an analysis of its *power and property investments* and organized her arguments in five themes:

Property Rights: PWIs have treated refereed scholarship (but not indigenous or community knowledge) as intellectual property, demarcated with a certain class. That is, individuals “own knowledge.” Evidence includes:

- Using last names as a shorthand reference for work (e.g., “Dik & Duffy’s 2012 CVQ”).
- Tendency to cite own work rather than say, “When I previously said...”
- The style manual indicates that principal authorship and order of authorship credit should reflect the relative contributions of persons involved (7th ed, APA 1.22) and that relative status should not determine authorship order. Thompson argued that power dynamics (especially around race and gender) likely interfere with this principle.

- The 7th edition has reduced citations of articles with three and more articles to “First author et al., YEAR” for all citations.
- Regarding, ownership of knowledge – does it belong to the researcher or the community from which it came? Community knowledge can be studied but not cited. And what about institutions. What if knowledge came from the Black Church? How does one cite that?

Precedent and pedigree: In the social sciences, we are expected to cite and give credit to relevant earlier works. Knowledge is seen as cumulative. Citations are essential.

- No “unhedged statement” (p. 45) is made without a citation; and in introductory sections, citations are often included with claims that seem obvious! This establishes the requisite lineage.
- Self-citations, expected citations (of the gurus), citations of colleagues exist IN TENSION with a citation economy (page limits, afterall).
- The requirement that scholars locate their project in the context of the existing peer-reviewed literature serves to keep out ideas/projects that would be challenging to the existing power structure.

Proceduralism: APA authors learn to address an audience unmarked (as if they were white, male, heterosexual) by gender or race as a “sign of professionalism” (p. 48).

- Standardized Format: a four section structure: Introduction, Method, Results Discussion; it could be that the experiences of marginalized and oppressed groups cannot be captured by this scientific narrative structure.
- Standardized Style: prizing scientific appearance and elegance. Thompson (2004) follows the guidelines regarding the use of the “slash” (/) and how it is impossible to standardize to the degree that it works for all groups.
 - The “First author et al., (year)” citation contributes to both gender- and color-blindness. ON the one hand is it “fair.” On the other hand, it obscures the person of the author.
 - APA’s prohibition against footnotes minimizes “the good stuff” (the most juicy arguments are always in the footnotes).

Protocol: Propriety or protocol represents conduct that signifies one’s understanding of prevailing relations of power, authority and legitimacy.

- The style manual (7th ed, Chapter 5, e.g., 5.2) acknowledges the importance of sensitivity and the avoidance of pejoratives to reference groups of people. Thompson indicates that this is “admirable” it fails to address unequal power relations. Further, distinctions between what is insensitive and pejorative may be invisible to those in positions of privilege.

The gentleman’s agreement: APA style is characterized “language that conveys professionalism and formality” (7th ed, 4.7, 4.8) and “differences should be presented in a professional and noncombative manner” (7th ed, 4.7).

- Thompson (?) is concerned that while this is offered with the hope of pluralism and the creation of safe spaces, it causes controversies to be ignored or dismissed and may bolster complicity in racism.

1.3 As We Dive into the Specifics

Please keep the perspectives of these authors in mind.

Let's also look at the characteristics of White Supremacy Culture in organizations (?). As we tour through the components of APA style, what resonates with this list? Refer to the .pdf handout or website for more definitions, descriptions, examples, and antidotes.

- Perfectionism
 - Perfectionistic culture
 - Worship of the written word
 - Only one right way
 - Either/or thinking
- Concentration of power
 - Power hoarding
- Paternalism
 - Defensiveness
- Right to comfort
 - Fear of open conflict
- Individualism
 - I'm the only one
- Progress is more/bigger
 - Objectivity
 - Quantity over quality
 - Sense of urgency

1.4 The JARS: The Core of APA Style

The JARS [Journal Article Reporting Standards; ?] were first introduced in a 2008 feature in the *American Psychologist* (?) and were included in the 6th edition of the style manual. The updated JARS, published in 2018, expanded the types of quantitative research (JARS-Quant) and included standards for reporting qualitative (JARS-Qual) and mixed methods (JARS-Mixed). Chapter 3 of the 7th edition is devoted to JARS. It contains numerous tables, definitions/explanations, and a flowchart.

The JARS are an attempt to represent what is common across approaches. There is a recognition that specialties/sub-specialties use different terminology. The terms, therefore, should be treated as placeholders and be updated to reflect the various research traditions.

In each of the sections below, I list both the APA style recommendations and JARS elements – which are somewhat annoyingly separate, adjacent, and overlapping.

In the next section I used text-citations to also refer to the section numbers of the 7th edition of the APA style manual. Additionally, because this OER is publicly available (i.e., not just used in my classroom), I have not copied the JARS elements into this document. They are freely available [here](#)

1.4.1 Title, Authorship, Author Note (APA 2.3)

QUIZLET: A manuscript title should

- a. Use abbreviations whenever possible
- b. Contain at least 30 words
- c. Be fully explanatory when standing alone
- d. Begin with the words, A Study of

The title page of a manuscript includes the

- a. Author's name
- b. Author's institutional affiliation'
- c. Running head
- d. Short title
- e. All of the above

1.4.1.1 Title (APA 2.4)

- Concise statement of main topic of the research,
- Identify the variables or theoretical issues under investigation (and the relationship between t Addhem),
- Focused and succinct (no prescribed word or character limit per the style manual; but a journal might have one).
- Avoid empty words/phrases like “A study of,” “An investigation of”

The lecture further reviews JARS elements.

1.4.1.2 Authorship/Byline (APA 2.5) & Affiliation (APA 2.6)

- Primary contributors;
- Institutional affiliation AT THE TIME of the study, no more than 2 institutional affiliations (and they both need to have contributed equally)
- Very specific style guidelines (with superscript notations) for connecting authors and their affiliations
- In the order of contribution – lots of ethical, practical, and sensitive considerations about who gets to be an author and in what order.

Sticky Issues about Authorship

- Faculty as first authors
- Ongoing projects with years of investment sponsored by faculty
- Who gets “the call”?
- Order between equal contributors (e.g., Singer & Willett)
- In equal contributions it’s ok (not ideal) to mention in the author note
- GOAL: name on a project, less concerned about author order
- Generally, graduate projects include the faculty sponsor as an author (last at SPFC conference; likely elsewhere at professional conferences or publication)
- Author-order rubrics can be useful to guide the decision

1.4.1.3 Author Note (APA 2.7)

Place the author note at the bottom half of title page. There are more specific instructions in style manual. Generally author note has four paragraphs:

- ORCID iDs <https://orcid.org>
- Changes in affiliation subsequent to the time of the study, “[Author’s name] is now at [new affiliation].” Can also be used if an author is deceased.
- Disclosures and acknowledgements (i.e., study registration, open practices and data sharing, related reports, conflicts of interest, financial or other assistance).
- Contact information for corresponding author. Requires full name, complete mailing address, and e-mail. Prescribed format: Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to [author’s name], [complete mailing address]. Email: author@institution.edu

The lecture further reviews JARS elements.

1.4.1.4 Running Head (APA 2.8)

- Abbreviated title printed at the top of the pages of a ms or pubbed article to identify it for the readers
- Max of 50 characters (counting letters, punctuation, spaces between words). If the title is already 50 characters or fewer, the full title can be used. Avoid abbreviations in the running head, although the ampersand can be swapped (& for “and”).
- Appears flush left in all uppercase letters at the top of the title and subsequent pages

1.4.1.5 Manuscript Page Headers/Page Numbers (APA 8.03)

- Number consecutively, beginning with the title
- Identify each page with the running head along with the page number
- To facilitate a blinded review, do not include your name in these
- Use the automatic functions of the word-processor to generate page headers and page numbers

1.4.2 Abstract (APA 2.8, 3.3)

QUIZLET: An abstract should

- a. Appear on the same page above the title and introduction
- b. Be single-spaced and set with larger margins
- c. Begin on page 2
- d. Be no longer than 3% of the text

Abstract lengths vary from journal to journal; the typical range is from ____ to ____ words.

For real...a good abstract is:

- Concise and specific
- Nonevaluative
- Coherent and readable
- Loaded with keywords
- May be a single paragraph (no indentation of first line) or structured (still no indentation, but labels inserted for the prescribed sections).

1.4.2.1 Recipe for an Abstract

- Identify the problem under investigation (1 sentence)
- Identify the participants and salient characteristics
- Identify the experimental method, including the apparatus, data gathering procedures, complete test names, etc.
- Identify findings (including statistical significance levels)
- Identify conclusions and implications/applications.
- Avoid *boilerplate* sentences. – At the end of an abstract, I often read, “Findings and implications will be discussed.” This is boilerplate because “everyone says it.” It’s also empty and a waste of words because it tells us NOTHING about the study.
- The style manual includes outlines for a variety of types of manuscripts.

The lecture further reviews JARS elements.

1.4.2.2 Keywords

Keywords include single words, phrases, or acronyms that describe the most important aspects of the paper. The purpose is indexing in databases (it’s what we search on in database like PsychInfo).

1.4.3 Introduction (APA 2.11)

QUIZLET: The introduction section of a research report should:

- a. Include a thorough historical review of the literature
- b. Define all of the terms that would be unintelligible to a reader with no previous exposure to the field
- c. Present the specific problem to be explored and described in the research strategy
- d. Be clearly labeled.

What question should the introduction section of a research report attempt to answer? a. What are the theoretical implications of the current research? b. What is the point of the study? c. What is the logical link between the problem and the research strategy? d. All of the above are correct. e. Only a and c of the above are correct.

Before you write, consider this:

- Why is this problem important?
- How does this study link to previous work?
- What are the primary/secondary hypotheses/objectives? What are their links to theory?
- How do the hypotheses and research design relate to each other?
- What are the theoretical and practical implications?

Three parts to the Introduction

- Brief introduction, 1-2 paragraphs
- Review of relevant scholarship, 1-2 pages
- Purpose, rationale, hypotheses, 1-2 paragraphs at the section's close.

1.4.3.1 The Brief Introduction

A good introduction paragraph answers the following questions in 1-2 paragraphs

- What is the point of the study?
- How do the hypothesis and experimental design relate to the problem?
- What are the theoretical implications of the study and how does the study relate to previous work in the area?
- What are the theoretical propositions tested and how were they derived?

In the middle...above ALL

- Demonstrate that the problem is IMPORTANT
- Narrative thread.
- Always refer to the THEORETICAL BACKGROUND
- Narrative thread.
- Closing paragraph a statement of purpose and rationale of project.
- Narrative thread.

The closing paragraph(s) of the Introduction

- What variables did I plan to manipulate?
- What results did I expect and why did I expect them? (the logic of this should also be made clear)
- What is my rationale for each hypothesis?

The lecture further reviews JARS elements.