David Scott & Robin Usher. (1999). *Researching Education: Data, Methods and Theory in Educational Enquiry.* New York, NY: Cassell & Continuum. Pages: 192. Price: $74.50 US (hardcover); $28.00 US (paperback).

Reviewed by Zana Marie Lutfiyya, Faculty of Education, The University of Manitoba.

Those of us who teach educational research courses face a number of dilemmas. Given the constraints of a typical three credit hour course, do we focus on the "doing" of research (e.g., methods and procedures) or do we push for an understanding of research *qua* research, that is, the attendant philosophical assumptions and issues that exist within every any research paradigm? We face a similar dilemma when we ourselves engage in research. We work hard to complete a project in order to both proceed to the next study as well as to make a contribution to our field. I suspect that many of us end up emphasizing research methods and procedures over assumptions (epistemological and ontological) in both our teaching of research as well as in our practice of it. We have any number of utilitarian demands to appease, whether it be getting student ready to do their thesis or completing a publishable piece ourselves. In addition, education, unlike certain other fields, doesn't have or is detached from a conscious connection to an overarching theoretical framework. Praxis dominates in a professional school, even while we profess to believe (and teach) that it is possible and desirable "to develop theory about education which is superior to practical knowledge" (Scott & Usher, p. 2) and, in fact, drive it.

It is this central notion that Scott and Usher contest in their book. In addition to making the belief about theory driving educational practice problematic, they question other commonly held beliefs about educational research, including the idea that nomothetic statements about all facets of education are possible, that educational disputes can be answered via empirical enquiry and that there is a correct way to collect and analyze educational data in order to make appropriate conclusions. Finally, they question the belief that the values, frameworks and so on of the researcher are irrelevant to the design of the study and are largely undiscussed in

research reports. By examining a number of paradigms used in educational research (e.g., positivist/empiricist, interpretivism, critical theory, and post modernism) as well as four commonly used research strategies (i.e., induction, deduction, retroduction and abduction), they contend that the epistemological and ontological relations inherent in all research activity is hidden and therefore never considered. Whatever the paradigm used, virtually all educational research cannot be evaluated properly by the reader as the complete text is simply not present.

Scott and Usher press on with their thesis,

> What this implies is that power is central to the research act and we simply cannot dismiss it from our epistemological endeavours, but must try to understand its effects. This involves a reflexive understanding of the way in which we are positioned as knowers, and it suggests that the scientific paradigm of a singular, convergent and fragmentable reality which can be known by researchers who act independently from the subjects of their research and who produce generalizations and nomothetic statements is not sustainable. (p. 2)

The authors' contention is that in education, the practice of research is (as they refer to it) both untheorized and what theory is present is hidden. Readers are unable to assess both the relevance and worth of the research. The authors suggest that these philosophical positions, which give rise to particular methodologies, must be fully explicated by the researchers and understood by the reader. More on this process later.

In the first part of the book, Scott and Usher delineate the philosophical contexts of educational research by challenging the notion of research as a technology vs. a socially constructed and interpreted practice. The provide the key philosophical assumptions of the research paradigms and strategies listed above, along with a critique of each. In the second section of the book, the authors describe research methods used by educational researchers. These connect clearly to the philosophical orientation in part one and include the experimental method, survey and correlational designs, qualitative research design and methods, including case study, interviews as well as theory building and the (auto)biographical method. The authors attempt to clarify the inherent assumptions within each

methodology (providing an insider's perspective, if you will), along with an analysis that "surfaces" or makes conscious the problems of the approach from an "outsider's" point of view. They continue this careful description and deconstruction of several issues in educational research, including the current bureaucratic response to ethical considerations in research, evaluation and arriving at criteria for judging the quality of a piece of research.

In their final brief chapter, Scott and Usher present their alternative to minimize the problems inherent in educational research, an approach they call "transgressive research." This is built upon Lather's (1994) concept of transgressive validity. They argue that researchers need to make problematic our representation of the world that we provide through our research efforts. This allows us to "...be reflexive about the practices of representation within which we are located..." (p. 22). This reflexivity cannot be purchased via a better research methodology but through making ourselves conscious about "...what *frames* our way of seeing when we do research..." (italics in original, p. 22). Scott and Usher call this the position from which we are *"incited to see"* (italics in original, p. 22). For the authors, establishing knowledge or truth through research always involves a power struggle, and one in which the researcher is enmeshed in a research/knowledge economy, rather than playing the role of a free-standing, rational, objective individual — a common rhetoric.

By highlighting our frames as much as our findings, we allow ourselves and others to read the research text at several levels. Lather (1994) uses the phrase that transgressive validity is a *"counter-practice of authority"* (italics in original p. 157). As Scott and Usher conclude, "...a transgressive perspective on validity is not concerned with how research methodologies work, but with how often they *fail* to work."

The authors provide a helpful example to make their case. They point to the way the context of research has changed. Research is now a commodity that is bought and sold. In order to improve our research efforts, we have tied ourselves to a variety of technologies which supposedly enhance our ability to "see" (i.e., collect and analyze our data) and thereby enhance the validity of our observations. The reliance on technol-

ogy means a dependence on funding and the existing economic order. The creation of knowledge now depends on cultural attitudes for legitimacy vs. epistemologically defined methods and rules. If the research satisfies the customer, then it "works." They contrast this current state of affairs with how researchers have been traditionally taught to practice research. Many of us were trained through a lengthy apprenticeship. Research was theory and fieldwork oriented and we were socialized into a recognized research paradigm. The researcher maintained a preeminent role in the production of knowledge. Scott and Usher suggest that the commodification of research has been accompanied by increasing rationalization of the doing of research, characterized by shorter projects, abridged methods and strong political pressures. To manage this "short cut" approach to research, we use "...legitimizing citations of the methodological masters but not the realization of the implied practices" (p. 158). As the traditional grounding in an apprenticeship model disappears, the conduct of research is speeded up and further fragmented.

They suggest that one response to this situation is to invite a greater negotiation or discussion between the researchers and the researched. The "subjects" under study attain greater power in developing and questioning the research questions, methods and interpretations of the researchers. This involvement will make visible the frames or perspectives of the researchers and of the research text. Scott and Usher conclude by again referring to Lather (1994) and stating that "...a resistant practice of research needs to be located in the local and the specific, where interventions are defined situationally and participatorily" (p. 160).

For me, the authors' conclusions remain unsatisfactory. Certainly highlighting the political and powerful nature of conducting research and knowledge construction is a useful process. Insisting that researchers employ a greater flexibility in our work contributes to this openness. Involving at least some research "subjects" as more effective participants in the research process in one way to encourage the practice of reflexivity. But I also found myself wondering if all of this simply moves power and control from one group to another, and a group with an even less obvious frame or focus to which to refer. The way seems open for an even greater commodification of the research process and

the construction of knowledge. Every group will simply manufacture their own. While some postmodernists will insist that this is exactly the point, the opportunity for a sustained and engaging discourse among more individuals may be lost.

Sandra Jackson & Jose Solis Jordan (Eds). (1999). *I've Got a Story to Tell: Identity and Place in the Academy*. New York, NY: Peter Lang Publishing, Inc. Pages: 167. Price: $32.95 US (softcover).

Reviewed by Annabelle Mays, Education and of Developmental Studies, University of Winnipeg.

I've Got a Story to Tell: Identity and Place in the Academy had its origins in "exchanges and dialogues about the experiences of faculty of colour in higher education..." (p. v). Each of the thirteen narratives recounts, from the perspective of a faculty member:

> ...what it means to be a professor within the contested terrain of higher education, to break silences, and to speak the unspeakable: the subjectivities of women and men of colour as educators contending with issues of race, gender, and class in their personal and pedagogical practices. (p. 1)

As the editors note, it is the intent of these stories to present varied experiences in American higher education institutions of faculty from widely differing ethnic and cultural backgrounds and to encourage the reader to reflect upon "what it means to be, to struggle, to transform self and others in the practice of freedom in teaching and learning in higher education" (p. 7). With its focus upon the experiences of faculty of colour who teach in what continue to be predominantly white institutions of higher learning, the volume contributes to furthering the understanding of the lives of faculty members who do not reside at the centre, who constitute the other. Extending the discourse begun several decades ago with the role of women in the academy.