Gesa Kirsch and Patricia Sullivan's *Methods and Methodology in Composition Research* is a sophisticated, up-to-date collection of essays by researchers and scholars of various stripes who engage in considerable reflection/reflexivity in discussing the research methods they know best. Because it is an edited collection rather than a single- or coauthored work (as was the case with Stephen North's *The Making of Knowledge in Composition*, or Janice Lauer and William Asher's *Composition Research: Empirical Designs*), the reader is afforded multiple perspectives on composition research. The result is a rich, synoptic view of the field of rhetoric and composition that brings together diverse perspectives from researchers who are both seasoned veterans and promising newcomers.

The editors have made excellent choices of "exemplars" of particular approaches, among them Beverly Moss (ethnography), Tom Newkirk (case study), Susan Miller (hermeneutical scholarship), Tom Huckin (discourse analysis), Richard Beach (experimental/descriptive research), and Robert Connors (historical study). Other researchers provide literature reviews of discipline-based approaches, such as Karen Shriver's discussion of the expanding cognitivist perspective which has undergone considerable change in the last decade, and Peter Mortensen's examination of the research traditions and theoretical perspectives related to recent studies of writing in classroom conference settings. A third group of researchers, rather than describing and reflecting upon specific research procedures, address broader political questions related to composition research and scholarship. Ruth Ray's essay on teacher-based research, and Patricia Sullivan's reflections on her participation in feminist reexaminations of received knowledge and texts, are two examples of "movement-based" discussions which interrogate the methodological status quo. The above essays constitute the first ten chapters of the book.

The final four chapters of the book have been assembled under the rubric of "Research Problems and Issues." These essays present four very diverse discussions of methodological issues related to different research traditions, from Keith Grant-Davie's highly focused examination of the complexities of coding data in empirical research (specifically, protocol analysis) to Gesa Kirsch's thoughtful analysis of the post-positivist, naturalistic assumptions that underlie much recent qualitative research. Also included in this section is Duane Roen and Robert Mittan's use of key concepts from the writings of Vygotsky and Bakhtin to frame a discussion of the strengths and limitations of collaborative research and writing. Lisa Ede's brief memoir of her development as a scholar in the context of a critical examination of key works
The editors apparently asked their contributors to write personal, anecdotal essays and reflections rather than traditional scholarly literature reviews. The result is that the strength of many of the essays in this collection lies in their informality. Donald Graves' catch phrase "warts and all," which he used to characterize his approach to naturalistic research and his nonacademic writing style, came to mind as I read many of these essays.

Although the collection is a bit uneven in the quality of its offerings, readers both old and new to the field will find much useful material. For this reason alone, I would recommend *Methods and Methodology* to a colleague interested in an up-to-date collection of essays that articulate critical questions related to the conduct of inquiry in composition studies. But beyond its breadth of perspective, Kirsch and Sullivan's collection has a special attraction for me. At the heart of the collection (for me, at least) is the vexing question, "What constitutes inquiry in a human science such as composition studies, institutionalized as it is in academic culture?" Ede argues, following Louise Phelps, that a more fitting *teleos* than the production of knowledge is *phronesis*, or practical wisdom, or that which emerges from "engaged and committed activity." Ruth Ray strikes the same chord in her essay on teacher research when she argues that "teacher researchers assert that much university-based research results in counterintuitive findings that are inappropriately applied to the classroom." This is a compelling argument, one that I have heard from a number of graduate students who were formerly public school teachers.

For many academics who teach undergraduate writing courses, part of the process of professionalism has involved becoming socialized into the role of producer of knowledge. In rhetoric and composition, as in most academic disciplines, this means becoming familiar with the issues in the field (and the history of those issues) and the questions/problems that are foregrounded in the discipline's various forums—in short, becoming acquainted with the current *topoi* of the discipline. Similarly, our professional forums such as *CCC* have changed, as well, as a result of the recent professionalization of the field. Authors' local narratives of what happened in their classrooms have been replaced by other genres: the research-based essay, the theory-laden interrogation of some current practice or perspective, the reflective and heavily-referenced "personal essay" by a well-known figure in the field. Thus, the institutionalization of composition studies as an academic discipline has brought with it the typified communicative forms, the use of which signifies membership in the broader academic tribe. Ironically, as the field has come of age, the first-person accounts representing local knowledge have been replaced by that which is non-local: the heavily intertextual genres that are the *sine qua non* of a knowledge-producing enterprise.

What I'm suggesting is that the question of "what kinds of inquiry count" is not an abstract one; to the contrary, "what counts" is directly tied to our
brief history as an academic field, as are questions about “what counts as evidence” and “what counts as warrants for the claims we make.” These questions also index complex socioeconomic and historical factors which function to problematize the calls for methodological pluralism made by Kirsch and Shriver in this collection.

Despite the above caveat, the strength of Methods and Methodology lies in the intense scrutiny of various methodologies that constitute the field of composition studies. The many readers that this collection of essays will attract should therefore appreciate the facility with which the editors balance the multiple perspectives and contradictory orientations of its contributors. We may not be one big happy family, but we are a reflective and articulate one.


Reviewed by Joel Nydahl, Babson College

This well-written, provocative book is required reading for anyone interested in the role of computers in education. Tuman’s thesis is not a new one: the computer, like the printing press, is redefining literacy—in disturbing ways—by altering how we read, write, and think. But while the focus of Word Perfect is on the effect of the computer in teaching the language arts, Tuman has a larger agenda. Ultimately, he is concerned that the computer will sculpt a “new cultural landscape” that will “affect all of us, professors and students alike.” He argues that we can and must have a say in shaping the contours of that landscape.

Tuman believes that we pose the wrong question when we ask, “Will computers make us more or less literate?” What we should ask is, “What will it mean to be literate in a computerized, post-industrial age in which hypertextual and online reading and writing prevail?” In pointing out that what it means to be literate has always evolved and has always been determined by cultural (mostly economic) forces, Tuman demystifies the apparent naturalness of our commitment to certain educational values and pedagogy. “The truly important changes in pedagogy and other patterns of cultural reproduction,” he argues, always have been “in accord with underlying, more basic changes in economic production.” During the previous industrial age, for example, what it meant to be literate was determined by the forces and values of industrialism and economic expansion. At a time when capitalism, the production of goods, and territorial aggrandizement drove the economy, literate citizens needed to master “critical and aesthetic reading and writing.”

Tuman believes that we are once again at a point in history when economic, social, and educational influences are redefining literacy. To be