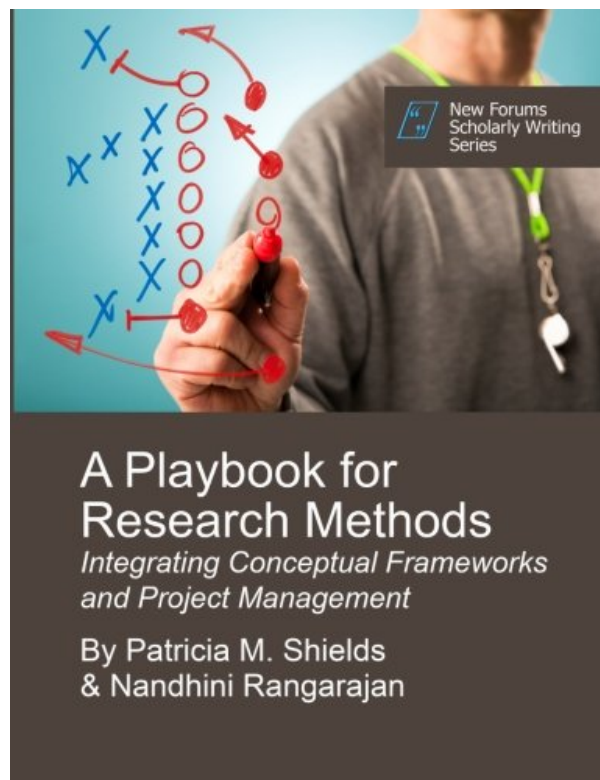
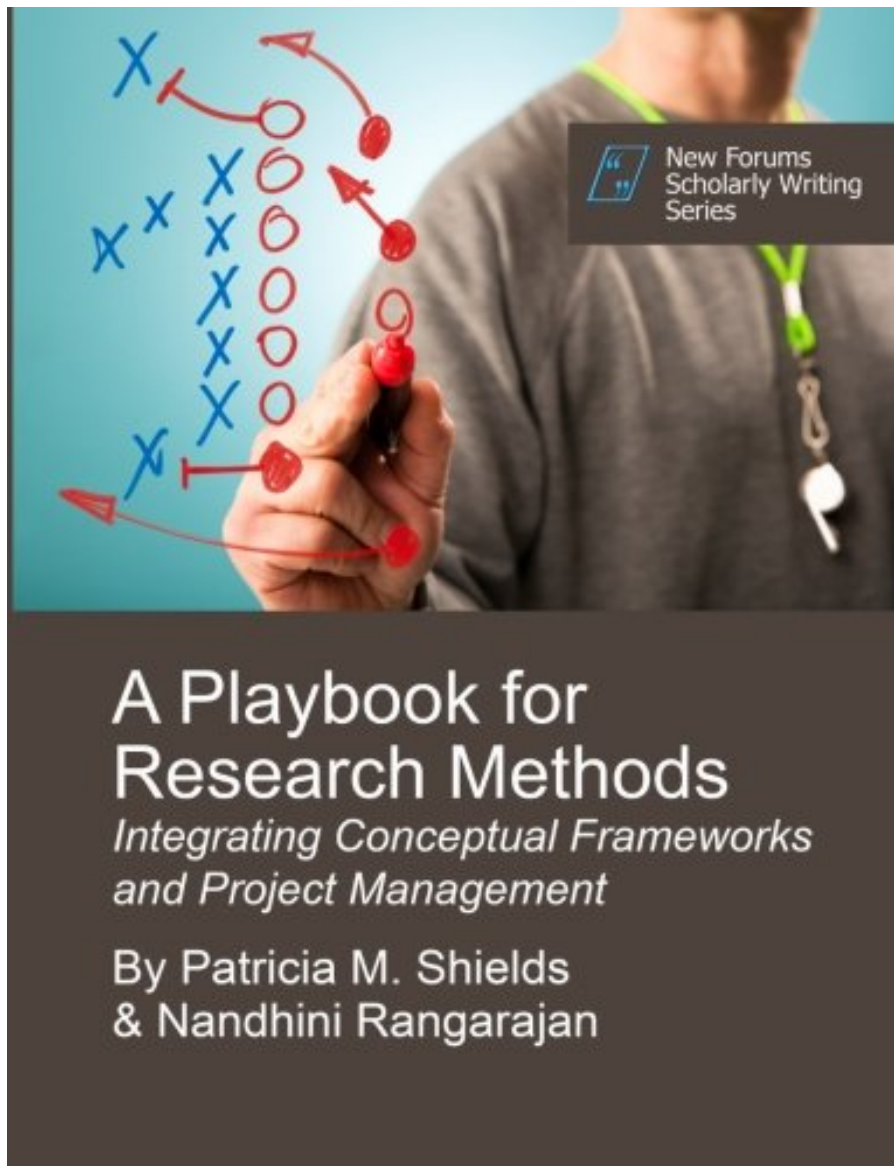


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About the Author

Patricia M. Shields is a Professor of Political Science at Texas State University and the Director of the Master of Public Administration Program. She has edited the journal *Armed Forces & Society* since 2001. She has won numerous teaching awards for her work supervising student research. Her research interests include pragmatism and public administration, teaching research methods, women in public administration, and civil military relations. She is the author of *Step-by-Step: Building a Research Project* and has published over 60 articles and book chapters in *Public Administration Review*, *Administration & Society*, *American Review of Public Administration*, *Armed Forces & Society*, *Journal of Public Affairs Education*, *Society*, *Journal of Graduate Teaching Assistant Development*, *Administrative Theory and Praxis*, *Public Administration Quarterly* among others. Nandhini Rangarajan is an Associate Professor of Political Science at Texas State University. She earned a Ph.D. in Public Administration from the Rockefeller College of Public Affairs and Policy, State University of New York at Albany. Her research interests are in creativity and innovation, public management, human resources and organizational behavior. Her articles have appeared in prominent public administration journals such as the *Review of Public Personnel Administration*, *Public Productivity and Management Review* and the *Journal of Public Affairs Education*. Her chapters have been published in recent books such as *The State of Public Administration and Local Economic Development and the Environment: Finding Common Ground*.

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Inspired by student athletes, this Playbook for Research Methods uses football as a metaphor to examine aspects of empirical research often overlooked in typical research methods texts. Writing a large research paper often overwhelms students. This book introduces basic project management tools to the process of writing a paper. The components of a paper are broken into smaller parts (much like lifting weights and drills for a football player). In this way, students can build skills central to scholarly research. The role of theory is another source of confusion. By using the analogy of a football “play” this book introduces four conceptual frameworks (a kind of close to the data intermediate theory) that brings coherence to all aspects of the research process. But empirical inquiry is not like playing football it is also like coaching football and inventing plays. Scholars should see themselves like football coaches who develop or find these frameworks (plays) as they work through the literature and define their research question. This “student-focused” book uses three examples from award winning student papers to illustrate each of the frameworks. The student’s story begins with finding a topic and then moves to recognizing critical literature, refining the purpose, developing and operationalizing a conceptual framework, choosing a method, analyzing data and presenting findings.

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