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CHAPTER 2

COMMUNICATION RESEARCH AND INQUIRY

MULTIPLE CHOICE

1. _____ is the idea that good science produces more questions than it answers.
a) Knowledge is power
b) Good theory is good science
c) The specification of ignorance *
d) The unknown known
e) McLuhan's Quandary

Answer: C
Bloom's: Remembering
A-head: Theory and Scientific Inquiry

2. Because a theory is not a fact, we can best judge its worth by assessing its _____.
a) support among those in the discipline
b) reputation of its most ardent supporters
c) parsimony
d) presence in the general culture
e) usefulness *

Answer: E
Bloom's: Understanding
A-head: Theory and Scientific Inquiry

3. When you view theory as a means of shaping scholars' perception by focusing attention on some specific feature of communication, you are applying the _____ metaphor for theory.
a) net
b) lenses *
c) map
d) spotlight
e) fly paper

Answer: B
Bloom's: Analyzing
A-head: Theory and Scientific Inquiry

4. The fact that theories are developed by people who have biases, interests, skills, and values means that they are_____.
a) dynamic

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b) human constructions *
c) abstractions
d) often rejected and replaced
e) here today and often gone tomorrow

Answer: B
Bloom's: Understanding
A-head: Theory and Scientific Inquiry

5. The fact that theories are always changing to meet not only the scientific advances of those who employ them, but to meet changing times and social conditions, means that they are _____.
a) dynamic *
b) human constructions
c) abstractions
d) often rejected and replaced
e) here today and often gone tomorrow

Answer: A
Bloom's: Understanding
A-head: Theory and Scientific Inquiry

6. The fact that theories reduce the topics under investigation to categories, variables, propositions, and assumptions means they are _____.
a) dynamic
b) human constructions
c) abstractions *
d) often rejected and replaced
e) here today and often gone tomorrow

Answer: C
Bloom's: Understanding
A-head: Theory and Scientific Inquiry

7. The starting point of scientific inquiry is asking scientifically testable questions. Which of the following is such a question?
a) "Why does my brother like *Star Wars* rather than *Star Trek*?
b) "How do people know when it's their turn to talk when in conversation with others?" *
c) "Why does my family always choose to go north for summer vacation?"
d) "When do brown shoes make more sense than black shoes?"
e) "What's up with jumbo shrimp?"

Answer: B
Bloom's: Analyzing

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A-head: Theory and Scientific Inquiry

8. The three essential steps of the process of scientific inquiry are ask a scientifically testable question, _____, and develop answers.

a) conduct a survey or experiment
b) engage in scholarly research
c) engage in systematic observation *
d) develop a solid hypothesis
e) consult with other scientists

Answer: C
Bloom's: Remembering
A-head: Theory and Scientific Inquiry

9. The ontology of the social sciences allows three discrete positions. One says the world is real, tangible, and measurable, existing apart from our efforts to study it. This is the _____ position.

a) realist *
b) objectivist
c) social constructionalist
d) subjectivist
e) metaphysical

Answer: A
Bloom's: Understanding
A-head: Three Philosophical Questions That Shape Scientific Inquiry

10. The ontology of the social sciences allows three discrete positions. One says that reality is a combination of the real world "out there" and our experiences with and of it. This is the _____ position.

a) realist
b) objectivist
c) social constructionalist *
d) subjectivist
e) metaphysical

Answer: C
Bloom's: Understanding
A-head: Three Philosophical Questions That Shape Scientific Inquiry

11. You have questions about a specific piece of research on conversations in the early stages of dating, so you decide to run that same study, albeit with a different set of young men and women. You are engaging in the scientific practice of _____.

a) means testing

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b) abstraction
c) hypothesis testing
d) replication *
e) random sampling

Answer: D
Bloom's: Analyzing
A-head: Tools of Observation: Research Methods

12. The epistemology of social science operates on a continuum between two positions. At one end is the position that the best way to generate and expand knowledge is through closing the gap between knower and known. This is the _____.
a) realist
b) objectivist
c) social constructionalist
d) subjectivist *
e) metaphysical

Answer: D
Bloom's: Understanding
A-head: Three Philosophical Questions That Shape Scientific Inquiry

13. Social scientists recognize that it is close to impossible to keep values out of their inquiry. Some, then, embrace them as a natural part of humans doing human work. Others do their best to limit the influence of those values on their inquiry. They try to set them aside, or _____ them through how they conduct their work.
a) obfuscate
b) bracket *
c) celebrate
d) ignore
e) challenge

Answer: B
Bloom's: Understanding
A-head: Three Philosophical Questions That Shape Scientific Inquiry

14. The form of social science scholarship that is most closely aligned with the natural sciences in ontology, epistemology, and axiology is _____ theory and research.
a) post-positivist *
b) interpretive
c) critical
d) objectivist
e) metaphysical

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Answer: A
Bloom's: Understanding
A-head: Traditions of Communication Inquiry

15. A post-positivist researcher who studies the effects of social networking on friendships wants to _____ those phenomena.
a) understand
b) change
c) explain and control *
d) shift perceptions of
e) boost the economic value of

Answer: C
Bloom's: Understanding
A-head: Traditions of Communication Inquiry

16. Which of the following is an example of a text that might be of interest to an interpretive researcher?
a) The number of tail-wag signals from one bee to another when it rains.
b) The tattoos of a motorcycle gang in Vermont. *
c) The most effective tire-tread pattern on that gang's bikes.
d) The temperature at which a classroom becomes too hot for successful learning.
e) The most effective curriculum for teaching math to suburban kids

Answer: B
Bloom's: Analyzing
A-head: Traditions of Communication Inquiry

17. For critical researchers, what is real and knowable in the social world is the product of the interaction between structure (the social world's rules, norms, and beliefs) and _____ (how humans act and interact in that world).
a) tradition
b) normalization
c) dialectic
d) agency *
e) representation

Answer: D
Bloom's: Understanding
A-head: Traditions of Communication Inquiry

18. Critical researchers refer to the interplay of the social world's rules, norms, and beliefs and how humans act and interact in that world as _____.

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a) tradition
b) normalization
c) dialectic *
d) agency
e) representation

Answer: C
Bloom's: Remembering
A-head: Traditions of Communication Inquiry

19. Communication research employs_____ (inquiry relying on the collection and analysis of numerical data) and_____ (inquiry relying on the collection and analysis of symbolic data such as language and other cultural products).
a) qualitative research/quantitative research
b) quantitative research/qualitative research *
c) experimental/survey
d) survey/experimental
e) humanistic/democratic

Answer: B
Bloom's: Understanding
A-head: Tools of Observation—Research Methods

20. In your TV violence experiment you show one group of children a cartoon in which a character is punished for hitting another character. A second group sees the same cartoon, but in this one the aggressive character is rewarded for hitting. This means that reward/punishment for aggression in cartoons is your _____.
a) dependent variable
b) independent variable *
c) text
d) structure
e) control variable

Answer: B
Bloom's: Analyzing
A-head: Tools of Observation—Research Methods

21. You cannot decide in this experiment how to measure the effect of your manipulation of the reward or punishment the children see in your cartoons. You are struggling with the question of _____.
a) epistemology
b) nomenclature
c) operationalization *
d) hypothesis building

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e) enumerating

Answer: C
Bloom's: Understanding
A-head: Tools of Observation—Research Methods

22. Experiments are the most-favored research method of postpositivist social scientists because they are the only way that _____ can be demonstrated.
    a) causality *
    b) connection
    c) correlation
    d) social influence
    e) representation

    Answer: A
    Bloom's: Understanding
    A-head: Tools of Observation—Research Methods

23. But one major problem for those social scientists is that it is the results of those experiments are _____.
    a) not always statistically valid
    b) usually difficult to replicate
    c) difficult to generalize to the larger population *
    d) subject to researcher bias
    e) often open to challenge

    Answer: C
    Bloom's: Understanding
    A-head: Tools of Observation—Research Methods

24. Surveys _____.
    a) are very expensive and time-consuming to conduct
    b) rely on what many people consider to be questionable statistics
    c) cannot demonstrate causality *
    d) are difficult to administer when large populations are of interest
    e) have difficulty when many variables are of interest

    Answer: C
    Bloom's: Understanding
    A-head: Tools of Observation—Research Methods

25. _____ is a quantitative (numerical) textual analysis that depends not on researchers' deep reading, but on their objective categorization and accurate measurement based on their deep reading.

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a) Content analysis *
b) A focus group
c) An online survey
d) Structural analysis
e) Means testing

Answer: A
Bloom's: Remembering
A-head: Tools of Observation—Research Methods

26. Communication theorist Em Griffith offered 3 metaphors as ways of understanding how social scientists use theories. They were nets, lenses, and _____.
a) microscopes
b) maps *
c) lasers
d) mazes
e) rulers

Answer: B
Bloom's: Remembering
A-head: Theory and Scientific Inquiry

27. To build theory, social scientists utilize _____, the active, systematic process of discovery, leading scholars from observation to knowledge.
a) random testing
b) peer review
c) blind trials
d) means testing
e) scientific inquiry *

Answer: E
Bloom's: Remembering
A-head: Theory and Scientific Inquiry

28. Social scientists face questions of ontology in the conduct of their work. These are questions of _____.
a) how to best created and expand knowledge
b) the nature of reality and what is knowable
c) the proper role of values in research and theory building
d) the best way to protect participants' privacy
e) the best way to connect with other, like-minded scientists

Answer: B
Bloom's: Remembering

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A-head: Three Philosophical Questions That Shape Scientific Inquiry

29. Social scientists face questions of epistemology in the conduct of their work. These are questions of _____.
    a) how to best create and expand knowledge *
    b) the nature of reality and what is knowable
    c) the proper role of values in research and theory building
    d) the best way to protect participants' privacy
    e) the best way to connect with other, like-minded scientists

    Answer: A
    Bloom's: Remembering
    A-head: Three Philosophical Questions That Shape Scientific Inquiry

30. Social scientists face questions of axiology in the conduct of their work. These are questions of _____.
    a) how to best create and expand knowledge
    b) the nature of reality and what is knowable
    c) the proper role of values in research and theory building *
    d) the best way to protect participants' privacy
    e) the best way to connect with other, like-minded scientists

    Answer: C
    Bloom's: Remembering
    A-head: Three Philosophical Questions That Shape Scientific Inquiry

31. The same piece of furniture is called a *desk* when you sit at it and write a term paper but it's called a *table* when you sit at it to eat. This phenomenon best fits the ontology of _____.
    a) realists
    b) nominalists
    c) experimentalists
    d) social constructionists *
    e) postpositivists

    Answer: D
    Bloom's: Analyzing
    A-head: Three Philosophical Questions That Shape Scientific Inquiry

32. Much like those who work in the natural sciences, postpositivist social scientists typically adopt an epistemological _____ position.
    a) Objectivist *
    b) subjectivist
    c) experimentalist

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d) textual
e) metaphysical

Answer: A
Bloom's: Understanding
A-head: Three Philosophical Questions That Shape Scientific Inquiry

33. Which social science tradition puts values front-and-center of their research and theory building, arguing that values should drive research which, like all good science, is intended to create change?
a) postpositive theory and research
b) interpretive theory and research
c) critical theory and research *
d) normative theory and research
e) metaphysical theory and research

Answer: C
Bloom's: Understanding
A-head: Traditions of Communication Inquiry

34. Interpretive researchers typically study _____, any product of social interaction.
a) Texts *
b) behaviors
c) signs
d) symbols
e) representations

Answer: A
Bloom's: Understanding
A-head: Traditions of Communication Inquiry

35. The goal of interpretive research and theory is _____.
a) Understanding *
b) changing the social world
c) explanation, prediction, and control
d) shifting perception
e) challenging the status quo

Answer: A
Bloom's: Remembering
A-head: Traditions of Communication Inquiry

36. The goal of postpositivist research and theory is _____.
a) understanding

b) changing the social world
c) explanation, prediction, and control *
d) shifting perception
e) challenging the status quo

Answer: C
Bloom's: Remembering
A-head: Traditions of Communication Inquiry

37. The goal of critical research and theory is _____.
a) understanding
b) changing the social world *
c) explanation, prediction, and control
d) shifting perception
e) upholding the status quo

Answer: B
Bloom's: Remembering
A-head: Traditions of Communication Inquiry

38. You are a social scientist. You have a social-constructionist ontology, an objectivist epistemology, and you employ the scientific method to limit the influence of your values on your work. You are a(n) _____ researcher.
a) Postpositivist *
b) critical
c) interpretive
d) cross-boundary
e) representational

Answer: A
Bloom's: Analyzing
A-head: Traditions of Communication Inquiry

39. You are a social scientist. You believe that all knowledge is local, you believe that knowledge is best advanced through subjective interaction with other scholars, and you willingly accept the role of values in your work. You are a(n) _____ researcher.
a) post-positivist
b) critical
c) interpretive *
d) cross-boundary
e) representational

Answer: C
Bloom's: Analyzing

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A-head: Traditions of Communication Inquiry

40. You are a social scientist. Your believe that knowledge is advanced only when it serves to free people, your ontology argues that reality is the product of the interplay between structure and agency, and you believe that it makes no sense to keep values out of your work. You are a(n) _____ researcher.
    a) post-positivist
    b) critical *
    c) interpretive
    d) cross-boundary
    e) representational

    Answer: B
    Bloom's: Analyzing
    A-head: Traditions of Communication Inquiry

41. Experiments involve the manipulation of one variable (the _____ variable) to measure its influence on another variable (the _____ variable).
    a) independent/dependent *
    b) primary/secondary
    c) dependent/independent
    d) secondary/dependent
    e) control/placebo

    Answer: A
    Bloom's: Remembering
    A-head: Tools of Observation: Research Methods

42. Experiments typically employ a(n) _____ group, participants who are not subjected to the experiment's manipulation of variables.
    a) blind
    b) anonymous
    c) stratified
    d) control *
    e) placebo

    Answer: D
    Bloom's: Remembering
    A-head: Tools of Observation: Research Methods

43. Survey researchers sometimes present questions to _____ samples of respondents; that is, all population members have an equal likelihood of appearing in the sample.
    a) stratified
    b) random *

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c) non-linear
d) anonymous
e) representative

Answer: B
Bloom's: Remembering
A-head: Tools of Observation: Research Methods

44. Survey researchers sometimes present questions to _____ samples of respondents to ensure the inclusion of particular categories of respondents.
a) stratified *
b) random
c) non-linear
d) anonymous
e) representative

Answer: A
Bloom's: Remembering
A-head: Tools of Observation: Research Methods

45. An important benefit of surveys is they _____.
a) can demonstrate causality
b) allow researchers great control over independent variables
c) allow researchers great control over dependent variables
d) do not require use of a control group
e) can investigate the influence of a large number of variables *

Answer: E
Bloom's: Understanding
A-head: Tools of Observation: Research Methods

46. Interpretive researchers feel no need to generalize their findings because they believe that_____.
a) generalizing scientific findings to large populations in meaningless
b) meaning is made between text and "reader" so there is no intention to generalize *
c) causality is the only true measure of communication's influence
d) only surveys allow such generalizations
e) the social world is fundamentally corrupt

Answer: B
Bloom's: Understanding
A-head: Traditions of Communication Inquiry

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47. _____ research is quantitative textual analysis that depends not on researchers' deep reading, but on their objective categorization and accurate measurement based on their deep reading.
    a) Survey
    b) Experimental
    c) Ethnography
    d) Content analysis *
    e) Critical

    Answer: D
    Bloom's: Remembering
    A-head: Tools of Observation: Research Methods

48. _____ is the study of human social interaction from the inside, for example when researchers move into a half-way house for delinquent teens and become part of the institution's daily routine.
    a) Survey research
    b) Experimental research
    c) Ethnographic research *
    d) Content analysis
    e) Critical research

    Answer: C
    Bloom's: Remembering
    A-head: Tools of Observation: Research Methods

49. Researcher Janice Radway successfully mixed research methods and traditions in her study of the _____.
    a) communication patterns of teens in a half-way house
    b) ways in which female readers of romance novels make meaning from those texts *
    c) way women employees ask for time off at work
    d) effect of television violence on young children
    e) motorcycle gang tattoos

    Answer: B
    Bloom's: Remembering
    A-head: Tools of Observation: Research Methods

50. Theory is never _____.
    a) changed
    b) fact *
    c) disproved
    d) fiction
    e) debated

Answer: B
Bloom's: Remembering
A-head: Theory and Scientific Inquiry

SHORT ANSWER

51. What are Em Griffin's three metaphors that can explain how theories work? What function of theory is implied by each?

Answer: Nets: Theories attempt to "catch" the world with ever finer mesh, hoping to apprehend human experience. Lenses: Theories are not mirrors that reflect the world. They are camera lenses or eye glasses that focus attention on some feature of communication. Maps: Theories show researchers the roads others have traveled, point out where they are, and offer directions about where they want to go.

A-head: Theory and Scientific Inquiry

52. Explain the value of the specification of ignorance.

Answer: Good science produces more questions than it answers. Because a theory is the best available description, it is always inadequate and in need of updating. As such, science is a self-correcting process and every answer should produce new questions. The most important product of science is ignorance. Albert Einstein likened the knowledge generated by scientific inquiry to a spotlight. As its circle of light increases (illuminating what we know), so does the circumference of the darkness around it (the number of things we still don't know).

A-head: Theory and Scientific Inquiry

53. Theories are human constructions; they are dynamic; and they are abstractions. Explain and offer an example of each of these concepts.

Answer: Theories are *human constructions*—they are developed by people who have biases, interests, skills, and values. People interested in intercultural communication, for example, will inevitably approach their work from a specific set of cultural assumptions. People who study conflict in families will develop a different kind of theory than will those who look at conflict in the workplace. Theories are *dynamic*—they are always changing; they must change as the world changes. Theories shaping understanding of communication between the genders are much different today than they were in the 1950s. Media violence theories from the days of black-and-white movies will certainly differ from those developed in the era of 3-D, single-shooter video games. Theories are *abstractions*, reducing the phenomenon under investigation

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to categories, variables, propositions, and assumptions. They inevitably leave something out. There are many different ways to operationalize and measure love, fatherhood, and patriotism.

A-head: Theory and Scientific Inquiry

54. List and describe the three steps involved in scientific inquiry.

Answer: *Ask scientifically testable questions*. Testable questions are typically "How," "Why," "What if" and "Does" inquiries. They revolve around people, events, relationships, and other interesting phenomena in the social world. They have to do with scientific concepts, not opinions, feelings, or beliefs. They are open to investigation using some form of systematic observation. Scientifically testable questions produce evidence and data that can be used to explain how the social world works. *Engage is systematic observation*. The answers to researchers' questions reside in the evidence they observe about patterns, relationships, and consistencies in the social world. *Develop answers*. Researchers must explain what they observed. This always involves definitions and descriptions based on evidence. This is what makes science different from opinion.

A-head: Theory and Scientific Inquiry

55. What is ontology? What are the three ontological positions?

Answer: Ontology involves questions and assumptions about what is the nature of reality and what is scientifically knowable. The *realist position* says the world is real, tangible, and measurable. It exists apart from anyone's effort to study it. The *nominalist position* says that reality exists only to the extent that we humans are able to experience it through the names and labels we give to the things we find in it. The *social construction position* says that reality is a combination of the real world "out there" and our experiences with and of it.

A-head: Three Philosophical Questions That Shape Scientific Inquiry

ESSAY

56. What error in understanding do people make when they dismiss scientific findings as "only a theory"? What factors separate theory from even really good speculation?

Main point: Although people use the expression in casual conversation, in scientific terms theory is much more.

Answers **must** include: Theories are grand syntheses—the sum of the knowledge of specific phenomena. They are always inadequate and in need of updating. Good theory produces new questions (the specification of ignorance).

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Answers **may** include: Theories are based on scientifically testable questions and are developed systematically. They are abstractions.

A-head: Theory and Scientific Inquiry

57. We typically think that good science minimizes the role of values in its conduct. But we also know that this is impossible in the social sciences. Describe the various axiological positions typically adopted by communication scholars and explain how each serves the interests of those who adopt them.

Main point: Some scholars employ the scientific method to minimize the impact of values on their work. Some either do their best to limit the influence of values on their inquiry (they "bracket" them) or they embrace them as part of the work itself. Still others celebrate their values and make them the centerpiece of their work.

Answer **must** include: How the scientific method minimizes impact of values, why researchers might choose to bracket or embrace their values, and the purpose of putting values front-and-center in scholarly inquiry.

Answer **may** include: Which axiological position is most at home in which tradition of communication inquiry.

A-head: Three Philosophical Questions That Shape Scientific Inquiry

58. Social scientists (post-positivists) who model their inquiry as close as possible to the work of natural science researcher (positivists) adopt the ontology, epistemology, and axiology of those scholars. What are the ontology, epistemology, and axiology of social science's post-positivists and how might they differ from those of the natural scientists?

Main point: Humans are not beakers of water or billiard balls. They do not easily conform to the rules of nature.

Answer **must** include: Postpositivism recognizes that humans living in a social world are not as constant or predictable as are the measurable elements of the physical world. Because the social world has more variation than the physical world and because humans manage that variation by assigning meaning to them, they adopt a social-construction ontology. Like the positivists, they adopt an objectivist epistemology, arguing that knowledge is best advanced through the systematic, logical search for regularities and causal relationships employing the scientific method. The objectivity inherent in the use of the scientific method keeps defines their axiology, limiting values in inquiry as much as humanly possible.

Answer **may** include: The postpositivist approach, much like those of positivist research in the physical sciences, seek explanation, prediction, and control.

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A-head: Traditions of Communication Inquiry

59. Each of the major traditions of communication inquiry—postpositivism, interpretive research and theory, and critical research and theory—has a different goal. What is the goal of each and which do you believe should be the most important goal of social science research and theory?

Main point: Postpositivism seeks explanation, prediction and control; interpretive theory and research seeks understanding; critical research and theory seeks to challenge existing ways of organizing the social world and the people and institutions exercising power in it.

Answer **must** include: An expression of a personal preference for one over the others. Although answers will vary, they must demonstrate an understanding of why each tradition wants to do what it claims it does.

Answer **may** include: An argument for the discipline's embrace of 2 or all of these traditions. Although answers will vary, such an answer will show an deep understanding of this chapter's overall theme.

A-head: Traditions of Communication Inquiry

60. Identify a question about communication that interests you, for example, why are college students so attached to their smartphones or why do some newly arrived immigrants choose to assimilate into the larger culture more quickly than others or how do male and female employees differ in their responses to an aggressive female supervisor? Now present your scientifically testable question, choose a research method (or mixed methods) for answering it, and describe how you might undertake your effort at systematic inquiry. By the way, the offered examples are there as guides—they are off the table as possible research questions.

Main point: Answers will vary, but the question must be scientifically testable and the chosen method(s) must match that question; for example, a question seeking to demonstrate causality must use an experiment.

Answer **must** include: A logical link from question to method to execution of that method.
Answer **may** include: Possible benefits and limitations of the chosen method.

A-head: Tools of Observation: Research Methods

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