

Richard A. Swanson and Thomas J. Chermack

# Theory Building in Applied Disciplines

- The first multidisciplinary book specifically on building, evaluating, and developing theories in academic fields that apply research to professional practice
- Offers a five-phase model that can be used to build and test a theory in any applied discipline
- Written by two highly respected scholars

Theory matters in applied disciplines—fields that apply scholarly research to professional practice, such as management, social work, health care, human resource development, education, and many others. Because these disciplines deal with human beings in the real world, a flawed theory can result in actual harm to people and institutions.

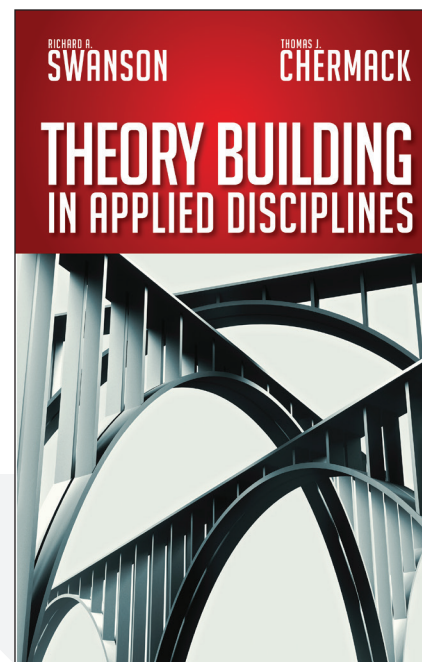
When faced with a professional problem, practitioners resort to the latest fad or simply throw everything and anything at it because of the lack of sound theory. Scholars deal with problems by slicing them into small segments to study them but fail to address the practical implications. What's needed is a way to unite research and practice to create robust theory.

This is exactly what Richard Swanson and Thomas Chermack offer here: a complete, five-step method for developing sound, field-tested theory in applied disciplines. Unlike many existing methods, which cover only the initial conceptualization of a theory, the authors offer a complete approach, from conceptualizing a theory to creating relevant assessment criteria, establishing a research agenda to test the theory's validity, applying the theoretical concepts in the real world, and using that experience to further refine and improve the theory. The method is not restricted to any single discipline, nor is it beholden to any research ideology.

Swanson and Chermack provide a set of tools for each phase of the process, making this book accessible and applicable to a wide audience. And in addition to examples in each chapter, they offer two extended case examples of complete theory building. With flawed theories impeding the development of many applied disciplines, this book is desperately needed.

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