

Preface

Welcome to *Complex Dynamical Systems in Education: Concepts, Methods and Applications*. The application of the principles of complexity and dynamical systems in the social and behavioral sciences is a relatively new development, whose relevance to the field of education is only beginning to be appreciated. This book aims to further stimulate this advancement.

As our target audience, we see educational researchers as well as practitioners and policy-makers who take an active interest in the interface between educational research and their own practical work. The book appeals to their relatively sophisticated understanding of the complex interface between research, practice, and policy that motivates much of the current conventional research (and funding thereof). Our intended audience also includes scholars working in disciplines other than education who may take an interest in how, specifically, the complex dynamical systems paradigm that they know applies to the field of education in particular.

The book has the appropriate level of discourse to be used in graduate and advanced undergraduate educational research courses, particularly courses aiming to reflect the methodological diversity that currently exists in the field, or courses that seek alternative approaches to the convention of presenting experimental and quasi-experimental designs as the sole vehicle for legitimate causal inference in education.

The text assumes a readiness among its readership to engage in the substantive and methodological issues that present themselves when a complexity perspective is taken, but, contrary to quite a few other complex dynamical texts, will not require high level mathematical skills. We take pleasure in presenting these chapters to you and hope that they result in a fuller awareness of what the complex dynamical systems paradigm has to offer to the field.

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