



John Glover: a Long Overdue Account of His Productive Scholarship Methods

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How are some scholars so productive? Kiewra and colleagues have interviewed about two dozen productive scholars over six studies to find out (Flanigan et al., 2018; Kiewra & Creswell, 2000; Kiewra et al., 2021; Kiewra et al., 2023; Patterson-Hazley & Kiewra, 2013; Prinz et al., 2020). Meanwhile, Bembenutty has also interviewed about 30 contemporary scholars to uncover their productivity pathways (Bembenutty, 2015, 2022). Absent from these interviews, though, is John Glover, the founding editor of *Educational Psychology Review* and one of the leading scholars of his time. Unfortunately, Glover's time was brief. He died from a fallen tree in 1989 at age 40, about 16 years into his storied educational psychology career, wherein he masterfully investigated topics mostly related to reading and prose comprehension and to problem solving and creativity.

Upon his death, Steve Benton, who assumed Glover's editorship duties when he passed, penned a tribute to his former University of Nebraska advisor:

In 1976, John went to the University of Nebraska where he spent the next 11 years as one of the premiere educational psychologists of his day... In 1987, John went to Ball State University as Research Professor of Education and Director at the Burriss Laboratory School. John's accomplishments were so valued that he was posthumously awarded the 1990 Ball State University Outstanding Researcher of the Year. He will continue to influence educational psychologists and preservice teachers with his nearly 100 journal articles and [23] books, including the third edition of his undergraduate text [*Educational Psychology: Principles and Applications*], a recent graduate text titled *Cognitive Psychology for Teachers*, and *Historical Foundations of Educational Psychology*. (Benton, 1991, pp. 1-3)

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Although Kiewra and colleagues never had the opportunity to interview Glover, Kiewra and Kauffman did interview three Glover associates in 2001 about Glover's scholarly productivity. Those associates were former University of Nebraska colleagues Barbara Plake and Bob Brown and former University of Nebraska advisee Alice Corkill. Each was interviewed independently by Kauffman and Kiewra. Those interviews were recorded and transcribed. The three interviewees were asked how Glover went about his work and was able to be so productive. That open-ended question was followed-up with prompts to elicit information about Glover's work habits, research management, mentoring and collaborations, and writing strategies, themes found important in earlier work by Kiewra and colleagues (Flanigan et al., 2018; Kiewra & Creswell, 2000; Kiewra et al., 2021; Kiewra et al., 2023; Patterson-Hazley & Kiewra, 2013; Prinz et al., 2020). Although the interviews occurred about a decade after Glover died, his memory, personality, and methods seemed well etched in interviewees' minds. Here, now is a long overdue account of John Glover's productive scholarship methods, based on those three interviews and divided into these sections: personality, work habits, research management, mentoring/collaboration, and writing.

Personality

Before delving into Glover's work, it is appropriate to say a few things about the person, because Glover was a special person, seemingly larger than life. Kiewra (2009) wrote about his first and only meeting with Glover at a San Francisco breakfast spot at the American Educational Research Association conference in 1986:

John's entrance was enigmatic. He burst through the door and I was immediately swallowed by his presence. He was a mountain with a mustache—tall, wide, and strong. He strode to our table, gave Steve [Benton] a warm greeting, and then locked eyes with mine. He thrust out his powerful right hand, swallowed mine, and then pierced any tension I felt meeting the legendary Glover. "You've been doing great work," he bellowed still clutching my hand, "I'm going to be citing your work on note taking in my educational psychology text." As he let go and stepped around the table to join us, I only then noticed that he was dressed from ankles to shoulders in a canary yellow sweat suit. He was a yellow mountain. (p. 87)

Although interviewees were not directly asked about Glover's personality, all three were compelled to address it. Plake described Glover much the same way Kiewra did, "John really had a commanding presence, an aura about him." Brown said that Glover's "style, approach, enthusiasm, and hard work reverberated through the department." Interviewees further described Glover as "energetic, driven, creative, curious, confident, caring, and fun loving." Corkill said, "You could often hear him laughing in his office. He had this big booming laugh, and he laughed a lot... He was excited about his work, he was happy, he was laughing, he would joke around, and he was a fun person to be around."

Colleagues and students were not the only ones who found Glover charismatic and endearing. Brown told a story about how Glover faithfully rode the bus to work each day and how, on his final ride to campus, his faithful co-riders threw a party for

him on the bus. They served cake and dressed in Glover-inspired loud plaid blazers to salute their friend.

Interviewees also said that Glover had a “brass and abrupt” side that rubbed some people the wrong way. Plake said, “It was clear who John respected and who he didn’t, and you wanted to be on the respected list. He cared about the people he valued. If he didn’t respect you, though, he had little time for you.” Corkill said, “Some people didn’t care for John and thought him arrogant. Perhaps it was because his research was outstanding, and he was justifiably proud of it, and that rubbed them the wrong way.” Brown said, “John was quick and easy and comfortable in asserting his opinions and not simply tolerating the company line, and that sometimes didn’t go well with colleagues and administrators.”

Work Habits

Glover loved research and worked tirelessly at it. Plake said, “John had a non-stop commitment to scholarship. If you wanted to play on John’s team, you had to be willing to be here and be part of it all the time. When there was work to be done, you were expected to be just as enthusiastic as John was. So, he cultured a mentality that this is fun, this is what we do, and it’s your life... He would come early and stay late; we were in research production around the clock. Now, I have to say that this sounds like a driven person that has no life outside of academia, but John was one of the most devoted family people that I knew, so he managed to focus his energies on his family but still keep his passion for research.”

Corkill too noted Glover’s passion for research and family. “John was a nine-to-five kind of guy. He’d come to the office every day, Monday through Friday, and stay all day. He was efficient. He didn’t waste time in the office. He didn’t spend a lot of time going around and chatting with people. When he was at the office he worked, and when he was at home he was at home. He didn’t sacrifice time with his family. He had his work schedule and his home schedule, and he didn’t take a lot of work home. When he went home, he spent time with his family.” Brown added, “John was completely devoted to his home life and two young daughters.”

While at work, Glover’s priority was research, and it was always on his mind. Brown recalled a tornado drill that sent Glover and him to a tornado shelter. Glover looked around at the dozens of others with them and half-jokingly said, “If a had only thought to bring a survey with me, look at the data I could collect.” Corkill recalled that Glover often noted research ideas on scraps of paper and stuffed them in his pocket for later consideration. Plake described Glover’s thirst for research ideas as a “fountain of thoughts bubbling up on a regular basis.”

Glover did not care much for committees and for university service work. Plake said, “I don’t think John was the least bit interested in service. He ducked committees as hard and fast as he possibly could, because they took away from the important work that he wanted to do. If he was on a committee, he gave it minimal attention because that’s not what he was here to do.” Corkill echoed that sentiment: “John didn’t do a lot of committee work. He didn’t do a whole lot of university service. I believe that John just kind of made a decision somewhere along the way that he was

not going to spend much time embroiled in service activities. Instead, he was going to focus his time and resources on research, and that is what he did. Meanwhile, John had more than his fair share of doctoral and masters students and student committees. But, he shunned the committee stuff, where faculty engage in a lot of busy work. John preferred to use his time focused on research.”

As for teaching, by all accounts, Glover was a talented teacher, but teaching also took a back seat to research. Plake said, “John cared about his teaching, in part, because it gave him a stage, and he was a gifted presenter. He liked to command an audience and was good at it.” Corkill said, “John taught the typical two and two load. The rest of the time he devoted to graduate students and to research. I don’t think he needed to spend much time preparing to teach because he was teaching the same courses over and over again, and once you’ve taught a course many times, you don’t have to spend much time preparing the instructional materials and writing tests, so you can streamline teaching. That way you have more time to spend on your research.”

Research Management

Glover’s research was programmatic, with most studies including multiple experiments. A quick online search found one study with five experiments (Palmere et al., 1983), another with seven (Glover et al., 1988), and a third with Experiments 1, 2, 3, 4a, 4b, and 4c (Glover, 1989). Plake said, “John’s work was a series of related studies, each one adding to the argument that he was trying to make. He saw research as building an argument, and you couldn’t build an argument with a single study because it would be too complex and have too many confounds. Also, all experiments leave questions, leave voids, and John was intent on answering those questions and filling those voids, assembling the completed puzzle.” Corkill also noted Glover’s question-answering approach to research. “John was not interested in collecting bunches of data, he was interested in collecting specific pieces of data that were going to answer highly specific questions. He always had his research questions firmly in mind before he collected the data. This made it possible for him to design simple, clean, and sharp studies and to develop measures that would best answer the specific questions he had posed.”

Glover was also a resourceful researcher. Corkill remembered that Glover smartly reused some experimental materials from one study to another. Corkill said, “There were some passages he reused, such as one about the fictitious country of Mala, another about the discovery of the planet Pluto, and another about the disappearance of Amelia Earhart. It is difficult to create reading passages that are at the proper level and length, so to reuse them when possible was smart.” Plake recalled that Glover found a simple and perfect solution for assessing student motivation throughout an experiment. Plake said, “John instituted a question at the end of studies that asked participants how hard they tried throughout the experiment. This way he could remove those who did not try hard from the pool. He’d tell them, ‘you are still going to get credit, but we want to know the truth, did you really try?’ I thought that was a clever way to determine motivation, simply ask them.”

Glover understood his research limitations and enlisted others to cover those limitations. Plake half-joked, “I don’t think John had ever run a statistical test in his life. He just knew that he needed to run them. So, like most of us, John was dependent on the expertise of others, particularly students.” Corkill added, “John designed studies and developed experimental materials, but rarely would he collect data. It was usually his students collecting data and analyzing results. John was also really good at giving his graduate students work they had the skills to do. And he always gave credit for the work that was done.”

Mentoring/Collaboration

Glover collaborated on most of his studies and chose to work with colleagues who could contribute unique things to a study. Plake said, “John had an antennae for finding the right collaborators. He was clever in his associations. He didn’t randomly pick people to work with; he picked people that could contribute unique and important things to the project. For example, I think he sought to work with me because he knew that I was skilled in measurement and statistics and that was something that would aid him. Moreover, he made you feel like your contribution was imperative. John would say, ‘You are absolutely the best person to do this. I couldn’t do it without you. This is so important. The field will suffer if you don’t help.’ He would make you feel like you’d be ending science if you didn’t participate... And people wanted to be part of his team. I wanted to be. John made the work fun, exciting, and interesting... John had us sitting around the board tossing out and developing ideas. It was always a rich research environment where John made his colleagues feel like they were smart, did good work, and were valued. Afterward John promoted the people he worked with and shared the credit, always saying ‘this was the team’s work’ never ‘my work.’ I felt honored that he wanted to work with me.”

Through his student mentoring and energy, Glover created a culture of research. Brown said, “John was like a shot of adrenaline among those he worked with.” Plake said, “He met with a lot of students, and he met a lot. It was not unusual to see students in his office or him in the graduate student office. He spent a lot of time in there kicking around ideas. He was always kicking around ideas... John also motivated students to think of their work as scholarship rather than just work. John always encouraged them to take an idea and turn it into a researchable question. Always encouraged them to pursue publication. He believed that no good idea should go unpublished.”

Regarding student mentoring, Corkill said, “John’s door was always open. He was always willing to interact with students, and when you’d walk through the door he would put down whatever it was he was doing and give you his full attention.”

Glover involved students in his projects but also gave them latitude to pursue their own research questions. Corkill said, “John got graduate students involved with research as quickly as possible by inviting them onto his projects. At the same time, he encouraged them to develop and pursue their own research interests. This helped students find their niche while expanding John’s research agenda.”

Writing

Glover was a skilled and thoughtful writer. Plake said, “John was a superb writer able to communicate ideas in compelling and interesting ways. He told a story. There was foreshadowing at the beginning, good connections throughout, and clear focus on the question he was answering. John put all the pieces of the puzzle together for the reader, so that when they finished reading, it all came together. It was a skill that I admired and tried to duplicate in my writing.”

In telling his story, Glover chose precise and sometimes elegant language. Plake said, “John liked to use flowerful words. He had a great vocabulary, and he used words that would not typically be used in scientific reporting. I remember one time he was writing about something having many varieties and referred to it as a kaleidoscope. You usually don’t run into kaleidoscope in technical writing. One time he used the word calliope, which means beautifully voiced. John just loved words, especially multiple-syllabic words, and used words in a colorful attention-capturing way.” Glover also got creative with titles. Corkill said that “John liked to joke around with titles. He wanted to have interesting titles for his articles. He told students that the title was what was going to catch readers’ attention and invite them to browse the article.” Kiewra still recalls these clever Glover titles: “Nobody knows how to remember that prose” and “First letter mnemonics: DAM (Don’t Aide Memory).”

Glover wrote every day and exhorted his students to do the same. Brown said, “It was John’s routine to arrive early to the office each day and immediately begin writing, before his coat stopped swinging on the hook. I believe his goal was 1,000 words a day.” Corkill said, John’s mantra was to “Write every day! He told students to get in the habit of writing every day—five pages a day.”

As for how Glover wrote, his priority was to get ideas down on paper quickly, to suspend judgment about writing quality until writing’s editing phase. Corkill said, “When John composed, he tried not to spend much time agonizing over the wording, tried not to spend much time editing. His writing strategy was to get his thoughts down on paper and then go back later and edit to perfection. I can hear John saying, ‘Don’t worry about vocabulary, don’t worry about wording. Instead, worry about making a logical and convincing case that the present study is necessary and important.’ It’s always hard to start a writing task, but John would simply start by throwing a rambling-stream-of-consciousness-kind-of-thing onto the paper. He warned me more than once not to be a writer who sits and agonizes for hours over the first two sentences of an article they are trying to write. He said, ‘Well that’s just ridiculous! Just start writing! Don’t worry about the words, don’t worry about the grammar, don’t worry about trying to make it look nice, just get your ideas down on paper. Later, you can go back and figure out how to make it look like proper writing instead of a rambling stream of thoughts. Then you go back and revise it five, six, or seven times.’”

As for the revision process, Corkill reported that Glover literally cut and pasted his documents before computers did that more efficiently. Corkill said, “When revising his work before computers were readily available, John would cut bits and pieces

from the manuscript he was writing and tape them together in new ways trying to find the best fit for his writing segments. This cut-and-paste method saved John from having to rewrite the whole manuscript.”

Discussion

Glover’s productivity and scholarly methods compare favorably with other productive scholars (Bembenuddy, 2015, 2022; Flanigan et al., 2018; Kiewra & Creswell, 2000; Kiewra et al., 2021; Kiewra et al., 2023; Patterson-Hazley & Kiewra, 2013; Prinz et al., 2020). Over his approximately 16-year career, Glover published about 100 articles. Over the first 15 years of their careers, productive scholars Dick Anderson published about 60, Rich Mayer (who now has more than 600 publications) about 70, Michael Pressley about 130 (Kiewra & Creswell, 2000), Patricia Alexander about 70, Dale Schunk about 50, and Barry Zimmerman about 60 (Patterson-Hazley & Kiewra, 2013). When you consider that many Glover articles contained several experiments and that he published 18 articles in *Journal of Educational Psychology*, the premiere journal in the field, his work product is even more impressive. In terms of books, Glover especially stands tall having published 23 in his shortened career. At the times they were investigated, well into their careers, Anderson had published 4 books, Pressley 8, Zimmerman 14, Schunk 16, and Mayer 27. The remainder of this discussion illustrates how Glover’s scholarly methods mirrored those of other productive scholars.

Regarding work habits, Glover’s commitment to and passion for research was common among productive scholars. For example, Doug Lombardi said, “I think about this stuff [research and writing] all the time” (Kiewra et al., 2021, p. 2012). Jacqueline Eccles said, “I’m always thinking about research. I dream grants, I dream articles, I dream talks. That’s essentially what’s always on my mind” (Prinz et al., 2020, p. 778). Moreover, Glover was not alone in prioritizing research over other academic duties. For example, Erika Patall said, “You can’t be a jack of all trades. To be a successful researcher, you must prioritize research over all else. You have to accept that you’ll be less good at other things. I don’t ever want to be bad at anything, especially teaching, but once I meet a threshold of good enough, I accept that” (Kiewra et al., 2021, p. 2007). Much like Glover, Ming-Te Wang downplayed the importance of committee work and called meetings “time killers” (Kiewra et al., 2021, p. 1992). Finally, Glover was in good company in his efforts to work normal hours and achieve a work-life balance. For example, Rich Mayer works a normal eight-hour day and regards family as his top priority (Kiewra & Creswell, 2000). Same for Logan Fiorella who works weekdays 9:00–5:00 and leaves evenings and weekends free to spend time with family (Kiewra et al., 2021).

In terms of research management, Glover’s knack for asking good research questions and conducting well-designed and programmatic studies to answer them fits with several productive scholars, especially Rich Mayer. Mayer declared that the single most important thing in doing good research was raising good research questions, which he tabbed as being personally interesting, having theoretical and educational relevance, and being feasible to carry out (Patterson-Hazley & Kiewra, 2013).

Just like Glover, Mayer advocates designing simple and feasible studies that focus on one clear question rather than many questions. Mayer said, “Feasibility is a big problem for most students. Sometimes they have a great research question but their plan for answering the question is not feasible. So, sometimes you might need to give up a little bit in order to actually do a study. Find a research method that allows you to answer your question, but is also as simple and as straightforward as possible. A lot of students make the methodology more complicated than it needs to be. They put in too many factors and explore unnecessary side issues” (Patterson-Hazley & Kiewra, 2013, p. 39). Glover and Mayer are also similar in their programmatic research approach. Both commonly design studies with multiple experiments that address related research questions systematically and provide a coherent answer in the end.

In terms of collaboration, Glover’s affinity for collaboration, particularly with colleagues and students he respects and with those who can add a unique dimension to a study or compensate for a Glover shortcoming, is akin to David Berliner’s perspective on collaborator choosing. Berliner said, “I choose my colleagues for two reasons. Number 1: I like them. I wouldn’t do it otherwise. Number 2: They have ideas and skills that may well be better than mine. They are quite likely to make me look good!” (Bembenutty, 2022, p. 23).

Through his collaborations, Glover built a culture of research at University of Nebraska similar to what other productive scholars built at their universities. For example, Patricia Alexander, University of Maryland, said, “When you have as many students as I have, you are always reading student work, meeting with them, and planning projects... You cannot imagine the energy in these lab meetings when this many brilliant and engaged students collectively tackle one problem” (Patterson-Hazley & Kiewra, p. 35). Mareike Kunter, Goethe University, said this about enculturating students: “What I really try to create is a team atmosphere where people are fearless, where everyone feels they can contribute, and where we learn and develop new things together” (Prinz et al., 2020, p. 779).

When mentoring the next generation of scholars, Glover allowed his graduate students to find their own path rather than insist they follow his. Freeing students to forge their own identities is similar to the mentoring stance Rich Mayer takes. Mayer said, “Students are in graduate school to become independent researchers, not to be my research assistants. I help them develop an initial research study that they can get up and running early in their program. I see my job as making sure that their study can be successful. That it is feasible and can make a contribution to the field. It is important that students work on their own ideas” (Patterson-Hazley & Kiewra, p. 34).

In terms of writing, Glover, like other productive scholars, made writing a daily routine. Logan Fiorella said, “It is really important to establish a writing habit, doing it at the same time and place day after day, where it’s just what you do, and it feels like no big deal” (Kiewra et al., 2021, p. 2013). Ming-Te Wang said much the same, “I force myself to write every day even if it’s just an hour or two or a single paragraph. Psychologically, I know I’m making progress. Moreover, when I put something aside for a few days, it is really difficult for me to find the thread and pick back up” (Kiewra et al., 2021, p. 1992).

Glover strived to tell a coherent story in his research reports. John Hattie does the same. Hattie said, “The work is not about the data but about my interpretation of these data and trying to develop and weave a compelling story” (Bembunty, 2022, p. 164). Mayer too strives for good storytelling. His writings are filled with clarifying signals, such as questions, headings, and pinpoint directives to table and figure parts, that take readers by the hand (see Mayer, 2002). Patricia Alexander also strives to tell the story of her research by often beginning her writing with a metaphor or analogical reference that gains reader interest, activates appropriate schema, and serves as a connective thread throughout the manuscript (Patterson-Hazley & Kiewra, 2013).

Glover is not alone in his largely unmonitored and unjudged writing when composing the first draft. Other productive scholars also write the initial draft without concern for writing style or mechanics knowing they will later revise their work to perfection. Dale Schunk advised writers to “just get it written” without concern for quality (Patterson-Hazley & Kiewra, 2013, p. 32). Patricia Alexander said this about initial draft composing: “I let it flow, flow, flow as rapidly as it can flow. I call this throwing it up on the page... People who try to edit sentence by sentence while they are building are constrained. It is almost like constipation, constraining oneself so tightly. You need to let the ideas out” (Patterson-Hazley & Kiewra, 2013, p. 33).

Regarding revision, Glover and other productive scholars faithfully follow the maxim: There are no good writers, only good revisers. Speaking about the revision process, Michael Pressley said, “At one point, I kept track and I was doing like 40 revisions after the first draft. I would say there’s always two or three monstrous revisions and then tons of tons of fine tuning... You don’t let it get out of your presence until the fine tuning” (Kiewra & Creswell, 2000, p. 152).

In conclusion, John Glover was a productive scholar. In his truncated career, he published a lot and published in top journals. Although one never knows what awaits around the bend, extrapolating out, it appears that Glover’s eventual productivity might have placed him among educational psychology’s most elite in recent generations. It is therefore justified that his scholarly methods were examined in this article and that they be read and considered by those wanting to accelerate their research careers and outputs. If we can be so bold, we offer some concluding advice to those readers, culled from these interviews, on Glover’s behalf:

1. Enjoy the work and the people. Laugh and have fun.
2. Especially collaborate with those who can contribute unique things to your project.
3. Let collaborators know you value them and spread credit generously among them.
4. Don’t be a time waster.
5. Speaking of time wasting, avoid committees, unproductive meetings, and other busy work. Put that saved time toward research.
6. On the time efficiency flip side, carry a survey with you at all times in case there is a tornado-warning-data-collection opportunity.

7. Conduct multiple experiments, making sure each answers a distinct and well-articulated research question or sub-question.
8. Write 5 pages every day.
9. Suspend judgment when writing an initial draft. Just get your ideas down.
10. Tell the reader a clear and coherent story.
11. Mix in a catchy title and a few commodious words for some attention-getting flair.
12. Prioritize family.
13. Go ahead and wear a loud plaid blazer or a canary-colored jogging suit. Life's too short not to.

Data Availability The data and materials used in the present study are available from the first author upon reasonable request.

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