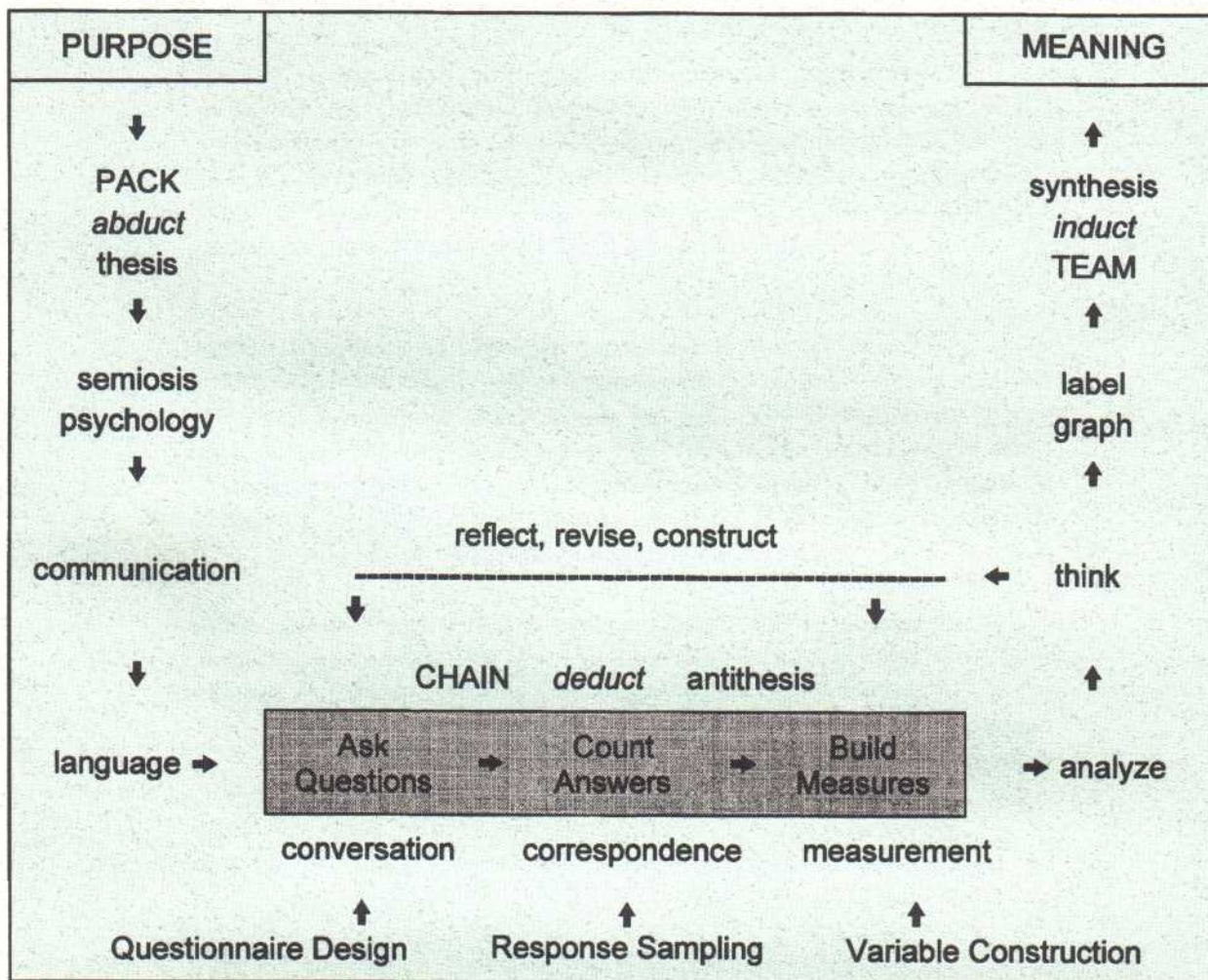


The Road to Reason

SOCIAL

Ben Wright

SCIENCE



QUALITATIVE

QUANTITATIVE

There are no pat answers on the road to reason, but there are many satisfying questions. We start from deep within ourselves, with Peirce's signs (*RMT*, 11:1, 539-540). Our brain cells work as a pack of hounds each searching for the prey (*RMT*, 10:2, 501). We abduct in thought, making intuitive leaps, defying logic, as we strive to formulate ideas expressible as words in some thesis. Then we communicate it to ourselves and others, searching for qualitative instances of what might be it.

There is no contradiction or conflict between the qualitative and the quantitative. The qualitative is complex, inscrutable, unique. But to learn from it, utilize it, manipulate it, it must be made simple, obvious, general. The leap from qualitative to quantitative is based on this organizing principle.

We want to escape the contradiction, chaos and idiosyncrasy of the impractical concrete. We want to build a manageable "world" based on the practical abstract.

Rasch measurement is our construction tool. In a careful process of deduction, we pile up the qualitative. We compress it. We chip off protuberances, smooth off rough edges to arrive at an artifact as elegant and handcrafted as ever formed from raw material by inspired craftsman.

But does our artifact have value? Is it a bauble or a gem? We must think. We must analyze. We must induce what greater meaning our artifact embodies. This prompts speculation, new abduction, and we're off to the beginning of a further road to reason.

Rasch Measurement Transactions, 11:4, 589 [rev]

CLASSROOM CLASSICS

