George Mason University
College of Education and Human Development

EDRS 797
MIXED RESEARCH METHODS
Fall 2010

Instructor: Joe Maxwell
Office: West 2004
Office hours: By appointment
Phone: 703-993-2119
Email: jmaxwell@gmu.edu; please use email for most communication.
Class meeting: Wednesday 4:30-7:10, East 134

Prerequisites: Successful completion (with a grade of B or higher) of EDRS 810 and 812, or equivalent coursework or experience. EDRS 811 is recommended but not required, since the focus of 811 (how to do statistical analysis) isn’t critical for much mixed method research. If you anticipate using sophisticated statistical analysis for a planned mixed method study, you need to be familiar with these techniques and their limitations.

Expectations

Students are expected to exhibit professional behavior and dispositions. See gse.gmu.edu for a listing of these dispositions.

Students must follow the guidelines of the University Honor Code. See http://www.gmu.edu/catalog/apolicies/#TOC_H12 for the full honor code.

Students must agree to abide by the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing. See http://mail.gmu.edu and click on Responsible Use of Computing at the bottom of the screen.

If you are a student with a disability, please let me know how I can best adjust the course to your strengths and needs. Students with disabilities who seek accommodations in a course must be registered with the GMU Office of Disability Services (ODS) and inform the instructor, in writing, at the beginning of the semester. See http://www2.gmu.edu/dpt/unilife/ods/ or call 703-993-2474 to access the ODS.

Course Goals

1. Understand the most important characteristics of mixed method research, and the main ways in which this approach differs from single-method research strategies.
2. Understand the most important strengths and limitations of both qualitative and quantitative research, and how to integrate these approaches in doing a mixed method study.
3. Be able to use these understandings to evaluate published mixed method research.
4. Be able to effectively communicate the design and process of a mixed method study.
**Assigned Books**


**Recommended Books**


The major journal for papers dealing with the methodology of mixed method research is the *Journal of Mixed Method Research*.

**Course Structure and Requirements**

This course is an advanced seminar on what is usually called “mixed methods” research—research that employs both qualitative and quantitative approaches. Class meetings will be run as seminars. I expect you to come to class prepared to discuss the reading assignments, and encourage you to share with the class other readings and examples you have found that are relevant. I will give mini-lectures on topics that I think are not well addressed by the readings, and there will be in-class exercises dealing with certain skills.

Before beginning the readings for a particular week I suggest that you ask yourself what your questions and concerns are about the topics for that week and that you list them. After finishing a reading, jot down the author's main points. Then, ask yourself how these relate to your questions or concerns. Did the reading answer your questions? Did it give you new ideas or ways of approaching your study? How can you use what you learned from reading it? If an example of a mixed method study is assigned, analyze it in terms of the methodological readings: How do the latter’s ideas apply? How do they not apply? What are the methodological readings’ implications for this study, and vice versa? How can this example inform your own study?

We will often be reading articles or book chapters presenting different perspectives on the same issue. Think about each author's approach to mixed method research as you read his/her work, and how this fits into the different approaches we have discussed.
Grading

Written assignments

There will be three written assignments, corresponding to the three modules of the course; each of these will count for 30% of the grade. For each of modules, there will be a choice of several assignments, as described in the Guidelines for the assignments. Alternative assignments to those that I suggest are possible, but you need to discuss these with me and get my approval prior to doing the assignment. Page lengths for written assignments are suggestions only. Length is to be determined by the needs of the individual assignments.

My criteria for evaluating written assignments are: your understanding of the readings (through your discussion of the material and your application of it to your research topic), demonstration of an analytic/critical stance toward the material, appropriate application of the ideas, and clarity in organization and writing. The grading criteria and procedures will be presented and discussed in class. Grading scale: A+, A, A-, B+, B, B-, C, F.

Class participation

Class participation will count for the final 10% of the grade. Class participation grades will be based on informed, relevant, productive, and respectful contributions (questions as well as comments and responses) to class discussions; attendance will be a factor in this part of the grade.

COURSE OUTLINE

Week       Topic and readings

Module 1: The nature of mixed method research

9/1       Introduction to the course and to mixed method research

Greene, Mixed methods in social inquiry, Introduction and Chapters 1-2
James, Inside-out perspective. In James, The 1984 Baseball Abstract (Blackboard)
Minta et al., Hunting associations between badgers and coyotes (Blackboard)

9/8       Qualitative and quantitative

Howe, The quantitative/qualitative dogma, in Howe, Closing methodological divides (e-reserve)
Hammersley, Deconstructing the qualitative-quantitative divide, in Hammersley, What’s wrong with ethnography? (e-reserve).
Maxwell, Using numbers in qualitative research (Blackboard).
Recommended:
Kidder & Fine, Qualitative and quantitative methods: When stories converge. In Mark & Shotland, *Multiple methods in program evaluation* (e-reserve)

9/15 Mixed methods social research

Greene, *Mixed methods in social inquiry*, Chapter 3
Weisner, Introduction, in Weisner, *Discovering successful pathways*.
Goldenberg, Gallimore, & Reese, Using mixed methods to explore Latino children’s development, in Weisner, *Discovering successful pathways*.
Castle, Fox, & Souder, Do professional development schools make a difference? A comparative study of PDS and non-PDS teacher candidates (Blackboard).

9/22 Paradigm issues

Greene, *Mixed methods in social inquiry*, Chapters 4-5 and Interlude 1
Maxwell & Mittapalli, Realism as a stance for mixed methods research (Blackboard)
Sleeter, Epistemological diversity in research on preservice teacher preparation for historically underserved children (Blackboard)
Fricke, Taking culture seriously: Making the social survey ethnographic, in Weisner, *Discovering successful pathways*.

Recommended:
Lee Shulman, Paradigms and Programs.
Greene & Caracelli, Making paradigmatic sense of mixed methods practice. In Tashakkori & Teddlie (Eds.), *Handbook of mixed methods in social & behavioral research* (e-reserve)
Phillips, Postpositivistic science: Myths and realities. In Guba, *The paradigm dialog* (e-reserve)
Maxwell & Lincoln, Methodology and epistemology: A dialogue (e-reserve)
Pitman & Maxwell, Qualitative approaches to evaluation. In LeCompte, Millroy, & Preissle, *Handbook of qualitative research in education* (e-reserve)

9/29 Alternative approaches to academic writing

Greene, *Mixed methods in social inquiry*, Chapter 10 and Interlude 3
Marshall & Barritt, Choices made, worlds created: The rhetoric of AERJ (e-reserve)
Bem “Writing the empirical journal article” [http://dbem.ws/WritingArticle.pdf](http://dbem.ws/WritingArticle.pdf)
Maxwell, “Guide to the APA Publication Manual: The most important things to remember.” (Blackboard)
Sandelowski, Tables or tableaux? The challenges of writing and reading mixed methods studies. (e-reserve)

Recommended:
APA Publication Manual
Module 2: Design, analysis, and validity

10/6  “Scientific research” and mixed methods

Module 1 assignment due

Platt, Strong inference (e-reserve)
James, Jeter vs. Everett (Blackboard)
Maxwell, Causal explanation, qualitative research, and scientific inquiry in education (Blackboard)
Eisenhart, Hammers and saws for the improvement of educational research (Blackboard)

Recommended:
Scriven, A Summative Evaluation of RCT Methodology: & An Alternative Approach to Causal Research (Blackboard)
Shadish, Cook, & Campbell, Experimental and quasi-experimental designs for generalized causal inference, Chapter 1 (e-reserve).
Chatterji, Evidence on “what works”: An argument for extended-term mixed-method (ETMM) evaluation designs (Blackboard)
Conrad (Ed.), Critically evaluating the role of experiments.
Lewontin, The analysis of variance and the analysis of causes, in Block (Ed.), The IQ controversy (e-reserve)
Maxwell, Re-emergent scientism, postmodernism, and dialogue across differences (Blackboard)
Maxwell, Explanation (Blackboard)
Maxwell, Scientism (Blackboard)
Pawson & Tilley, Realistic evaluation.
Raudenbush, Learning from attempts to improve schooling: The contribution of methodological diversity (Blackboard)

10/13  Research design and research problems

Greene, Mixed methods in social inquiry, Chapters 6-7 and Interlude 2
Maxwell & Loomis, Mixed method design: An alternative approach (Blackboard)
Maxwell, Qualitative research design, chapter 3
Kling et al., “Bullets don’t got no name,” in Weisner, Discovering successful pathways

Recommended:
Maxwell, Literature reviews of, and for, educational research (Blackboard)
10/20  Data analysis

Greene, *Mixed methods in social inquiry*, Chapter 8
Maxwell, Some notes on key concepts in quantitative analysis. Unpublished class notes (Blackboard)
Nix & Barnette, The data analysis dilemma: Ban or abandon. A review of null hypothesis significance testing (e-reserve)
Boaler & Staples, Creating mathematical futures (Blackboard)
Weiss et al., Working it out: The chronicle of a mixed-method analysis, in Weisner, *Discovering successful pathways*.

Recommended:
Maxwell & Miller, Categorizing and connecting strategies in qualitative data analysis (Blackboard)
Thompson, Statistical significance and effect size reporting: Portrait of a possible future (e-reserve)
Kaplan, Fill in the numbers <http://www.slate.com/id/2233353?wpisrc=newsletter>
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Exploratory_data_analysis

10/27  Validity and generalizability

Greene, *Mixed methods in social inquiry*, Chapter 9
Maxwell, Using qualitative research for causal explanation (Blackboard)
Leibovici, Effects of remote, retroactive, intercessory prayer (Blackboard)
Weisner et al., Behavior sampling and ethnography (Blackboard)
Becker, Generalizing from case studies. In Eisner & Peshkin, *Qualitative inquiry in education* (e-reserve)

Recommended:
Conrad & Conrad, Reassessing validity threats in experiments: Focus on construct validity (e-reserve)
Hammersley, *What's wrong with ethnography?*, Chapters 5, 7, and 8.
Module 3: Integrating approaches, methods, and data

11/3 Strategies for integrating approaches

Module 2 assignment due

Bryman, Barriers to integrating quantitative and qualitative research (Blackboard)
Trend, On the reconciliation of qualitative and quantitative analyses: A case study. In Cook & Reichardt, *Qualitative & quantitative methods in program evaluation*. (e-reserve)
Maxwell, Diversity and methodology (Blackboard)

Recommended:
Shulman, Summary and prognosis, in Shulman, *Paradigms and programs* (e-reserve)
Yanchar & Williams, Reconsidering the compatibility thesis and eclecticism: Five proposed guidelines for method use (Blackboard)

11/10 Examples: Integrating data collection methods

Kaplan & Duchon, Combining qualitative and quantitative methods in information systems research: A case study (Blackboard)
Maxwell, Sandlow, & Bashook, Combining ethnographic and experimental methods in evaluation research: A case study (e-reserve)
Rank, The blending of qualitative and quantitative methods in understanding childbearing among welfare recipients, in Hesse-Biber & Leavy (Eds), *Approaches to qualitative research* (e-reserve)
Zentella, Integrating qualitative and quantitative methods in the study of bilingual code switching (e-reserve)

11/17 Presenting integrated analyses and results


11/24 Thanksgiving: No class

12/1 More examples of analyses and results

Irwin, Data analysis and interpretation: Emergent issues in linking qualitative & quantitative evidence (e-reserve).
Muth, Conceptualizing incarcerated literacy learners: Pragmatic and dialectical uses of assessment data. Unpublished paper (Blackboard)
Gibson-Davis & Duncan, Qualitative-quantitative synergies in a random-assignment program evaluation, and the commentary by Huston, in Weisner, *Discovering successful pathways*. 
Recommended:
Tolman & Szalacha, Dimensions of desire: Bridging qualitative and quantitative methods in a study of female sexuality, in Hesse-Biber & Leavy (Eds), Approaches to qualitative research (e-reserve)

12/8 Final class: Presentations of mixed method designs/learning

Module 3 assignment due

Full references


Cook, T., and Reichardt, C. (Eds), Qualitative and Quantitative Methods in Evaluation Research. Sage, 1979


Pitman, MA, and Maxwell, JA, “Qualitative approaches to evaluation”. In MD LeCompte, WL


