George Mason University  
College of Education and Human Development

EDRS 824  
MIXED METHODS RESEARCH: INTEGRATING QUALITATIVE AND QUANTITATIVE APPROACHES  
Spring 2013

Instructor: Joe Maxwell  
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Class meeting: Thursday, 4:30-7:10; see course schedule.  
Location: Thompson 2022.  
Prerequisites: Successful completion (with a grade of B or higher) of EDRS 810 and EDRS 812, or equivalent coursework or experience. EDRS 811 is recommended but not required, since the main focus of 811 (how to do more advanced statistical analysis than that covered in EDRS 810) isn’t essential for much mixed methods research. If you anticipate using sophisticated statistical analysis for a planned mixed methods study, you need to be familiar with these techniques and their limitations; some of the limitations will be discussed in this course.

Catalog Description

This course is an advanced research seminar dealing with integrating qualitative and quantitative approaches, methods, and data in a single study. The course covers the paradigms and “mental models” that inform both approaches, and the ways in which qualitative and quantitative goals, questions, methods, analysis strategies, and presentation styles can be productively combined.

Course Goals

The main goals of the course are:  
1. Understand the most important characteristics of mixed methods 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 a mixed method study.  
3. Be able to use these understandings to evaluate published mixed methods research.  
4. Be able to plan and communicate the design and process of a mixed methods study.

Assigned Books

If you haven’t used my book *Qualitative Research Design: An Interactive Approach* in previous courses, you should read this (pdf file on Blackboard), since I will frequently refer to it on issues of research design, methods, and validity.

**Other readings** will be placed either on Blackboard (almost all) or on electronic reserve. These include assigned and recommended articles, papers of mine that may be relevant, and exemplary assignments from previous semesters. **Reading assignments are listed for the day on which they will be discussed.**

**Recommended Reference Books and Journals**


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

**Course Structure and Requirements**

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 available readings, and there will be in-class exercises dealing with certain skills. There will also be opportunities for you to present to the class, and get feedback on, your own research (what, in EDRS 812, I call “consultations”), and how integrating approaches can be useful in this.

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.

For each class after the first one, you are required to develop a class discussion question on one of the readings for that class, and to email this to me by midnight of the day before the class. I will use some of these questions as part of the class discussion of the readings. Doing this will count toward the participation component of the course grade.

**Student Expectations**

Students must adhere to the guidelines of the George Mason University Honor Code [See oai.gmu.edu/honor-code/].

Students must follow the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing [See http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/1301gen.html].

- Students are responsible for the content of university communications sent to their George Mason University email account and are required to activate their account and check it regularly. All communication from the university, college, school, and program will be sent to students solely through their Mason email account.

- Students must follow the university policy stating that all sound emitting devices shall be turned off during class unless otherwise authorized by the instructor.

- Students are expected to exhibit professional behaviors and dispositions at all times. For additional information on the College of Education and Human Development’s core values, see http://gse.gmu.edu/.
If you are a student with a disability, please let me know how I can best adjust the course and assignments to your strengths and needs. Students with disabilities who seek accommodations in a course must be registered with the George Mason University Office of Disability Services (ODS) and inform their instructor, in writing, at the beginning of the semester [See http://ods.gmu.edu/, or call 703-993-2474 to access the ODS].

Campus Resources

- The George Mason University Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) staff consists of professional counseling and clinical psychologists, social workers, and counselors who offer a wide range of services (e.g., individual and group counseling, workshops and outreach programs) to enhance students’ personal experience and academic performance [See http://caps.gmu.edu/].

- The George Mason University Writing Center staff provides a variety of resources and services (e.g., tutoring, workshops, writing guides, handbooks) intended to support students as they work to construct and share knowledge through writing [See http://writingcenter.gmu.edu/].

COURSE SCHEDULE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Topic and readings</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Module 1: What is mixed method research?</td>
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<tr>
<td>1/24</td>
<td>Introduction to the course and to mixed method research</td>
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<td>Elbow, The believing game and how to make conflicting opinions more fruitful (Blackboard)</td>
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<td>Rabinowitz &amp; Weseen, Power, politics, and the qualitative/quantitative debates in psychology (Blackboard)</td>
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<td>Greene, <em>Mixed methods in social inquiry</em>, Introduction and Chapters 1-3</td>
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<td>1/31</td>
<td>Qualitative and quantitative</td>
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<td>James, Inside-out perspective (Blackboard)</td>
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<td>Hammersley, Deconstructing the qualitative-quantitative divide (Blackboard).</td>
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<td>Maxwell, Using numbers in qualitative research (Blackboard).</td>
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<td>Minta et al., Hunting associations between badgers and coyotes (Blackboard).</td>
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<td>Kidder &amp; Fine, Qualitative and quantitative methods: When stories converge (Blackboard)</td>
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<td>Recommended:</td>
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<td>Blumer, Sociological analysis and the “variable” (Blackboard)</td>
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<tr>
<td>2/7</td>
<td>Paradigm issues</td>
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Greene, *Mixed methods in social inquiry*, Chapters 4-5 and Interlude 1

Yanchar & Williams, Reconsidering the compatibility thesis and eclecticism: Five proposed guidelines for method use (Blackboard)

Oakley, Paradigm wars (Blackboard)

Maxwell, Paradigms or toolkits? Philosophical and methodological positions as heuristics for mixed methods research (Blackboard)

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)

**Recommended:**

Lee Shulman, *Paradigms and programs.*

Maxwell, *A realist approach for qualitative research* (Blackboard)

Phillips, Postpositivistic science: Myths and realities (Blackboard)

Maxwell & Lincoln, Methodology and epistemology: A dialogue (Blackboard)

Pitman & Maxwell, Qualitative approaches to evaluation (Blackboard)

2/14 **Mixed methods social research**

Weisner, Introduction to *Discovering successful pathways.*

Castle, Fox, & Souder, Do professional development schools make a difference? A comparative study of PDS and non-PDS teacher candidates (Blackboard).

Goldenberg, Gallimore, & Reese, Using mixed methods to explore Latino children’s development, in Weisner, *Discovering successful pathways.*

Fricke, Taking culture seriously: Making the social survey ethnographic, in Weisner, *Discovering successful pathways.*

2/21 **Writing about mixed method research**

Greene, *Mixed methods in social inquiry*, Chapter 10 and Interlude 3

Marshall & Barritt, Choices made, worlds created: The rhetoric of AERJ (Blackboard)

Bem, Writing the empirical journal article (Blackboard)

Sandelowski, Tables or tableaux? The challenges of writing and reading mixed methods studies. (Blackboard)

**Recommended:**

Howard S. Becker, *Writing for social scientists.*

American Psychological Association Publication Manual

Maxwell, “Guide to the APA Publication Manual: The most important things to remember.” (Blackboard)


**Module 2: Design, analysis, and validity**
Module 1 assignment due

Platt, Strong inference (Blackboard)
Freedman, Statistical models and shoe leather (Blackboard)
Maxwell, Causal explanation, qualitative research, and scientific inquiry in education (Blackboard)
What is causing Arctic sea ice decline? <http://nsidc.org/icelights/2012/05/16/what-is-causing-arctic-sea-ice-decline/> - more-747
Smith and Pell, Parachute use to prevent death and major trauma related to gravitational challenge: Systematic review of randomised controlled trials (Blackboard)
Swern, A story of evidence-based medicine: Hormone replacement therapy and coronary heart disease in postmenopausal women (Blackboard)
Eisenhart, Hammers and saws for the improvement of educational research (Blackboard)

Recommended:
Maxwell, The Importance of Qualitative Research for Causal Explanation in Education (Blackboard)
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 (Blackboard)
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)
3/7 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)

3/14 Spring break—no class

3/21 Data analysis

Greene, Mixed methods in social inquiry, Chapter 8
Maxwell, Some notes on key concepts in quantitative analysis (unpublished class notes) (Blackboard)
Cohen, The Earth is round (p < .05) (Blackboard)
Nix & Barnette, The data analysis dilemma: Ban or abandon. A review of null hypothesis significance testing (Blackboard)
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:
Gigerenzer, Mindless statistics (Blackboard)
Maxwell & Miller, Categorizing and connecting strategies in qualitative data analysis (Blackboard)
Thompson, Statistical significance and effect size reporting: Portrait of a possible future (Blackboard)
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Exploratory_data_analysis
3/28  Validity and generalizability

Greene, *Mixed methods in social inquiry*, Chapter 9
Maxwell, *Qualitative research design*, 3rd ed., chapter 6, “Validity” (Blackboard)
James, Jeter vs. Everett (Blackboard)
Leibovici, Effects of remote, retroactive, intercessory prayer (Blackboard)
Saletan, <http://www.slate.com/articles/health_and_science/human_nature/2012/06/new_family_stuctures_study_is_gay_parenthood_bad_or_is_gay_marriage_good.html>
Weisner et al., Behavior sampling and ethnography (Blackboard)

Recommended:
Hammersley, Validity (e-reserve).
Saletan, A liberal war on science? <http://www.slate.com/articles/health_and_science/human_nature/2012/06/don_t_let_criticism_of_the_new_gay_parents_study_become_a_war_on_science.single.html>
Becker, Generalizing from case studies. In Eisner & Peshkin, *Qualitative inquiry in education* (Blackboard)

**Module 3: Integrating approaches, methods, and data**

4/4  Strategies for integrating approaches

*Module 2 assignment due*

Bryman, Barriers to integrating quantitative and qualitative research (Blackboard)
White, Of probits and participation: The use of mixed methods in quantitative impact evaluation (Blackboard)
Trend, On the reconciliation of qualitative and quantitative analyses: A case study (Blackboard)
Kaplan & Duchon, Combining qualitative and quantitative methods in information systems research: A case study (Blackboard)

Recommended:
Maxwell, Diversity and methodology (Blackboard)
Shulman, Summary and prognosis, in Shulman, *Paradigms and programs* (Blackboard)
4/11 Examples: Integrating data collection methods

Maxwell, Sandlow, & Bashook, Combining ethnographic and experimental methods in evaluation research: A case study (Blackboard)
Rank, The blending of qualitative and quantitative methods in understanding childbearing among welfare recipients (Blackboard)
Bernheimer, Weisner, & Lowe, Impacts of children with troubles on working poor families: Mixed-method and experimental evidence (Blackboard)
Zentella, Integrating qualitative and quantitative methods in the study of bilingual code switching (Blackboard)

4/18 Presenting integrated analyses and results

Morse, Tylko, & Dixon, Characteristics of the Fall-Prone Patient (Blackboard)
Morse & Tylko, The Use of Qualitative Methods in a Study Examining Patient Falls (Blackboard)
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 (Blackboard)
Milgram, Obedience to authority. Harper & Row, 1974

4/25 More examples of integrating analyses and results

Irwin, Data analysis and interpretation: Emergent issues in linking qualitative & quantitative evidence (Blackboard).
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.

5/2 Final class

Module 3 assignment due
Full references


Cook, Thomas, and Reichardt, Charles (Eds), *Qualitative and quantitative methods in evaluation research*. Sage, 1979


Maxwell, Joseph A., Using numbers in qualitative research. *Qualitative Inquiry* 16(6), pp. 475-482 (2010).


Phillips, Postpositivistic science: Myths and realities. In Egon Guba (Ed.), *The paradigm dialog*.


Rank, The blending of qualitative and quantitative methods in understanding childbearing among welfare recipients, In S. Hesse-Biber & P. Leavy (Eds), *Approaches to qualitative research*.


