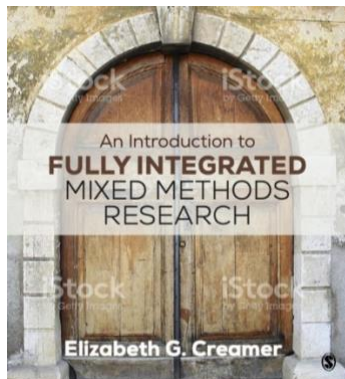


LESSON PLAN

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GRADUATE LEVEL RESEARCH METHODS CLASS ON MIXED METHODS



TOPIC: *Controversies in Mixed Methods Research*

READING: [Chapter 10: Controversies and Future Directions in Mixed Methods Research](#) in Creamer, E. G. (2018) *Introduction to Fully Integrated Mixed Methods Research* (pp. 198-223). SAGE

SESSION OBJECTIVES

On completing the session, students will be able to think more complexly about mixed methods research and:

1. Define what is meant by a mental model.
2. Identify key differences between definitions of mixed methods research.
3. Identify statements that can form the basis of a personalized position statement or mental model about mixed methods research.

ACTIVITY/ASSIGNMENT

One of the leaders in the original group of academics who began to build an argument for mixed methods as a distinct methodology, Jennifer C. Greene from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, uses the language of ‘**mental model**’ to describe the unique vision each investigator develops about research. Noting that it encompasses what some refer to as paradigms, disciplinary orientation, and theoretical perspective, she describes a mental model to be understood as the “complex, multifaceted lens through which a social inquirer perceives and makes sense of the social world” (*Mixed Methods in Social Inquiry*, 2007, p. 13).

Mixed methods research differs from another methodology, grounded theory, whose history can be traced back to a single pair of authors, Glaser and Strauss and their seminal 1967 book, *The Discovery of Grounded Theory* (Creamer, *Advancing Grounded Theory with Mixed Methods Research*, 2021). Emerging two decades after that classic work by Glaser and Strauss (1967), the discussion about mixed methods was fueled by multiple methodologists writing in different contexts and continents and from the vantage point of different mental models. These differences are mirrored in the variety of definitions that were offered for mixed methods in the group of scholars who established the mixed methods cannon.

The different mental models evident in the definitions that appear in the foundational literature about mixed methods research can be helpful to investigators new to the methodology to develop a personal stance about mixed methods. It can inform reflexivity and intentionality about a personal position statement about mixed methods that Greene would refer to as a mental model. This can be useful in the type of reflexivity that is expected in reporting mixed methods research.

ACTIVITY

As a starting point for developing a personalized position statement about your mental model about mixed methods research, consider the similarities and differences in the implications of the definition of mixed methods research offered by three methodologists instrumental to the development of the foundational literature (Greene, Bazeley, and Creswell and Plano Clark). No one definition is any more ‘right’ than another. Differences between the definitions draw attention to choices an investigator has and to the authors and literature to seek out that best aligns to his or her views.

DISTINGUISHING KEY ELEMENTS OF A DEFINITION OF MIXED METHODS RESEARCH

Pat Bazeley, *Integrating Analysis in Mixed Methods Research* (2018)

Definition: “Any research that involves multiple sources and types of data and/or multiple approaches to analysis of data in which integration of data and analyses occurs priority to drawing final conclusions”	
Implications	Is this a Position You’d Like to Incorporate in Your Mental Model?
Multiple QUAL or QUANT sources or data can be mixed methods. It’s not only QUAL and QUANT.	
Integration is central to the definition.	
Integration must occur during analysis.	
Integration only at the point of drawing inferences is multi-methods.	

Creswell & Plano Clark, *Designing and Conducting Mixed Methods Research* (2nd edition), 2011

Definition: “MMR is a research design with philosophical assumptions as well as methods of inquiry. ...As a method, it focuses on collecting and analyzing both quantitative and qualitative data in a single study or a series of studies.”	
Implications	Is this a Position You’d Like to Incorporate in Your Mental Model?
MMR is a research design.	
MMR is a method of data collection and analysis.	
Integration is not a central defining element. It primarily occurs at the inference stage.	

Jennifer Greene, *Mixed Methods in Social Inquiry* (2007)

Definition: “The core meaning of mixed methods in social inquiry is to invite multiple mental models into the same inquiry space for purposes of respectful conversation, dialogue, and learning one from the other toward the generation of better understanding of the phenomenon being studied” (p. 13).	
Implications	Is this a Position You’d Like to Incorporate in Your Mental Model?
Purpose for using mixed methods is paramount to its selection.	

The priority is to engage different perspectives.	
Multiple paradigms are involved.	
Personal values are part of a mental model.	