

No.2 February 2015

From the President's desk

Dear MMIRA Association Members: I have been busy along with the other officers and Executive Committee members of your Association in building toward the future. This includes planning for a March election of the new President-Elect of the Association, continuing to develop Association awards including a dissertation award and travel awards, moving forward with the four MMIRA Regional Conferences (Jamaica, Philadelphia, San Antonio, and Sendai, Japan) during the next few months, fielding proposals for sites for the 2016 International Conference, and organizing a new "MMIRA Task Force on the Future of Mixed Methods and Our Association." Many thanks for your support. And let me know how I can further enhance our growing Association!

John W. Creswell, President, MMIRA

Editor's tips for the mixed methods researcher

Are you struggling with how to label your mixed method? I read an article recently in which the authors redefined the type of mixed methods research they were doing multiple times during the course of their project (if the resulting article was anything to go by). The complexity and evolving nature of many mixed methods projects means that applying a defining label to the design and mixed methods purpose of the study can be inadequate to convey what was done. Deciding which label fits, even if the project is relatively straightforward, can also be an issue for students who feel bound to name their design or constrained to fit their project to a named design. This kind of problem is common also when qualitative methods are being described and students feel bound to apply a particular methodological label to their work.

Labels can be useful, especially to introduce the methodology section in journal articles where word limits are tight, as a shorthand statement describing the study's design, purpose and/or methodology – but only if the labels applied clearly help to convey how the research was done. If used, they need to be supplemented by sufficient explanation to ensure that message is understood. Alternatively, I see no problem in not using a conventional label at all for designs, purposes or methodologies. Rather, start with a brief overview statement to guide the reader, and then follow through with sufficient detail that the reader understands how you conducted the study and arrived at your results. Therein lies the hint – the main purpose for describing your methods is so that I as reader can assess the credibility of your results and conclusions.

 Pat Bazeley

News & Events

Upcoming conferences

March 12-13, Jamaica: MMIRA Regional Conference at The University of the West Indies, Mona. Keynote: Tony Onwuegbuzie. Conference chair: Loraine Cook. Further info: <http://mmira.org>; www.mona.uwi.edu/mixedmethods/ or mixed.methods2015@gmail.com

June 19, Philadelphia PA: MMIRA Regional Conference at Drexel University, College of Nursing and Health Professions. *Improbable dialogues: Interprofessional mixed methods research collaborations* Keynote: John Creswell. Conference chair: Nancy Gerber, Co-chair: Joke Bradt. Further info: <http://mmira.org>; nq27@drexel.edu; jbradt@drexel.edu

August 2-3, San Antonio, TX: MMIRA Regional conference hosted by the Lifelong Learning Centre in the University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio. *Engaging Patients in Health Care Systems: A Pragmatic, Mixed Methods Approach*. Contact: alvaradolv@uthscsa.edu

September 19-20, Sendai Japan: MMIRA Regional Conference at Miyagi University of Education, Sendai, in association with Japan Association for Qualitative Psychology Website: www.jsmmr.org Contact: jsmmr.adm@gmail.com

A unique US national program in mixed methods education and mentorship

The US National Institutes of Health (NIH) has funded a four-year project to train 56 health science researchers in mixed methods. The Mixed Methods Research Training Program for the Health Sciences will provide a state-of-the-art methodology training program to enhance the mixed methods skills of NIH investigators. This project is being coordinated by Joseph Gallo (PI) at Johns Hopkins University, John W. Creswell (Co-PI) at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, and Charles Deutsch (Co-PI) at Harvard University. It has primary support from the National Institute for Mental Health, the National Institute on Aging, the National Institute for Nursing Research, the National Heart Lung and Blood Institute, and the Office of Behavioral and Social Sciences. Each year 14 scholars (mentees) in a cohort will bring to the training their individual research investigations, and they will be matched with consultants (mentors) from a list of 25 experienced NIH-mixed methods investigators from around the US. At this time, this program is only open to individuals with a doctoral degree (MD, PhD, ScD or similar degree) and U.S. citizens. Each year the scholars and the consultants will participate in informal consultations, webinars, and in intensive summer workshops to be held in alternating years at Johns Hopkins and Harvard. In late fall of each year, applications will be solicited for a new cohort to be trained. For further information, please contact jgallo2@jhu.edu.

New books

Recently published books on, or using, mixed methods

Mixed Methods Applications in Action Research: From Methods to Community Action

Nataliya V. Ivankova LA: Sage ©2015 472pp ISBN: 9781452220031 US\$54

Part I: Applying Mixed Methods in Action Research

Chapter 1: Introducing Mixed Methods Research

Chapter 2: Introducing Action Research

Chapter 3: Applying Mixed Methods in Action Research

Part II: Designing and Conducting a Mixed Methods Action Research Study

Chapter 4: Conceptualizing a Mixed Methods Action Research Study

Chapter 5: Designing a Mixed Methods Action Research Study

Chapter 6: Planning Integration of Quantitative and Qualitative Methods in a Mixed Methods Action Research Study

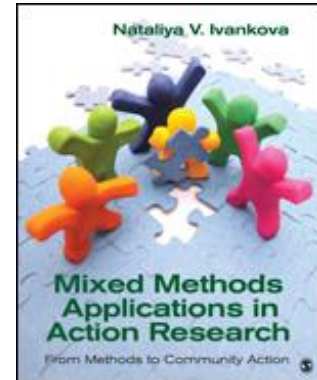
Chapter 7: Sampling and Collecting Data in a Mixed Methods Action Research Study

Chapter 8: Analyzing Data in a Mixed Methods Action Research Study

Chapter 9: Assessing Quality of a Mixed Methods Action Research Study

Part III: Using Mixed Methods Inferences to Inform Community Action

Chapter 10: Planning and Implementing Action Using Mixed Methods Action Research Study Inferences



Mixed Methods for Policy Research and Program Evaluation

Patricia Burch & Carolyn J. Heinrich LA: Sage 232 pp ISBN: 9781452276625 US\$50

Chapter 1: Introduction: The Demand for and Value of Fully Integrated Qualitative and Quantitative Research

Chapter 2: Conceptualizing Mixed Methods Research

Chapter 3: Designing and Implementing Fully Integrated Mixed

Chapter 4: Developing Practical Tools for Integrated Mixed Methods Studies of Policy Implementation

Chapter 5: Fully Integrated Mixed Methods Research in K-12 and Higher Education in the United States

Chapter 6: An Application of Fully Integrated Mixed Methods in Program Development and Evaluation

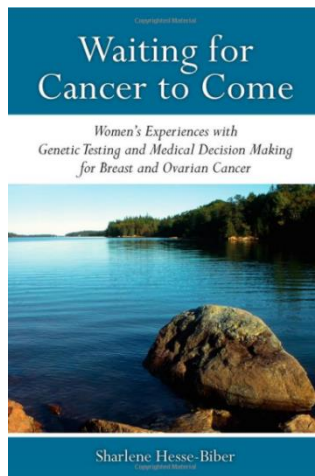
Chapter 7: Mixed Methods Research in an International Context

Chapter 8: On the Future of Fully Integrated Mixed Methods Research: Context and Common Lessons from the Cases for the Field



This practical text equips students, researchers, and policymakers in the social sciences with the tools they need for applying mixed methods in policy research and program evaluation, from design, through data collection, and dissemination. Emphasizing the “how-to”—the set of conceptual and active tasks carried out by mixed methods researchers—the book is illustrated with rich case studies from the authors’ own research projects in education and public policy. These examples help readers identify and explain policy and program impacts and better understand the “why” and “how” of observed effects. Throughout the book, the authors describe challenges that both beginners and advanced scholars are likely to encounter when doing mixed methods research and recommend practical tools available to address them.

Waiting for Cancer to Come: Genetic Testing and Medical Decision Making for Breast and Ovarian Cancer Sharlene Hesse-Biber ISBN: 978-0-472-05219-6 US\$24.95
University of Michigan Press, 2014 <http://www.press.umich.edu/5660855>



1. The genetic testing industry: capitalizing on fear, selling empowerment
 2. Ready for the test
 3. You're BRCA positive
 4. Waiting and watching
 5. The surgical fix
 6. Finding new normal
 7. Toward empowerment
- Epilogue: Through their eyes: studying women's health

Waiting for Cancer to Come tells the stories of women who are struggling with their high risk for cancer. Based on a qualitatively-driven mixed methods study involving interviews and surveys of dozens of women, this book pieces together the diverse yet interlocking experiences of women who have tested positive for the BRCA 1/2 gene mutations, which indicate a higher risk of developing breast and ovarian cancer. Sharlene Hesse-Biber brings these narratives to light and follows women's journeys from deciding to get screened for BRCA, to learning the test has come back positive, to dealing with their risk. Many women already know the challenges of a family history riddled with cancer and now find themselves with the devastating knowledge of their own genetic risk. Using the voices of the women themselves to describe the under-explored BRCA experience, *Waiting for Cancer to Come* looks at the varied emotional, social, economic, and psychological factors at play in women's decisions about testing and cancer prevention.

From the journals

Ford, H. (2014). Big data and small: collaborations between ethnographers and data scientists. *Big Data & Society*, 1(2), 1-3. doi: 10.1177/2053951714544337 (open access)

What does ethnography have to do with big data? Find out in Heather Ford's account of her experience, as an ethnographer, of working with computer scientists to understand the sourcing of information provided through Wikipedia. One of the lessons learned from her experience was the value of sharing in the activities of other team members, rather than compartmentalizing each person's contribution to the overall project.

Cooper, K. S. (2014). Eliciting engagement in the high school classroom: A mixed-methods examination of teaching practices. *American Educational Research Journal*, 51 (2), 363-402.

Reviewed by Prof. Elizabeth Creamer, School of Education, Virginia Tech

This article produced from an ambitious dissertation completed by a doctoral student at Harvard describes a mixed method case study designed to explain whether, how and why select teaching strategies are significantly related to student engagement in 581 classes at a comprehensive blue collar high school in Texas. Eighty percent of the students completed multiple survey forms designed to evaluate the extent that teachers in their different classes used three sets of teaching practices. These are: *connected instruction* (personally meaningful),

lively teaching that promotes active engagement through games and activities, and *academic rigor* by supporting students to complete academically rigorous assignments and conveying a passion for the content. In addition to the quantitative data, qualitative observations and interviews were used to construct five case studies that illustrate variations in classroom approaches related to engagement.

Results of the study indicated that characteristics of teaching practice (e.g. connection, lively, or rigorous) were much more strongly related to student engagement than characteristics of the students. Teaching practices explained 71% of the variation in engagement; as compared to only 29% related to student qualities. Connected learning had a much stronger relationship to student engagement than the other categories of practice. The author hypothesized, but did not test empirically, that the strong theoretical relationship between connected learning and engagement is that connected learning promotes engagement because "it appears to draw on students' sense of self as a mechanism of engagement" (p. 393). The case studies illustrate that student engagement was not as high in classes where connected instruction was not supplemented with academically challenging activities.

The study used a sequential, explanatory design that was driven by the quantitative analysis. Confirmatory factor analysis was used to document the reliability of the three-factor structure and regression analysis to confirm the relationship between the teaching strategies and student engagement. These results were then used to identify five embedded case studies to confirm and expand the quantitative results by addressing the theoretical questions about how and why these teaching practices were related to engagement.

There is considerable value added in this study by the use of mixed methods even though the commentary is not solidly grounded in the mixed methods methodological literature. The inclusion of what, how, and why research questions is a classic signal of a mixed methods study that offers an opportunity for theory development. The author describes her reasons for using mixed methods primarily in term of confirmation and triangulation, but the case studies actually provided a considerably more nuanced picture of classroom practices particularly in demonstrating that engagement was maximized in cases where connected learning strategies were used within the context of a demanding academic environment where there were many opportunities for active involvement. The discussion section is exemplary in that it provides a well-developed explanation for the findings that interweaves or mixes insights from both the qualitative and quantitative analysis.

There's a lot to admire about both the study and the article, which is all the more noteworthy in that the author did not utilize an extant database or set of instruments. The theoretical link to identity is the least well-developed aspect of the article. Although long, this publication could be extremely useful as an instructional tool in a graduate class designed to help pre-service teachers to analyze their own teaching style or to develop a philosophy of teaching stamen. The design could readily be replicated and theoretical explanation extended on a smaller scale by applying the same constructs to other classroom settings and using existing instruments that measure dimensions of identity. The student and teacher interview protocols are available through a supplemental website. STEM educators will be heartened to know that three of the five case studies illuminate teaching practices that promote engagement in high school science classrooms.

Read it in the latest issue of JMMR (January 2015)

As a member of MMIRA, you can access Journal of Mixed Methods Research articles through the MMIRA website. What follows is a summary of articles in the most recent issue (Jan., 2015).

Knaggs, Sondergeld and Schardt evaluated the impact of a college preparatory program (GEAR UP) on attendance and persistence in low-income and minority students who face a range of personal, social, and systemic barriers. GEAR UP had been established in a school experiencing 'academic emergency' (with just 59% graduation rate), with university-teacher cooperation. The team used a quasi-experimental design based on four years of college attendance data for two cohorts, only one of which had been exposed to the program. Focus groups were conducted with a parallel group of purposively selected (succeeding) senior high school students to explore factors influencing their decisions to attend college (or not). Quantitative and qualitative data were analysed and presented separately, then together integrated with the literature to make meta-inferences regarding the impact of the program on students' attendance and persistence.

This article illustrates a common problem when relying on statistical significance to assess program outcomes. While differences between cohorts were significant, differences for subgroups (minorities, low income) were not necessarily so despite the proportions achieving some outcomes showing quite marked differences. This was not so much an incongruity (as suggested by the authors), but an artefact of small sub-group sizes and other features of the statistical database.

Knaggs, C. M., Sondergeld, T. A., & Schardt, B. (2015). Overcoming barriers to college enrollment, persistence, and perceptions for urban high school students in a college preparatory program. *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*, 9(1), 7-30. doi: 10.1177/1558689813497260

Joss Moorkens provides a very detailed examination of the kinds of translation inconsistencies introduced when translation is automated using translation memory software. Quantitative analysis (primarily counts) of the kinds of errors made in a sample of translated texts provided the focus for follow up interviews with translation experts who used translation memory software to assist their work. Although data collection and analyses for the two phases were necessarily conducted separately, results were written in an integrated form with interviewee explanation or other commentary provided for each problem revealed by the analysis of texts.

Moorkens, J. (2015). Consistency in translation memory corpora: a mixed methods case study. *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*, 9(1), 31-50. doi: 10.1177/1558689813508226

Concerned at the high rates of suicide amongst US military personnel (one per day)

Rosenberg, Lewandowski and Siegel used merged qual/quant profiles to test the application of goal disruption theory, as evidenced in military personnel who might be prompted to endure more harm than they should in striving to maintain their belief in their goals and their ability to achieve them. The authors created merged profiles for each of the 127 participants by combining quantitative measures of their need to achieve and preparedness to endure harm in order to achieve their needs (each classified as low/high based on median splits to create four profiles) with a priori coded qualitative responses about their most salient goals (those that would make a 'perfect world'). Content analysis of the merged profiles allowed identification of the content of goals most associated with higher need and/or harm endurance, e.g., those related to family (high/high), money (high/low). Additional coding showed a high-need/high-endurance profile was associated also with higher levels of specificity of goals. Although the

participant sample reflected many branches of the military, a minority only (37%) had ever seen combat.

Rosenberg, B. D., Lewandowski, J. A., & Siegel, J. T. (2015). Goal disruption theory, military personnel, and the creation of merged profiles: a mixed methods investigation. *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*, 9(1), 51-69. doi: 10.1177/1558689813508006

van der Roest, Spaaij, and van Bottenburg explore the prevalence and characteristics of mixed methods research in the emerging discipline of sport management. Classifying any combination of qualitative and quantitative methods within a study as 'mixed', they found that the prevalence of mixed methods articles within four major sport management journals was just 1.7%, with rates ranging from 0.8% until 3.1%. Of the 46 mixed methods studies identified, more than one-third did not integrate separately conducted methods prior to a discussion of the combined findings, and so even less would meet a more stringent definition of mixed methods. The authors found also that "when MM designs are used ..., their rationale and philosophical underpinning are often not thought through sufficiently and their design is often poorly legitimized and weakly mixed" (p. 85). They concluded that sport management, as a subdiscipline, was not yet integrating insights from mixed methods research, and suggested reasons why this might be.

van der Roest, J.-W., Spaaij, R., & van Bottenburg, M. (2015). Mixed methods in emerging academic subdisciplines: the case of sport management. *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*, 9(1), 70-90. doi: 10.1177/1558689813508225

Mahoh and Onwuegbuzie's methodological article addresses the issue of whether descriptive and interpretive phenomenological approaches can provide a basis for mixing methods. The authors argue that "axiological and methodological parallels between phenomenological and quantitative [postpositivist] methods allow for [their] combination ... under a single overarching paradigmatic framework" (p. 95). They suggest these methods are most often in one of a variety of sequential designs to allow for differences in approaches. The authors provide examples of mixed methods studies incorporating different styles of phenomenology, and describe different design models.

Mayoh, J., & Onwuegbuzie, A. J. (2015). Toward a conceptualization of mixed methods phenomenological research. *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*, 9(1), 91-107. doi: 10.1177/1558689813505358

Finally, **Wallace** reviews Jason, L. A., & Glenwick, D. S. (Eds.). (2012). *Methodological approaches to community-based research*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association – a useful-looking book in which different authors contribute discussions on pluralism, mixed methods, data grouping, time series analysis, multilevel modelling, epidemiological approaches, geographic information systems, and economic cost analysis.

MMIRA updates

Watch this space!

—for news of scholarships and awards, coming in the next issue.

Membership

Currently, MMIRA has 610 members, including 225 regular members, 216 student members, 136 members from developing nations, and 27 institutional memberships. Our members come from all major continents and most academic disciplines.

184 of our members currently need to renew their memberships. If you are one of these, *please* renew as soon as possible! Also, *please* tell others about the MMIRA and ask them to join!

Executive

We will soon be initiating the process for electing a new President Elect for MMIRA, so think about who might be able to make a strong contribution to the Association in that role, watch for a call for nominations, and then take the opportunity to vote. On July 1, the current President Elect (Pat Bazeley) will become the President for 2015-6, and John Creswell (current President) will continue on the Board for one more year as (immediate) Past President. Other Board positions will remain as they are at present this time round, as they run on a two year cycle.

MMIRA on Facebook

MMIRA on Facebook page now has 278 friends and is constantly growing. We invite all MMIRA members to join the MMIRA community in Facebook to follow the news about MMIRA and discuss the mixed methods research developments around the world:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/mmira/>

MMIRA on Twitter @mmira2014

MMIRA is now on Twitter! If you haven't already done so, follow us at @MMIRA2014 and be the first to hear about upcoming events, opportunities, and mixed methods resources. (Ed: There's pointers to some really great resources there!). Twitter is a great way to network with the MMIRA international community of scholars and create opportunities for collaboration. We hope to connect with you soon!

Social Media 101: Getting Started on Twitter

by Mandy Archibald, Student representative on the MMIRA Board¹

Part 2: Establishing your Twitter strategy

In Part 1 of this series we offered practical tips for getting you started on Twitter, the popular microblogging site. We discussed the practicalities of setting up your Twitter account, establishing your profile, and 'following' and tweeting. After grasping these basics it is time to

consider your Twitter *strategy* – namely, how to make the most of Twitter as an academic tool for connecting, learning, sharing, and enhancing your scope of influence.

What is your Twitter voice?

Followers want to know what you represent. Are you using Twitter to share recent research in your area, your personal reflections, or both? Set boundaries for what you tweet about, and *retweet* content from your followers and others that aligns with your interests. Retweeting and replying to tweets is also a great way to connect with other users, and is characteristic of twitter’s interactive communication style.

Who do you want to reach?

You need followers to have reach, and you need reach to have impact. Who is your target audience for the content that you are tweeting about? Reach out to these users through *mentions* (include their twitter username, like @MMIRA2014 in your Tweet). As the tweets from those you follow show up in your timeline – *respond!* Responding is a great way to get a new conversation started.

How will you manage your account?

Remember that regular engagement is the most effective way of getting the most out of Twitter. Take a minute to plan out your Twitter content for the week. For example, you might tweet about new research on Monday and Tuesday, helpful hints for scholarship on Wednesday and so on. Also, don’t be afraid to ask for what you want. If you are seeking a reply, say so. If you are hoping for retweets, ask for them!

Control your timeline!

Only tweets from those users you follow show up on your timeline. Take time periodically to review the list of who you follow. Follow and unfollow users regularly based on their contributions. You can also *mute* a user. This is an appealing option if you don’t want to unfollow someone but also don’t want this user’s tweets to show up on your timeline.

There are many more features, tricks and tips to using Twitter. Stay tuned for Part 3 of this series, entitled “Getting Fancy with Twitter ” in the next quarterly newsletter. Until then, happy Tweeting!

Your association

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Secretary: Beth Larson

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