Foreword

The paradigms question has been laid to rest after being heavily debated these last three decades. While we have moved beyond the perennial discussion about the one best method to conduct research, we are still left with how to best teach novice researchers to become proficient in mixed methods. With this book, we feel a dream has become an opportunity to offer a step by step outline of how to conduct a quality mixed methods study for novice researchers. As professors, teaching our masters and doctoral students research methodology, we feel there is a void in comprehensive teaching materials that can take students in the social and behavioral sciences through a quality Mixed Methods Research (MMR) project from start to finish. While there are numerous definitions of MMR, we feel that Creswell’s (2009) definition of the research approach “as involving philosophical assumptions, the use of qualitative and quantitative approaches, and the mixing of both approaches in a study” is precise and encompassing (p. 4).

The evolution of mixed methods research and its subsequent acceptance as a valid approach, as well as its contribution to the field, warrants our attention and requires us to focus on the logistics of teaching mixed methods. Now solidly established as the third research community or the third methodological movement (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2003), the mixed methods approach provides researchers with an opportunity to gain a holistic understanding of a research problem. The proposition of our experience is that students, albeit new to the research process, need to be successful in learning both quantitative and qualitative approaches. While some research questions can only be answered using quantitative data and others are only suited for qualitative data, one can’t argue that some studies will provide more comprehensive results from a mixed methods approach. The old adage we tell our students, “the research question drives everything,” is still very true. We note that many traditional doctoral programs still place students in either qualitative or quantitative paradigms for their initial research orientation. We believe, as Gorard and Taylor (2004) urge, that novice researchers can become imprisoned within one of these purported corners, limiting their potential to become consumers and generators of research. Hence we concur with Teddlie and Tashakkori (2009) that it is “essential for social and behavioral scientists today to be methodologically bilingual” (p. 32). We would like to thank our students past and current for the opportunity to learn with them and to hone our own research skills of MMR as we are emerged in this journey together.

WHY CHOOSE MIXED METHODS RESEARCH

Why choose Mixed Methods Research (MMR)? MMR helps to improve communication across disciplines and among practitioners leading to better outcomes. MMR appears to be a form of research that
**Foreword**

will greatly benefit practitioners as well as experienced researchers who want to expand their research methodologies. Research that has been presented primarily by quantitative research can benefit from the voice of the participants and the added value of the different perspective that qualitative research can provide. The purpose of MMR is to draw from the positive aspects of both research paradigms to better answer the research question. MMR has become a widely accepted and well established technique used in many areas of research in order to enhance the proficiency and reliability of research result. This book contributes to the understanding of MMR technique. In writing this book we have attempting to break down the steps or decisions researchers need to consider and master in order to produce a quality study. It is our experience that the thought of conducting a study feels overwhelming to many, and in our own teaching we address these concerns and offer to break down the research process into manageable linear phases. Hence the outline of the chapters follows this logical process.

The intent of this book is to create a practical, easy to read and understand, user-friendly book that will reach a wide audience. The main target is the novice researcher, for example master or doctoral level students committed to writing their thesis, dissertation, or scholarly articles. Typically these students have very limited knowledge of research. The majority of books on research are highly complex and target the advanced researchers. This book will help to fill the void for beginning researchers who are committed to conducting high quality research while at the same time being novice researchers. MMR is often used in schools, businesses and non-profit organizations as they strive to address and resolve questions that will impact their organizations. We hope that the book will be an excellent instructional aid for a professor who wishes to utilize this book in a research methods course. The final chapter, Creating and Implementing a Mixed Methods Research Study, is a complete tool taking students through the research process step by step from start to finish.

*Mette L. Baran*
*Cardinal Stritch University, USA*

*Janice E. Jones*
*Cardinal Stritch University, USA*

*Milwaukee, October 2015*

**REFERENCES**


