



PURPOSE: Although there are two basic approaches to conducting social science research (i.e., quantitative and qualitative), each has its strengths and weaknesses in “getting to the heart of” any social phenomenon. We have observed, with some distress, that researchers (including fledgling researchers in graduate school) often define themselves as being committed to one or the other research approach or tradition. Although this commitment often influences how researchers approach questions or define studies they undertake, we believe that it is research questions that should drive the approach, and not a particular researcher’s training or preference. Many (or maybe most) research questions are quite broad, and how they are addressed could often benefit from inquiries designed from several traditions. Our purposes in this course are several. First, we hope to encourage students to think more broadly about the research they undertake (now or in the future). We have seen too often a lack of respect for, or even hostility to, different perspectives. Thus, we want to encourage discourse across perspectives. Second, we want students to actually engage in mixed-methods research. These activities are meant to build both skill and appreciation for research that is driven by the questions we ask, rather than the methodologies we prefer. We have a third purpose, which is hopefully a product of the teaching staff for the course. We wish to engage in some public and respectful discussions – between two faculty members who are know mostly for their research in one or another paradigm. We hope that our students will benefit from these discussions, and we suspect that they will be among our own best experiences in this new course. We appreciate that you have decided to join us in this new undertaking, from which we all hope to learn a great deal. Because the course is new, we have chosen to focus on particular research and data that each of us knows well, but both of us are somewhat unfamiliar on the whole.

#### REQUIRED READINGS:

- Text: Abbas Tashakoori and Charles Tedley, Editors (2003). *Handbook of Mixed Methods in Social and Behavioral Research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Articles: Available on CTools.

DATA SOURCES: There are two general sources of data for the course, both of which focus on children in and out of school. One source focuses on young children, usually between 5 and 6 years old, in their first formal year of schooling: kindergarten. The major format of these data is quantitative, and they are part of a nationally representative longitudinal study sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education: the *Early Childhood Longitudinal Study – Kindergarten Cohort (ECLS-K)*. We use a random subset of the ECLS-K study, including data on close to 20 children in each of 200 U.S. public and private elementary schools. The data are organized into two SPSS systems files, one containing data on children, the other on their schools (the data files may be linked by the school IDs). Students may also use an existing complementary qualitative dataset, collected in kindergarten and first-grade classrooms in low-income Michigan public elementary schools.

The second data source focuses on the literacy practices of adolescents (6<sup>th</sup> through 11<sup>th</sup>-grade youth) in and out of school in one urban community. The data come from a study sponsored by the National Institutes of Health and the Institute of Education Sciences (R01HD046115 NICHD/ACF/ASPE/IES). The total sample is longitudinal (three years, to

date), with repeat participants representing a subsample of each year's sample. These data are both qualitative and quantitative in nature, and represent semi-structured, reading process, and ethnographic interviews; some observational data; large-scale survey data; reading diagnostic data; and some school records. For the purposes of this course, two years of interview, survey, and some school record data will be made available.

**ASSIGNMENTS:** Students are required to complete four papers. This includes three short papers that involve bringing the mixed-method approach to existing data and/or research that has been accomplished using solely qualitative or quantitative methods. The fourth paper – a final project – will involve analyzing data collected using multiple, mixed methods. In general, these assignments make use of the data sources described above. However, students who have access to their own data that fit the course formats are encouraged to use them for the final project. Whether using the data sources supplied or another source, the final project will be a true mixed-method study.

All papers must be submitted via CTools and hard copy in class on the due date.

- Paper 1: You will read two articles, one by each of the instructors, which represent data sources and analyses using only one method. These published papers make use of the same data sources described above. In this brief (no more than 20 double-spaced pages) conceptual paper, you should:
  1. Suggest a few research questions raised but not answered by the analyses presented in each paper.
  2. Propose additional data sources and analytic methods that you might employ to address those questions for each paper. You should provide details for each suggested source and method (e.g., if proposing a semi-structured interview, then provide the interview prompts and a method for analyzing those data; if proposing an experimental intervention, then discuss the intervention design, outcome measures, and analytic methods for examining growth as a result of the intervention).
  3. Discuss how these proposed methods would work in tandem with the methods already employed in the published study. As part of this discussion, predict any points of incommensurability in the methods.
  
- Paper 2: Using qualitative data from the ALD data source, you will design and conduct a short study focused on a particular issue. Around those qualitative results, you are asked to design a quantitative study to address questions that are unanswered by the qualitative data to which you have access for this paper. For example, you may have in-depth interview or observational data that illustrate actual adolescent literacy practices outside of school, accompanied by young people's thoughts about their engagement in these practices, but you may wish to know whether a large sample of youth engage in such practices and, if so, what the effects of those practices are on some outcome variable of interest. Or you may have observational and interview data with kindergarten or first-grade teachers about how they accommodate their teaching to their low-income students. You will design an accompanying study that details the guiding research questions you would ask, the

methods of data collection and analysis, and a plan for integrating the findings with the qualitative data you have already collected and analyzed. The objective of this paper is to be able to consider how the quantitative study would have to be designed to complement—not merely supplement—the qualitative study already conducted. Thus, the proposal should reflect the sense that the various data would be used side by side to provide insights into the domain under study, rather than this paper serving simply as a proposal to do a separate quantitative study. This paper should be not more than 10 double-spaced pages in length, but can include an appendix with some qualitative presentations you have drawn from the existing data.

- Paper 3: Paper 3 is the reverse of Paper 2. That is, you start with quantitative data, design and conduct a focused study, and then design a qualitative study to address questions unaddressed or suggested by the quantitative data to which you have access. For example, you may have survey data results regarding the nature and frequency of adolescent literacy practices outside of school (working with the ALD data), but you may wish to know more about the motivation of youth to engage in particular practices. Or you may choose to use quantitative data about young children's instruction in kindergarten (working with the ECLS data), but may wish to know more about the processes or interactions these children have in school. Based on your quantitative results, you will design an accompanying qualitative study that details (a) the guiding research questions you would ask, (b) the methods of data collection and analysis you propose, and (c) a plan for integrating the findings with the quantitative data you have already collected and analyzed. The objective of this paper is to consider how the qualitative study should be designed to complement—not merely supplement—the quantitative study you have conducted. Thus, the proposal should reflect the sense that the various data would be used side by side to provide insights into the domain under study, rather than this paper serving simply as a proposal to do a separate qualitative study. This paper should be not more than 10 double-spaced pages in length, and may be accompanied by an appendix containing some tables documenting your quantitative results.
- Paper 4: Using data provided for you from the ALD or ECLS data bases (or data of your own, as long as they constitute both qualitative and quantitative data drawn from a single study), you will design a focused study, analyze both types of data, and write up your findings that emphasize the integration of the methodologies around the same general issue. The objective of this paper is to provide practice in analysis of different forms of data, in order to experience the challenge of presenting analyses of both forms in a single paper. This paper will be limited to 30 pages. You must include the description of methods, presentation of findings, and conclusions (no literature review necessary). We set strict page limits to replicate the page limits set by many journals. This approach encourages you to experience the real challenge of presenting two forms of data analysis in a prescribed space. If you wish, you may work in teams on this project, but the teamwork must not simply be a division of labor between qualitative and quantitative analyses.

AUDITING: This course will require substantial time and effort, and participants must complete all assignments. Thus, students who are unwilling or able to commit the time and

effort it takes should not enroll. We expect that all students will take the course for credit. However, if someone wishes to participate as a paid auditor this would be acceptable.

### WEEKLY SCHEDULE

<b>Meeting Date &amp; Topic</b>	<b>Reading</b>	<b>Assignment Due</b>
<b><u>January 8</u></b> What is Mixed-Method Research, and Why Should We Do It?	ASR article (in-class reading)	
<b><u>January 15</u></b> What are the Challenges and Affordances of Mixed Methods Research?	HB 1, 3 Johnson & Onwuegbuwie article MM Interlude 1	
<b><u>January 22</u></b> What are the Challenges and Affordances of Mixed Methods Research?	HB 4-5 Yin article Lee et al (2006) article Moje article	Paper 1 Initial Questions for discussion in class
<b><u>January 29</u></b> Doing Mixed Methods Research: Design	HB 6-7, 23	Paper 1
<b><u>February 5</u></b> Doing Mixed Methods Research: Design	HB 8-9, 17 MM Ch 6 (ref)	Précis of paper 2
<b><u>February 12</u></b> Doing Mixed Methods Research: Data Collection	HB 10-11, 18 MM Ch 7 (ref)	
<b><u>February 19</u></b> Doing Mixed Methods Research: Analysis	HB 13 MM Interlude 2	Paper 2
<b><u>February 26</u></b>	SPRING BREAK	NO CLASS MEETING
<b><u>March 4</u></b> Doing Mixed Methods Research: Analysis	HB 15, 21 MM Ch 8	Précis of paper 3
<b><u>March 11</u></b> Doing Mixed Methods Research: Analysis	HB 16, 22	

<b>Meeting Date &amp; Topic</b>	<b>Reading</b>	<b>Assignment Due</b>
<b><u>March 18</u></b> Doing Mixed Methods Research: Analysis	MM Ch 9	Paper 3
<b><u>March 25</u></b> Doing Mixed Methods Research: Analysis	HB 14	Final paper précis
<b><u>April 1</u></b> Doing Mixed Methods Research: Ethics and Writing	HB 12 MM Ch 10	
<b><u>April 8</u></b> Mixed Methods Research Presentations	HB 25	Final Paper
<b><u>April 15</u></b> Mixed Methods Research Presentations	HB 26	