

## The Mixed Methods Reader – a Book Review

The Mixed Methods Reader edited by Clark and Creswell, Sage 2008, ISBN 978-1-4129-5145-6 is an exceptional book and should be required reading for anyone who is interested in undertaking academic research using a mixed methods approach. Mixed methods to which an increasing number of academic researchers are resorting is generally poorly understood and few of those who claim to use it are competent.

In many cases mixed methods is seen as a refuge where those who refuse to take part in the methodological wars can shelter. In some cases the academic researcher will collect some qualitative and some quantitative data and process these independently of one another and then will claim to have used a mixed methods framework. When this is done, the claim is usually made that the researcher has used two different lenses through which to examine the research question and that this is what mixed methods is about.

Whilst it cannot be said that the approach of resorting to both quantitative and qualitative data is in any way valueless a more informed and integrated framework for the use of mixed methods makes the research more powerful.

Clark and Creswell provide an excellent overview of a number of important papers in the subject. They trace the need for mixed methods and they contextualise this approach and provide an accessible way of understanding its role and how it functions.

The book contains 23 papers and addresses most of the important issues which any researcher needs to come to terms with if he or she is to be a successful practitioner of mixed methods. The book is divided into two parts, the first of which is titled Methodological Selections and addresses the essential topics within the mixed methods domain. The second part, titled Exemplar Research Studies, addresses the different types of mixed methods design. The Methodological Selections take on some of the philosophical issues related to Mixed Methods. In particular, I found the discussion on Pragmatism as a Philosophical Foundation for Mixed Methods and The Transformative-Emancipatory Perspective as a Philosophical Foundation for Mixed Methods interesting. The paper on Advanced Mixed Methods Research Design is particularly useful. In the Exemplar Research Studies section papers on triangulation and on experimental design are especially interesting.

In general the book is accessible and there is an extensive index.

The book is available at the usual bookshops.

I wholeheartedly recommend this book to anyone wishing to become a competent Mixed Methods Researcher.

Dan Remenyi

