



BRITISH  
ACADEMY

*for the humanities and social sciences*



COMBINE

A network dedicated to  
multiplying and opening methods  
in research evaluation

Lancaster  
University 

# Mixed, mixing and multiplying methods

Dr Gemma Derrick

Centre for Higher Education Research & Evaluation

# Why mixed methods?

*“Methods should be mixed in a way that has complementary strengths and non-overlapping weaknesses. It involves the recognition that all methods have their limitations as well as their strengths”* -

Johnson and Turner (2003)

## QUALITATIVE RAP



The butt was approximately spherical in shape, light-brown, and firm yet yielding to pressure.

## QUANTITATIVE RAP



Numerous attempts were made to measure the volume, density, and elasticity of the butt; however, the subject refused repeatedly and became hostile.

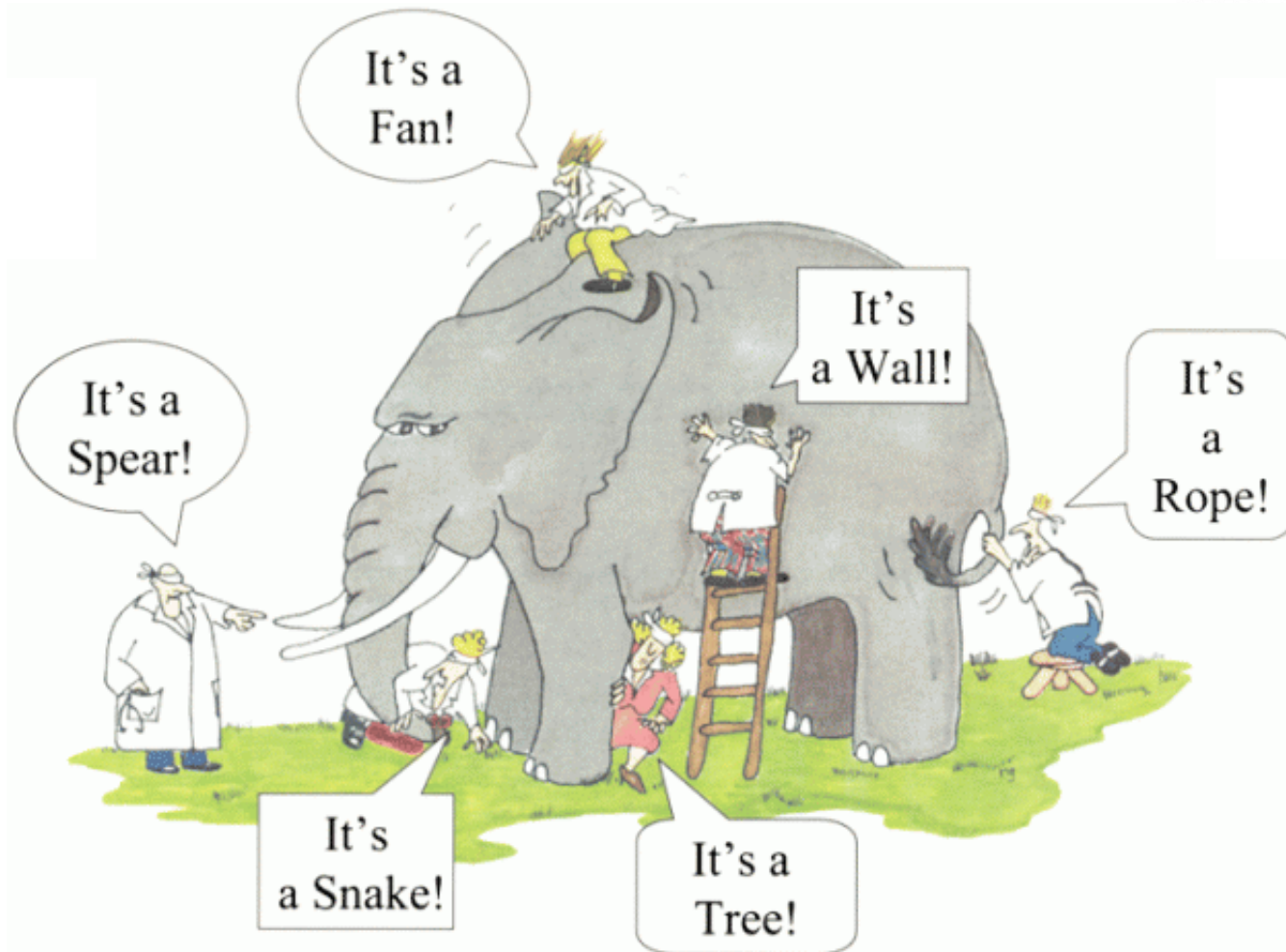


A network dedicated to multiplying and opening methods in research evaluation



BRITISH  
ACADEMY

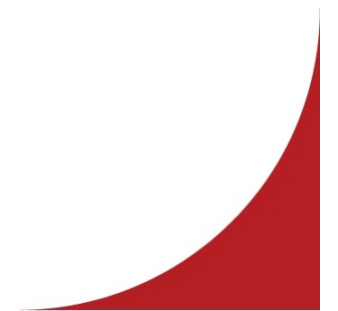
for the humanities and social sciences



# What is mixed-methods really?

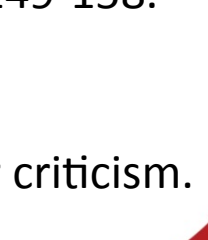
---

- Utilizing multiple methods (qual and quant)
  - Basic definition that it should combine two or more methods
- Intentionally integrating and combining these methods to draw on the strengths of each
- Framing the investigation within multiple philosophical and/or theoretical positions.
- Pragmatic methodology



# Critics (Creswell, 2007)

---

- Is there a post-positivist leaning to mixed methods?
    - Howe, K. R. (2004). A critique of experimentalism. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 10, 42-61.
    - Giddings, L. S. (2006). Mixed-methods research: Positivism dressed in drag? *Journal of Research in Nursing*, 11(3), 195-2003.
    - Holmes, C. A. (2007). *Mixed(up) methods, methodology and interpretive frameworks*. Contributed paper for the Mixed Methods Conference, Cambridge, University, July 10-12, 2006.
  - What are the limits for mixed methods research?
    - Sale, J. E. M., Lohfeld, L. H., Brazil, K. (2002). Revisiting the quantitative-qualitative debate: Implications for mixed-methods research. *Quality and Quantity*, 36, 43-53.
    - Leahey, E. (2007). Convergence and confidentiality? Limits to the implementation of mixed methodology. *Social Science Research*, 36, 149-158.
  - Is there a dominant discourse in mixed methods research?
    - Freshwater, D. (2007). Reading mixed methods research: Contexts for criticism. *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*, 1(2), 134-146.
- 

# Why mix?

## Validity

- to corroborate quant and qual data

## Offset

- offset weaknesses of quant and qual and to draw out strengths

## Completeness

- more comprehensive account than quant or qual alone

## Process

- quant provides outcomes, qual the processes

## Explanation

- qual can explain quant results or vice versa

## Unexpected results

- surprising results from one, other explains

## Instrument development

- qual employed to design instrument

## Credibility

- both approaches enhance integrity of findings

## Context


- qual provides context; quant provides general

## Utility

- more useful to practitioners

# Triangulation

---

- Denzin (1970) – Heavily influence by Wright Mills and the Chicago School of Urban Sociology. Reflexive and Interpretive
    - Date triangulation: involves time, space and people
    - Investigator triangulation: involved multiple researchers in an investigation
    - Theory triangulation: involved using more than one theoretical scheme in the interpretation of the phenomenon
    - Methodological triangulation: involved using more than one method to gather data, such as interviews, observations, questionnaires and documents
  - *“By combining multiple observers, theories, methods and empirical materials, researchers can hope to overcome the weakness or intrinsic biases and the problem that come from single method, single-observer and single-theory studies.”*
- 

# Design considerations

Approach	Type	Purpose	Limitations	Resolutions
QUAL + quan	Simultaneous	Enrich description of sample	Qualitative sample	Utilize normative data for comparison of results
QUAL	Sequential	Test emerging H, determine distribution of phenomenon in population	Qualitative sample	Draw adequate random sample from same population
QUAN + qual	Simultaneous	To describe part of phenomena that cannot be quantified	Quantitative sample	Select appropriate theoretical sample from random sample
QUAN	Sequential	To examine unexpected results	Quantitative sample	Select appropriate theoretical sample from random sample



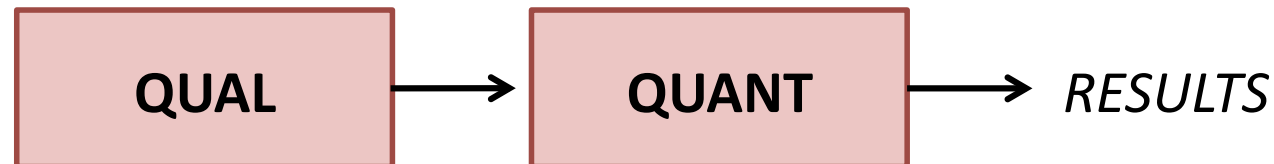
# How to mix?

---

## 1. Converge data



## 2. Connect data

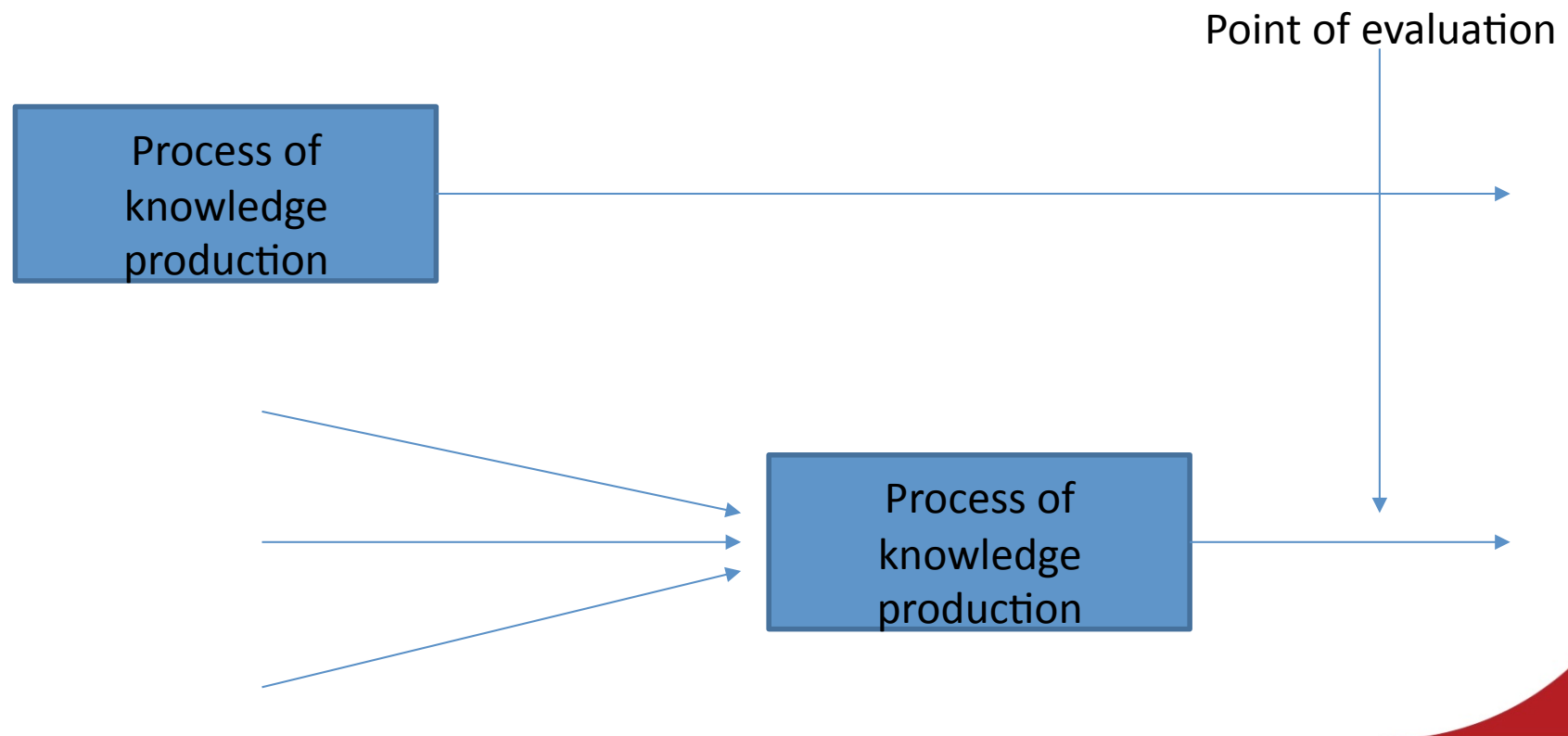


## 3. Embed the data



# What does MM mean for research evaluation?

- Move from logic-model of research production and its evaluation to a more democratic model of co-production and co-information (realist evaluation model)



# The COMbINE Network

---



**The future of evaluation is mixed**

( <http://combine.cwts.nl> )

