

- The introduction is rather standard for scholarly research in that it basically sets forth the research problem and why it is important to be studied. However, one of the deficiencies in past research is that there is a need for what mixed methods research has to offer, such as a more comprehensive analysis, multiple viewpoints, a chance to explore or confirm, and others. These rationales for mixed methods were delineated in Chapters 1 and 5.
- The purpose statement needs to convey a mixed methods approach, and the research questions can convey the qualitative and quantitative strands of the study as well as the mixed methods question, framed using one of the scripts in Chapter 5. It is important to include the rationale for mixed methods in the purpose statement, as mentioned earlier. The order of the research questions depends on which design is being used in sequential studies, with the order mirroring the procedures proposed for the study (e.g., qualitative followed by quantitative for an exploratory design).
- The philosophical foundation for the use of mixed methods needs to be described and a rationale presented for the use of one or more worldviews. Further, if a theoretical lens is used (e.g., a social science or an advocacy lens), this lens needs to be mentioned, and the proposal needs to detail how the lens will flow into the final study. If no theoretical lens is used in the study, then this section would only address the worldview perspective being taken by the researcher.
- In a mixed methods study, we would recommend including a literature review section. It should cover the literature (divided into subtopics) for studies examining the research problem in the study, and it should include qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods studies. The end of this literature review should point out how the proposed study significantly adds to the literature.
- The methods section typically begins with information about mixed methods research and the specific type of design being used. In Chapter 3, we provide an example of this opening paragraph that might be adapted for a proposed study.
- The methods section needs to be carefully shaped to convey the details of the procedures of the mixed methods design. Since proposal reviewers might not be familiar with mixed methods, providing a definition for it is important. Then, the specific mixed methods design needs to be mentioned and described. Here would be a place as well to describe some of the challenges of using this design, and we refer you to Tables 7.3 and 7.4 on validity issues. A diagram of the procedures would be useful (as discussed in Chapter 4). The detailed data collection for both qualitative and quantitative research using the

elements of good procedures are found in Table 6.1. The mixed methods data analysis steps, as found in Chapter 7, for merging or connecting can be discussed, followed by specifying qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods validity considerations.

- Also important is the need to identify potential ethical issues that are likely to present challenges in the dissertation or thesis and the strategies that will be used to address them.
- The researcher's skills in conducting mixed methods research and the time involved in gathering both forms of data need to be mentioned. The researcher needs to know both quantitative and qualitative research and the forms of data collection and analysis used in both approaches. Providing a timeline is useful in mixed methods research, given the extensive time involved in collecting and analyzing two forms of data.

### Structure of a Mixed Methods Dissertation or Thesis

The ideal structure of a mixed methods dissertation or thesis mirrors the proposal but adds the results or findings and the conclusions. An example of the table of contents for a mixed methods dissertation can serve to illustrate the structure of a final study. The content will differ for different types of mixed methods designs and program requirements, and the example we provide from the field of communication studies on hurtful communication from college teachers to students illustrates an exploratory design with the intent of developing an instrument.

The dissertation structure as illustrated in Table 8.2 by Marešh (2009) was an exploratory mixed methods design with the intent to develop and test an instrument. It began with collecting and analyzing qualitative interview data from students. From this, Marešh then analyzed the results to obtain nine themes of hurtful messages that teachers communicate to students. An instrument was then developed from these themes, and the instrument was administered to a large sample of students. As shown in the structure of this dissertation, the study consisted of six chapters. The first three chapters conveyed the introduction, the relevant literature, and the methodology. In the methodology chapter, the author advanced philosophical assumptions, stated the mixed methods research design, and provided a figure to illustrate the procedures. Then, the methodology discussion conveyed the phases of the research from the initial qualitative beginnings to the interim phase of instrument development and on to the quantitative data collection. Separate chapters were then included for first the qualitative results (including the instrument), the quantitative results, and then the final discussion. In summary,