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# Call for Greater Emphasis on Qualitative Inquiry in the Agriculture Research Methodology Curriculum in the Caribbean

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## Abstract

Post secondary training in agriculture in the Caribbean currently equips students with quantitative techniques which often require consistent and reliable sources of quantitative data. Yet, a recurring theme of most quantitative work conducted in the Caribbean is the constraints experienced by the researcher due to data limitations. Drawing on the work of Dooley (2007), Miller (2006) and Warmbrod (1987), this paper presents a theoretical argument that calls for a paradigm shift in the teaching of research methodology in agriculture, in the Caribbean, from the current approach, to one which will incorporate qualitative inquiry (Butler-Kisber, 2008) as a reliable methodology for investigation within the field of agriculture, in small Caribbean islands where undertaking quantitative studies has proved to be challenging.

The thick descriptions (Geertz, 1973) obtained through qualitative inquiry can be used to understand the "particularizability" (Donmoyer, 1990) of the situation. There is rich data grounded in the experiences of those involved in agricultural production that is often ignored/discarded because of the inability of researchers to recognize and utilize it, due to lack of training. Exemplars from the researchers personal experience working in agriculture in Grenada after Hurricane Ivan, will be used to support the claims made in this paper.

Keywords: Qualitative Inquiry; agricultural research methods, curriculum reform