

Course Description

MEDD8911 Qualitative Research Synthesis

Course description			
<p>This course focuses on qualitative research synthesis. Systematic literature reviews and meta-analyses are common ways to summarise the evidence of earlier educational research. However, both of these methods usually require a trained team of experts and a long period of time. Also, these methods represent a positivist approach to educational research: they often aim to find “the right answers” or “effect sizes” without carefully explaining “what works”, “under what circumstances”, “for whom” and “why”. This course thus focuses on qualitative methods for synthesizing - not just summarising - earlier educational research. Examples of qualitative types of literature reviews are scoping reviews, critical reviews and meta-ethnographies: the course will introduce these varying methodologies. The course provides practical tools for both searching the literature and analysing research outputs through qualitative methods. Qualitative syntheses do not only aim at synthesizing the results of earlier studies but to analyse these studies as socially, culturally and historically situated artefacts. In this course, we will learn how to analyse scholarly research as a part of the broader ecosystems of education.</p>			
<p>Coursework / Examination ratio: <u>100</u> % Coursework, <u>0</u> % Examination</p>			
Course objectives			
<p>The course consists of three Course Objectives: CO1: Introduction to research synthesis (e.g., introducing scoping review, critical review, realist review). CO2: Designing and conducting a meaningful literature search. CO3: Analysing and synthesizing research literature through qualitative methods.</p>			
Course learning outcomes (CLOs)		Aligned programme learning outcomes (PLOs)	
1. Basic understanding of different types of literature review (e.g., how such approaches differ from systematic reviews and meta-analyses)		PLOs 1, 4	
2. Skills in searching literature for a review (e.g., picking the right keywords and databases). The course uses the software Covidence for the review process (provided free at HKU)		PLOs 1, 2, 3, 5	
3. Skills in analysing datasets that consists of research outputs including, but reaching beyond, the commonly used simplistic practices such as categorization and thematic analysis		PLOs 1, 2, 3, 5	
Course assessment methods			
Assessment method	Type of assessment (e.g. description of assignment)	Weighting (%)	Aligned course learning outcome(s)
Essay	Critical analysis of one earlier research synthesis paper	20	CLO 1
Project: During the course, the students develop their own review project. The final project outcome is a full research report.	Project part 1: Outline of the project. This first part of the project includes i) an introduction, ii) a brief literature review and/or theoretical framework and iii) an outline of methods: literature search protocol (e.g., search terms, inclusion and exclusion criteria).	40	CLOs 1, 2, 3
	Project part 2: Analysis and findings. This second part of the project includes i) an extraction table with a full analysis of the identified studies, ii) the reported	40	CLOs 1, 2, 3

	findings and iii) a brief discussion section that summarises the synthesis.		
Course content and topics			
<p>Topics of the lectures are:</p> <p>L1) Introduction and overview of research syntheses</p> <p>L2) Specific examples: scoping review, qualitative research synthesis and critical review</p> <p>L3) Using Covidence + Literature search part 1</p> <p>L4) Literature search part 2</p> <p>L5) Analysis methods: introduction and examples</p> <p>L6) Analysis methods: thematic analysis</p> <p>L7) Analysis methods: discourse analysis</p> <p>L8) How to evaluate research syntheses?</p>			
Required / recommended readings and online materials			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aveyard, H. (2014). <i>Doing a literature review in health and social care: A practical guide</i> (3rd ed.). Maidenhead: Open University Press. • Lockwood, C., Munn, Z., & Porritt, K. (2015). Qualitative research synthesis: methodological guidance for systematic reviewers utilizing meta-aggregation. <i>JBI Evidence Implementation</i>, 13(3), 179-187. • Major, C. H., & Savin-Baden, M. (2012). <i>An introduction to qualitative research synthesis: Managing the information explosion in social science research</i>. Routledge. <p>The course will also make use of good exemplars of research syntheses in education. A bank of “good and bad examples” will be added to course Moodle so the students can choose to</p>			
Other additional course information			
Advanced Research Methods (ARM) course			