A

Action research (AR)

Definition: AR is social research carried out by a team encompassing a professional action researcher and members of an organization or community seeking to improve their situation. AR promotes broad participation in the research process and supports action leading to a more just or satisfying situation for the stakeholders.

Source: Greenwood , D.J., Levin, M. (1998). Introduction to Action Research: Social Research for Social Change. Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications.

Citation/URL: p. 4

Annotated Bibliography

Definition:

1) An annotated bibliography is a list of citations to books, articles, and documents. Each citation is followed by a brief (usually about 150 words) descriptive and evaluative paragraph, the annotation. The purpose of the annotation is to inform the reader of the relevance, accuracy, and quality of the sources cited.

Source: Website: How to Prepare an Annotated Bibliography, Cornell University Library

Citation/URL:http://www.library.cornell.edu/olinuris/ref/research/skill28.htm#what

2) A bibliographic list of relevant materials located through a search, with a short paragraph detailing major ideas.

Source: University of Toronto, New College Writing Centre

Citation/URL: http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/images/stories/Documents/annotated-bibliography.pdf

Applied Research

Definition:

(1) Research conducted for the purpose of applying, or testing, theory and evaluating its usefulness in solving problems.

(2) Any research which is used to answer a specific question, determine why something failed or succeeded, solve a specific, pragmatic problem, or to gain better understanding

Source: Gay, L. R. (1981). Educational Research: Competencies for Analysis & Application (2nd ed.). Ohio, CO:Charles E. Merrill

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B

Basic Research

Definition:

(1) Research conducted for the purpose of theory development or refinement.

(2) Research aimed at expanding knowledge rather than solving a specific, pragmatic problem.

Source: Gay, L. R. (1981). Educational Research: Competencies for Analysis & Application (2nd ed.). Ohio, CO:Charles E. Merrill

Benchmarking

Definition: Benchmarking is about making comparisons with other organizations and then learning the lessons that those comparisons throw up so that it is an effective tool for bringing about improvements in performance.

Best-evidence synthesis

Definition:

(1) To overcome the limitations of the methods of traditional narrative review and meta-analysis Robert E. Slavin Director at Centre for Research on Elementary and Middle Schools, Johns Hopkins University (1986) proposed the method of "best-evidence synthesis" which, in theory, draws on the strengths of the methods of traditional narrative review as well as meta-analysis.

Source : Abstract: A critique of contemporary methods of research synthesis, Harsh Suri, The University of Melbourne, 1998

Citation/URL: http://www.aare.edu.au/98pap/sur98250.htm

(2) Slavin (1984, 1986) has proposed that the type of methods used to generate research evidence are less important than the quality of the primary studies undertaken, whatever methodological approaches are used. Slavin suggests that what is required is a 'best evidence synthesis' in which "reviewers apply consistent, well justified, and clearly stated a priori inclusion criteria" of studies to be reviewed. Primary studies should be "germane to the issue at hand, should be based on a study design that

minimizes bias, and should have external validity." The latter requires outcome variables that have some 'real life' significance rather than "extremely brief laboratory studies or other highly artificial experiments."

(3) A best evidence synthesis combines the qualities of a meta-analysis with a literature review. It begins with studies that have evidence of impact (meta-analysis) and explores the themes that cut across these studies, in relation to explanatory theoretical literature to identify the most promising contributors to success.

Source: The Magenta Book Chapter 2: What do we already know? Background Document, Dr Phil Davies, Government Chief Social Researcher's Office, Cabinet Office, Strategy Unit, United Kingdom, June 2003

Citation/URL: http://www.gsr.gov.uk/downloads/magenta_book/Chap_2_Magenta.pdf

Best Practices

Definition: A best practice is a technique or methodology that, through experience and research, has proven to reliably lead to a desired result.

Bias

Definition: Any effect that is introduced into an experiment or research study that may influence the outcome based on anything other than the variables involved (e.g. expectations, the use of inappropriate statistics).

Source: Education Commission of the States

Citation/URL: http://www.ecs.org/html/educationIssues/TeachingQuality/TRRreport/report/glossary.asp

Briefing

Definition: A meeting in which a client and researcher discuss the client's information needs so that the most appropriate research methodology can be recommended.

C

Capacity and capacity building

Definition: In knowledge exchange, capacity is the set of skills, structures, and processes, as well as the organizational culture, that allows, encourages, and rewards knowledge exchange. The Foundation works to build the capacity of decision-making

and research organizations to achieve knowledge exchange in order to make decisions on the basis of research and other evidence.

Source: Health Services Research Foundation

Citation/URL: http://www.chsrf.ca/other_documents/evidence_e.php#definition

Case study

Definition: A data collection method in which a single person, entity or phenomenon is studied in depth over a sustained period of time and through a variety of data. Example: A researcher conducts a year long case study of a school district that was awarded a grant to improve teacher quality. The researcher documents the processes used to implement the grant, interviews teachers and administrators, observes staff development, and measures student achievement before and after the grant was awarded.

Source: Education Commission of the States

Citation/URL: http://www.ecs.org/html/educationIssues/TeachingQuality/TRRreport/report/glossary.asp

Causal-Comparative Research

Definition: Research that attempts to determine the cause, or reason, for existing differences in the behaviour or status of groups of individuals; also referred to 'ex post facto' research.

Source: Gay, L. R. (1981). Educational Research: Competencies for Analysis & Application (2nd ed.). Ohio, CO:Charles E. Merrill

Causal Research

Definition: Study examining whether one variable causes or determines the value of another.

Cluster Sampling

Definition: Consists of selecting clusters of units in a population and then performing a census on each cluster. The selection of clusters could be based on some desired feature of the population or could be a random sample of clusters in the population.

Cohort

Definition: A group of individuals having a statistical factor (age, race etc.) in common in a demographic study.

Competitive Procurement Terms (e.g. Business Case)

For definitions of terms related to the procurement of research and evaluation --

Source: see the Ontario Shared Services (OSS) Bureau's Glossary of Terms and Other Definitions for Competitive Procurement on the Learning Ministries intranet

Citation/URL: http://w3.edu.gov.on.ca/cmsd/procure/glossary.pdf

Correlational Research

Definition: Research that involves collecting data in order to determine whether, and to what degree, a relationship exists between two or more quantifiable variables.

Source: Gay, L. R. (1981). Educational Research: Competencies for Analysis & Application (2nd ed.). Ohio, CO:Charles E. Merrill

Critical Friend

Definition: Critical friends are peers or colleagues who ask probing questions and offer helpful critiques. While they may be independent of the project/task/issue, their role is to ask probing questions to enable those involved to gain fresh insights into their work. The main benefits of using critical friends are that they provide: an outsider's view of the project/task/issue; independent questioning to ensure that the focus is maintained; and alternate sources of information/expertise.

Source: TAFE NSW International Centre for VET Teaching and Learning

Citation/URL: http://www.icvet.tafensw.edu.au/resources/critical_friends.htm

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D

Data

Definition: The collection of observations

Decision maker

Definition: Decision makers in the health services field can range from frontline health providers to administrators to ministers of health. However, the Foundation works with two particular groups of decision makers — managers and policy makers. These individuals often work in health services organizations such as hospitals and regional health authorities, as well as ministries of health and relevant regulatory agencies.

Source: Health Services Research Foundation

Citation/URL: http://www.chsrf.ca/other_documents/evidence_e.php#definition

Demographics

Definition: Description of the vital statistics or objective and quantifiable characteristics of an audience or population. Demographic designators include age, marital status, income, family size, occupation, and personal or household characteristics such as age, sex, income, or educational level.

Dependent variable

Definition: The variable measured in a study - the "outcome." In experimental research, the dependent variable is affected by the independent variable. In correlational research, the dependent variable is associated with one or more other variables. Example: in an experimental research study, a researcher randomly assigns teachers in a large elementary school to receive one of three types of professional development: a class on instructional strategies, a training program on how to increase student motivation or a teacher discussion group. The researcher measures the differences in achievement gains among the students of the three teachers. The dependent variable is student achievement gains.

Source: Education Commission of the States

Citation/URL: http://www.ecs.org/html/educationIssues/TeachingQuality/TRRreport/report/glossary.asp

Descriptive statistics

Definition: Descriptive statistics are used to describe the basic features of the data in a study. They provide simple summaries about the sample and the measures. Together with simple graphics analysis, they form the basis of virtually every quantitative analysis of data. With descriptive statistics you are simply describing what is, what the data shows.

Source: Web Center for Social Research Methods

Citation/URL: http://www.socialresearchmethods.net/

Descriptive study

Definition: A research study that has the goal of describing what, how, or why something is happening.

Source: Education Commission of the States

Citation/URL: http://www.ecs.org/html/educationIssues/TeachingQuality/TRRreport/report/glossary.asp

Design control

Definition: Use of the experimental design to control extraneous causal factors.

Disaggregated data

Definition: Test scores or other data divided so that various categories can be compared. For example, schools may break down the data for the entire student population (aggregated into a single set of numbers) to determine how minority students are doing compared with the majority, or how scores of girls compare with those of boys.

Source: Canadian Council on Learning

Citation/URL: http://www.ccl-cca.ca/CCL/Glossary?Language=EN

Dissemination

Definition: Dissemination goes well beyond simply making research available through the traditional vehicles of journal publication and academic conference presentations. It involves a process of extracting the main messages or key implications derived from research results and communicating them to targeted groups of decision makers and other stakeholders in a way that encourages them to factor the research implications into their work. Face-to-face communication is encouraged whenever possible.

Source: Health Services Research Foundation

Citation/URL: http://www.chsrf.ca/other_documents/evidence_e.php#definition

Dissemination strategy

Definition: A dissemination strategy is an evolving plan begun in advance of a research program that aims to: extract clear, simple, and active main messages or key implications from research results; identify credible "carriers" of the message; pinpoint key decision-maker audiences for the messages; and develop ways to deliver the messages that are appropriate to the audiences being targeted and that encourage them to factor the research implications into their work. Face-to-face communication is encouraged whenever possible.

Source: Health Services Research Foundation

Citation/URL: http://www.chsrf.ca/other_documents/evidence_e.php#definition

E

Effect Size

Definition: The magnitude of a result in relation to a standard normal distribution. An effect size of +/- 1.0 would indicate that the result was 1 standard deviation above or below the mean.

Source: Canadian Council on Learning

Citation/URL: http://www.ccl-cca.ca/CCL/Glossary?Language=EN

Empirical research/empirical studies

Definition: Research that seeks systematic information about something that can be observed in the real world or in a laboratory

Source: Education Commission of the States

Citation/URL: http://www.ecs.org/html/educationIssues/TeachingQuality/TRRreport/report/glossary.asp

Empowerment evaluation

Definition: Empowerment evaluation is the use of evaluation concepts, techniques, and findings to foster improvement and self-determination. It employs both qualitative and quantitative methodologies. Empowerment evaluation has an unambiguous value orientation - it is designed to help people help themselves and improve their programs. Program participants conduct their own evaluations and typically act as facilitators. Empowerment evaluation is necessarily a collaborative group activity, not an individual pursuit.

Source: Fetterman, D., Kaftarian, S. J., Wandersman, A. (eds). (1996). Empowerment Evaluation: Knowledge and Tools for Self-Assessment & Accountability. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications

Citation/URL: pp. 4-5

Evaluative thinking

Definition: Using data to inform decisions - not to make data the only basis of decisions - but to bring data to bear on decisions. Evaluative thinking is not just limited to evaluation projects, it's not even just limited to formal evaluation. It's an analytical way of thinking that infuses everything that goes on.

Source: Michael Patton (interviewed by Lisa Waldick)

Citation/URL: IDRC

Evidence

Definition: Evidence is information that comes closest to the facts of a matter. The form it takes depends on context. The findings of high-quality, methodologically appropriate research are the most accurate evidence. Because research is often incomplete and sometimes contradictory or unavailable, other kinds of information are necessary supplements to or stand-ins for research. The evidence base for a decision is the multiple forms of evidence combined to balance rigour with expedience—while privileging the former over the latter.

Source: Canadian Health Services Research Foundation

Citation/URL: http://www.chsrf.ca/other_documents/evidence_e.php#definition

Evidence-based policy

Definition: An approach "that helps people make well-informed decisions about policies, programs and projects by putting the best available evidence from research at the heart of policy development and implementation."

Source: Davies, P.T. (1999). What is Evidence-Based Education? British Journal of Educational Studies, 47 (2): 108-121

Citation/URL: Cited in Davies, P.T. (2004). Is Evidence-Based Government Possible? Jerry Lee Lecture 2004. London, UK: Campbell Collaboration Colloquium

Evidence-informed decision-making

Definition: Similar to the above but recognizes that evidence competes with other sources of knowledge, interests and resource constraints in decision-making.

Source: Based on presentation by Carol Campbell

Citation/URL: Module 1 of Evaluation & Research Learning Program: Evidence-Informed Decision Making for Effective Policy and Program Development & Delivery

Evidence-informed policy

Definition: Decision-making that takes "account of (i) the quality and strength of the research evidence and (ii) the contextual factors relating to that decision" (including "many factors concerned with public perceptions and political consequences"). (p. 246)

Source: Hargreaves, D. H. (1999), "Revitalizing educational research: lessons from the past and proposals for the future," Cambridge Journal of Education, 29(2), pp. 239-249.

Citation/URL: p 246

Experimental Research

Definition: Discovering causal relationships is the key to experimental research. In abstract terms, this means the relationship between a certain action, X, which alone creates the effect Y. For example, turning the volume knob on your stereo clockwise causes the sound to get louder. In addition, you could observe that turning the knob clockwise alone, and nothing else, caused the sound level to increase. You could further conclude that a causal relationship exists between turning the knob clockwise and an increase in volume; not simply because one caused the other, but because you are certain that nothing else caused the effect.

For experimental research we need:

- a hypothesis for a causal relationship;

- a control group and a treatment group;

- to eliminate confounding variables that might mess up the experiment and prevent displaying the causal relationship; and

- to have larger groups with a carefully sorted constituency; preferably randomized, in order to keep accidental differences from fouling things up.

Source: website: Colorado State University, Basic Concepts of Experimental and Quasi-Experimental Research

Citation/URL:http://writing.colostate.edu/guides/research/experiment/pop2b.cfm

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F

Formative Evaluation

Definition: Evaluation that is done to improve a program or policy (i.e., for getting it right).

Source: Based on presentation by Lorna Earle

Citation/URL: Module 3 of E & R Learning Program: Using Evaluation for Evidence-Informed Decision-Making

G

Sorry we don't have any glossary terms that start with this letter.

H

Sorry we don't have any glossary terms that start with this letter.

I

Impact Evaluation

Definition: Impact evaluation is intended to determine more broadly whether the program had the desired effects on individuals and institutions and whether those effects are attributable to the program intervention. The impacts can be on intermediate outcomes (ex: teacher learning, changes in practice) or on final outcomes (ex: student learning, student engagement).

Implementation Evaluation

The focus on an implementation evaluation is on gathering information about aspects of program delivery to inform decisions about improvements to the program processes. An on-going implementation evaluation can identify obstacles to program delivery, help adapt the planned intervention to program reality, and maintain or improve the quality of the delivery process.

Independent variable

Definition: in experimental research, the variable that the researcher varies or manipulates to determine whether it has an effect on the dependent variable. Example: as part of an experiment, a researcher randomly assigns teachers in a large elementary school to receive one of three types of professional development: a class on instructional strategies, a training program on how to increase student motivation or a teacher discussion group. The researcher measures the differences in achievement gains among the students of the three teachers. The independent variable is professional development, and it has three different values.

Source: Education Commission of the States

Citation/URL: http://www.ecs.org/html/educationIssues/TeachingQuality/TRRreport/report/glossary.asp

Indicator

Definition: Something measured that signifies a state or level of performance or achievement. For example, an indicator for the level of post-secondary attainment might be the percentage of working-age population which has completed a post-secondary program.

Source: Canadian Council on Learning

Citation/URL: http://www.ccl-cca.ca/CCL/Glossary?Language=EN

Inferential statistics

Definition: Inferential Statistics investigate questions, models and hypotheses. In many cases, the conclusions from inferential statistics extend beyond the immediate data alone. For instance, we use inferential statistics to try to infer from the sample data what the population thinks. Or, we use inferential statistics to make judgments of the probability that an observed difference between groups is a dependable one or one that might have happened by chance in this study. Thus, we use inferential statistics to make inferences from our data to more general conditions; we use descriptive statistics simply to describe what's going on in our data

Source: Web Center for Social Research Methods

Citation/URL: http://www.socialresearchmethods.net/

Interjurisdictional Scan

Definition: A check (in more or less detail) of what is being done in other cities, school boards, provinces and/or countries on a given topic or policy issue. Click here for a sample interjurisdictional scan.

Source: Education Research and Evaluation Strategy Branch

J

Sorry we don't have any glossary terms that start with this letter.

K

Knowledge Broker

Definition: A knowledge broker is an individual or an organization that engages in knowledge brokering.

Source: Health Services Research Foundation

Citation/URL: http://www.chsrf.ca/other_documents/evidence_e.php#definition

Knowledge Brokering

Definition: Knowledge brokering links researchers and decision makers, facilitating their interaction so that they are able to better understand each other's goals and professional culture, influence each other's work, forge new partnerships, and use research-based evidence. Brokering is ultimately about supporting evidence-based decision-making in the organization, management, and delivery of health services.

Source: Health Services Research Foundation

Citation/URL: http://www.chsrf.ca/other_documents/evidence_e.php#definition

Knowledge exchange (formerly knowledge transfer)

Knowledge exchange is collaborative problem-solving between researchers and decision makers that happens through linkage and exchange. Effective knowledge exchange involves interaction between decision makers and researchers and results in mutual learning through the process of planning, producing, disseminating, and applying existing or new research in decision-making.

Source: Health Services Research Foundation

Citation/URL:http://www.chsrf.ca/other_documents/evidence_e.php#definition

Knowledge Mobilization (KM or KMb)

Knowledge mobilization "refers to the ways in which well-validated bodies of knowledge about education, resulting from extensive empirical enquiry, are connected to, or influence, policy and practice in the education system".

Source: Ontario Education Research Panel

Citation/URL: http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/research/OERP_KM_En.pdf

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L

Lessons Learned

Definition: Knowledge derived from the implementation and evaluation of a program that can be used to identify strengths and weaknesses of program design and implementation. This information is likely to be helpful in modifying and improving program functions in the future.

Linkage and exchange

Definition:Linkage and exchange is the process of ongoing interaction, collaboration, and exchange of ideas between the researcher and decision-maker communities. In a specific research collaboration, it involves working together before, during, and after the research program

Source: Health Services Research Foundation

Citation/URL: http://www.chsrf.ca/other_documents/evidence_e.php#definition

Literature Review

Definition:

(1) A literature review is a comprehensive analysis of a segment of a published body of knowledge through summary, classification, and comparison of prior research studies, reviews of literature, and theoretical articles.

(2) An account of what has been published on a topic by accredited scholars and researchers.

Source: University of Toronto, Health Sciences Writing Centre

Citation/URL: http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/images/stories/Documents/literature-review.pdf

Logic Model

Definition: A logic model is a systematic and visual way to present and share the logical linkages among the resources being used to operate the program, the activities you plan to do, and the changes or results you hope to achieve.

Source: W.K. Kellogg Foundation, 2005

Citation/URL: In E & R Learning Program Module 3: Using Evaluation for Evidence-Informed Decision-Making.

M

Meta-analysis

Definition:

(1) A statistical methodology consisting of a set of statistical procedures designed to combine the numerical results of primary research studies addressing similar research questions. A meta-analysis essentially averages the results from a number of studies using a statistical method that gives the greatest weight to the studies with the smallest standard errors, which usually means the largest studies. This approach is common in reviews of controlled trials of the efficacy of treatments in health care and is not common in the social sciences.

Source: University of London, Institute of Education

Citation/URL: Gough D (2007) Weight of evidence: a framework for the appraisal of the quality and relevance of evidence In J. Furlong, A. Oancea (Eds.) Applied and Practice-based Research. Special Edition of *Research Papers in Education*, 22, (2), 213-228.

(2) Meta-analysis is a collection of systematic techniques for resolving apparent contradictions in research findings. Meta-analysts translate results from different studies to a common metric and statistically explore relations between study characteristics and findings.

Gene Glass first used the term "meta-analysis" in 1976 to refer to a philosophy, not a statistical technique. Glass argued that literature review should be as systematic as primary research and should interpret the results of individual studies in the context of distributions of findings, partially determined by study characteristics and partially random. Since that time, meta-analysis has become a widely accepted research tool, encompassing a family of procedures used in a variety of disciplines.

(3) A way of statistically combining the results of a set of research studies on the same general topic to get an overall 'bottom line' conclusion as to what the literature shows.

Source: http://pareonline.net/getvn.asp?v=2&n=8

Citation/URL: Article: Meta-Analysis in Educational Research. Bangert-Drowns, Robert L. & Rudner, Lawrence M. (1991). Meta-analysis in educational research. Practical Assessment, Research & Evaluation, 2(8). Retrieved July 10, 2007 from http://PAREonline.net/getvn.asp?v=2&n=8

Multivariate Analysis

Definition: Multivariate analysis (MVA) is based on the statistical principle of multivariate statistics, which involves observation and analysis of more than one statistical variable at a time. In design and analysis, the technique is used to perform trade studies across multiple dimensions while taking into account the effects of all variables on the responses of interest.

Uses for multivariate analysis includes:

- Design for capability (also known as capability-based design)

- Inverse design, where any variable can be treated as an independent variable

- Analysis of alternatives, the selection of concepts to fulfill a customer need

- Analysis of concepts with respect to changing scenarios

- Identification of critical design drivers and correlations across hierarchical levels

Multivariate analysis can be complicated by the desire to include physics-based analysis to calculate the effects of variables for a hierarchical "system-of-systems." Often, studies that wish to use multivariate analysis are stalled by the dimensionality of the problem. These concerns are often eased through the use of surrogate models, highly accurate approximations of the physics-based code. Since surrogate models take the form of an equation, they can be evaluated very quickly. This becomes an enabler for large-scale MVA studies: while a Monte Carlo simulation across the design space is difficult with physics-based codes, it becomes trivial when evaluating surrogate models, which often take the form of response surface equations.

Source: From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

Citation/URL:http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Multivariate_analysis

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N

Sorry we don't have any glossary terms that start with this letter.

O

Option Appraisal

Definition: Option appraisal helps identify the benefits the proposed development is intended to achieve, decide which are the most important, and test all the remaining options to see how far they are likely to achieve each benefit.

P

Participatory evaluation

Definition: Participatory evaluation means involving people in the evaluation - not only to make the findings more relevant and more meaningful to them through their participation, but also to build their capacity for engaging in future evaluations and to deepen their capacity for evaluative thinking.

Source: Michael Patton (interviewed by Lisa Waldick)

Citation: IDRC

Peer Review

Definition: Peer review (known as refereeing in some academic fields) is a process of subjecting an author's scholarly work or ideas to the scrutiny of others who are experts in the field. It is used primarily by editors to select and to screen submitted manuscripts, and by funding agencies, to decide the awarding of grants. The peer review process aims to make authors meet the standards of their discipline, and of science in general. Publications and awards that have not undergone peer review are likely to be regarded with suspicion by scholars and professionals in many fields. Even refereed journals, however, can contain errors.

In the case of manuscripts, the editor will pass manuscripts that are accepted for publication to a publisher who will be responsible for organizing redactory services, printing and distribution of the publication. In specialist academic (scholarly) journals, the editor (or increasingly group of editors) is normally a well-respected academic in the field, and edits the journal on behalf of a learned society or a commercial publisher. Some journals have professional editors employed by the owner of the journal. An editor is ultimately responsible for the quality and selection of manuscripts chosen to be published, usually basing their decision on peer review, although the authors are always responsible for the content of each manuscript. The editor does not revise and correct spelling, grammar and formatting - that process is carried out by a copy editor, although the editor controls the quality of the process.

Source: From Wikipedia, the free encyclopaedia

Citation/URL: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peer_review

Pilots

Definition: A pilot project serves as an advance or experimental version or sample of an operation.

Q

Quantitative Research

Definition: research in which the data are numbers and measurements. Example: a researcher randomly assigns students to different reading curricula. At the end or the school year, the researcher examines the students' scores on a reading achievement test to determine whether the different curricula had different effects on reading.

Source: Education Commission of the States

Citation/URL: http://www.ecs.org/html/educationIssues/TeachingQuality/TRRreport/report/glossary.asp

Qualitative Research

Definition: research in which the data are narrative descriptions or observations. Example: a researcher observes how teachers instruct different reading curricula in two different schools. The researcher also interviews the teachers to understand their approaches to the different curricula and how approaches might be influenced by school characteristics.

Source: Education Commission of the States

Citation/URL: http://www.ecs.org/html/educationIssues/TeachingQuality/TRRreport/report/glossary.asp

Quasi-experimental Research

Definition: A quasi-experimenter treats a given situation as an experiment even though it is not wholly by design. The independent variable may not be manipulated by the researcher, treatment and control groups may not be randomized or matched, or there may be no control group. The researcher is limited in what he or she can say conclusively.

The significant element of both experiments and quasi-experiments is the measure of the dependent variable, which it allows for comparison. Some data is quite straightforward, but other measures, such as level of self-confidence in writing ability, increase in creativity or in reading comprehension are inescapably subjective. In such

cases, quasi-experimentation often involves a number of strategies to compare subjectivity, such as rating data, testing, surveying, and content analysis.

Rating essentially is developing a rating scale to evaluate data. In testing, experimenters and quasi-experimenters use ANOVA (Analysis of Variance) and ANCOVA (Analysis of Co-Variance) tests to measure differences between control and experimental groups, as well as different correlations between groups.

Source: website: Colorado State University, Differences between Experimental and Quasi-Experimental Research

Citation/URL:http://writing.colostate.edu/guides/research/experiment/pop3e.cfm

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R

Randomised Controlled Trial (RCT)

Definition: In a RCT, participants are randomly assigned either to an intervention group (e.g. a drug treatment) or to a control group (e.g. a placebo treatment). Both groups are followed up over a specified period of time and the effects of the intervention on specific outcomes (dependent variables) defined at the outset are analysed (e.g. serum cholesterol levels, death rates, remission rates).

Source: University of Bath Research Methods Glossary

Citation/URL: http://www.bath.ac.uk/e-learning/gold/glossary.html#N1928

Rapid Evidence Assessment

Definition:Rapid Evidence Assessment (REA) is a tool for getting on top of the available research evidence on a policy issue, as comprehensively as possible, within the constraints of a given timetable. Typically, this means providing an assessment of the available evidence in three months or less.

REAs provide a balanced assessment of what is already known about a policy or practice issue, by using systematic review methods [1] to search and critically appraise the academic research literature and other sources of information.

REAs seek to avoid biased evidence that can be given by a single study or a selective number of studies and, instead, aim to provide a more comprehensive and rounded view of the available evidence on a topic or issue.

REAs differ from fully developed systematic reviews in terms of the time taken to prepare them and, consequently, the degree to which literature searching and other

review activities can be comprehensive. Whereas a fully developed systematic review will comprehensively search the available literature using electronic databases, print sources and the 'grey' literature (e.g. work in progress and/or not yet in print), REAs will search these sources as comprehensively as possible given the particular time and resource constraints of the policy under consideration.

Given that REAs are less comprehensive than fully developed systematic reviews, they may fail to identify potentially important studies or other sources of evidence. Consequently, for this reason, they should not be considered a definitive statement on what is known about a topic or issue. Rather, they should be seen as the best provisional understanding of the evidence given the time and resources that have gone into them.

Ideally an REA should be further developed into a full-blown systematic review. When this is done, an REA is better referred to as an Interim Evidence Assessment, leaving the term rapid evidence assessment for reviews of the available evidence that are not intended to be developed into a full-blown systematic review.

How Can They Help Policy Makers?

REAs can help policy makers by:

- Identifying which policy initiatives are likely to work and which are not

- Identifying the likely outcomes (positive and negative) of policy initiatives

- Identifying the likely size of any effects of the policy

- Identifying what needs to be in place to make a policy work

- Identifying the levers and barriers to effective policy implementation

- Identifying and separating high quality from lower quality research evidence

Source: Website: Rapid Evidence Assessment: A Tool for Policy Making, the Government Social Research Unit (GSRU) United Kingdom, Civil Service

Citation/URL: http://www.gsr.gov.uk/resources/rae.asp

Rapid Review

Definition: A quick scan of published material to determine the volume of literature on a given topic and/or to identify the major issues related to a particular policy issue and help refine keywords for further searches. Click here and here for sample rapid reviews. See also Rapid Evidence Assessment --

Regression Analysis

Definition: a statistical technique for determining the association between a dependent variable and one or more independent variables and thereby being able to predict variation in dependent variable by knowing the other variables. Example: in School District X, a researcher collects data on beginning teachers' scores on the state licensing test (variable 1), number of college courses in mathematics (variable 2), amount of time spent in school-based field experiences prior to certification (variable 3) and the achievement gains in mathematics by each teacher's students (dependent variable). The researcher uses regression statistics to measure the association between the three teacher variables and student achievement gains and to estimate student achievement gains based on the contribution of each of the teacher variables to that association.

Source: Education Commission of the States

Citation/URL: http://www.ecs.org/html/educationIssues/TeachingQuality/TRRreport/report/glossary.asp

Reliability

Definition: Reliability refers to the trust or confidence we have when speaking about the description and analysis of our data. Does our description truly represent what we found? Is it true? Can the description or analysis be depended on? Are research participants able to see their experience in the research report?

Source: Kirby, S. & McKenna, K. (1989). Experience, Research, Social Change: Methods from the Margins. Toronto, ON: Garamond Press.

Citation/URL: p. 35

Request for Proposals (RFP)

Definition: A procurement document that requests vendors to supply solutions for the delivery of complex products or services or to provide alternative options or solutions. The RFP process uses predefined evaluation criteria in which price is not the only factor.

Request for Services (RFSe)

Definition: The document used during the second-stage selection process to request submissions from one or more vendors listed on a services Vendor of Record arrangement.

Research Study

Definition: The focus in a research study is on examining some issue or phenomenon in order to extend the existing knowledge base.

Response Rate

Definition: The proportion (percentage) of those invited to participate in a research study who actually do so.

Source: University of Bath Research Methods Glossary

Citation/URL: http://www.bath.ac.uk/e-learning/gold/glossary.html#N1942

S

Sampling

Definition: The process of selecting a subgroup of a population to represent the entire population. There are several different types of sampling, including:

- Simple random sampling: this probability sampling method gives each eligible element/unit an equal chance of being selected in the sample; random procedures are employed to select a sample using a sampling frame.

- Systematic sampling: a probability sampling strategy involving the selection of participants randomly drawn from a population at fixed intervals (e.g. every 20th name from a sampling frame).

- Cluster sampling: a probability sampling strategy involving successive sampling of units (or clusters); the units sampled progress from larger ones to smaller ones (e.g. health authority/health board, trust, senior managers).

- Convenience sampling (also referred to as accidental sampling) a non-probability sampling strategy that uses the most easily accessible people (or objects) to participate in a study.

- Purposive/purposeful sampling: a non-probability sampling strategy in which the researcher selects participants who are considered to be typical of the wider population (sometimes referred to as judgmental sampling).

- Quota sampling: a non-probability sampling strategy where the researcher identifies the various strata of a population and ensures that all these strata are proportionately represented within the sample to increase its representativeness.

- Snowball sampling: a non-probability sampling strategy whereby referrals from earlier participants are used to gather the required number of participants.

- Theoretical sampling: the selection of individuals within a naturalistic research study, based on emerging findings as the study progresses to ensure that key issues are adequately represented.

Source: University of Bath Research Methods Glossary

Citation/URL: http://www.bath.ac.uk/e-learning/gold/glossary.html#N1944

Selection Bias

Definition: systematic effects on the dependent variable that occur due to characteristics of the study participants. Example: a researcher conducts a study on the influence of student teaching on teaching performance. The researcher assigns 20 teacher preparation candidates who attend college during the day to participate in 16 weeks of student teaching. The researcher assigns 20 candidates who are night students to have eight weeks of student teaching. Selection bias in this study is likely because the characteristics of day and night students, such as age and motivation, may be different. The results could be due to these differences instead of the amount of student teaching.

Source: Education Commission of the States

Citation/URL: http://www.ecs.org/html/educationIssues/TeachingQuality/TRRreport/report/glossary.asp

Stakeholder Consultation & Analysis

Definition: This is a method used to identify all parties engaged in conducting the research, those who make or implement policy, and the intermediaries between them. It can help define a way to engage stakeholders so that the impact of research on policy can be maximised.

Statistical significance

Definition: Statistical significance is a measure of how likely it is that the reported result or difference was obtained by chance. For example, a result that is significant at the .05 level, the likelihood that the result was obtained by chance is less than 5 times out of 100. If the result of difference was significant at the .01 level, the result or difference was likely to have occurred less than once out of one hundred times.

Source: Canadian Council on Learning

Citation/URL: http://www.ccl-cca.ca/CCL/Glossary?Language=EN

Summary

Definition: In addition to more traditional forms of research synthesis, the Foundation also produces summaries of research evidence. Summaries are a less formal way of pulling research together, generally using a more conversational tone. An example is the Mythbusters series, which sets out the research evidence behind public debates on current healthcare issues. Where a formal synthesis can be considered to be the creation of new knowledge, a summary clearly pulls together main messages from a number of published sources.

Source: Health Services Research Foundation

Citation/URL: http://www.chsrf.ca/other_documents/evidence_e.php#definition

Summative Evaluation

Definition: Evaluation that is done to prove that a program worked or did not work (often done once a program is completed although it is its purpose, not its timing, that differentiates it from formative evaluation).

Source: Based on presentation by Lorna Earl

Citation/URL: Module 3 of E & R Learning Program: Using Evaluation for Evidence-Informed Decision-Making

Synthesis

Definition: A synthesis is an evaluation or analysis of research evidence and expert opinion on a specific topic to aid in decision-making or help decision makers in the development of policies. It can help place the results of a single study in context by providing the overall body of research evidence. There are many forms of synthesis, ranging from very formal systematic reviews, like those carried out by the Cochrane Collaboration, to informal literature reviews. The Foundation conducts syntheses aimed at making "best practice" recommendations for a specific area of management or policy development.

Source: Health Services Research Foundation

Citation/URL: http://www.chsrf.ca/other_documents/evidence_e.php#definition

Systematic Review

Definition: Combines the qualities of a meta-analysis with a literature review It begins with studies that have evidence of impact (meta-analysis) and explores the themes that

cut across these studies, in relation to explanatory theoretical literature to identify the most promising contributors to success.

Source: Klassen, Jahad & Moher

Citation/URL: Klassen, Terry P.; Jahad, Alejandro R. & Moher, David (1998). Guides for reading and interpreting systematic reviews. Archives of Pediatric & Adolescent Medicine, 152(7), 700-704.

T

Triangulation

Definition: This term is used in a research context to describe the use of a variety of data sources or methods to examine a specific phenomenon either simultaneously or sequentially in order to produce a more accurate account of the phenomenon under investigation.

Source: University of Bath Research Methods Glossary

Citation/URL: http://www.bath.ac.uk/e-learning/gold/glossary.html#N1980

Trustworthiness

Definition: A term used to describe whether naturalistic research has been conducted in such a way that it gives the reader confidence in the findings. It can be assessed using the following criteria:

- Credibility: with its connotations of 'truth', credibility can be compared with internal validity in positivist research. A study's credibility is said to be confirmed when the reader recognises the situation described by a research study as closely related to their own experience (sometimes referred to as confirmability).

- Dependability: The dependability of a study is evaluated if it meets the associated criterion of audit ability. Audit ability is achieved when a researcher provides a sufficiently clear account of the research process to allow others to follow the researcher's thinking and conclusions about the data and thus assess whether the findings are dependable.

- Transferability: Equivalent to external validity in positivist research (it may also be referred to as applicability). A study is said to be transferable if the findings 'fit' contexts beyond the immediate study situation. In order to transfer the findings elsewhere, readers need sufficient information to be able to assess the extent to which a specific research setting is similar to other settings.

U

Sorry we don't have any glossary terms that start with this letter.

V

Validity

Definition: In research terms, validity refers to the accuracy and truth of the data and findings that are produced. It refers to the concepts that are being investigated; the people or objects that are being studied; the methods by which data are collected; and the findings that are produced. There are several different types of validity:

- Face validity: the extent to which a measuring instrument appears to others to be measuring what it claims to measure.

- Content validity: is similar to face validity except that the researcher deliberately targets individuals acknowledged to be experts in the topic area to give their opinions on the validity of the measure.

- Criterion-related validity: requires the researcher to identify a relevant criterion or 'gold standard', which is itself reliable and valid, to provide an independent check of the new measure (i.e. to compare the results from a well-established and a new measuring instrument).

- Construct validity: refers to the degree to which a research instrument measures a theoretical concept (or construct) under investigation.

- Internal validity: refers to the extent to which changes in the dependent variable (the observed effects) can be attributed to the independent variable rather than to extraneous variables.

- External validity: refers to the degree to which the results of a study are generalisable beyond the immediate study sample and setting to other samples and settings.

W

Sorry we don't have any glossary terms that start with this letter.

X

Sorry we don't have any glossary terms that start with this letter.

Y

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Z

Sorry we don't have any glossary terms that start with this letter.