A Personal Introduction

- Context
- Reflexivity
Seminar Aims

• Brief historical overview
• Do we need qualitative systematic review?
• What methods of review are best suited to qualitative research?
• Discuss some methodological considerations
• Concluding recommendations
Systematic Review, Qualitative Research & the Evidence Based Movement

• Exponents
  – Cochrane Qualitative Methods Group
  – Campbell Collaboration
  – EPPI Centre
  – The Joanna Briggs Institute

• Dissenters
  – Myopic, exclusionary (Morse, 2006)
  – Fallible (Hamersley, 2001)
Are conventional SR methods suited to qualitative research?

‘To summarise qualitative findings is to destroy the integrity of the individual projects on which such summaries are based, to thin out the desired thickness of particulars… and ultimately to lose the vitality, viscerality and vicarism of the human experiences represented in the original studies’

(Sandelowski, 1997: 366).
Fundamental methodological considerations for qualitative research

Types or levels of review

- Qualitative research in quantitative reviews
- Stand alone qualitative reviews
- Mixed methods reviews
What’s in a name?

Meta-synthesis
Meta-ethnography
Narrative review
Narrative synthesis
Thematic synthesis
Systematic literature review
Bayesian meta-analysis
Critical Interpretive Synthesis (CIS)
Stages of Search Process, Study Selection & Review.

1. Research Question

2. Research Searching

3. Research Screening

4. Research Appraisal (Review)

5. Research Synthesis (Analysis)
1. Formulate Research Question (and Protocol)

2. Search Databases (identify papers)
   Remove Duplicates

3. Screen Papers by title/abstract
   Exclude Papers

4. Full text Review
   Exclude Papers

5. Analysis of included papers
1. Support for Breast Feeding

2. Search Databases = 3912
   Plus hand-searches
   Remove Duplicates = 7420

3. Screen Papers by title/abstract
   Exclude Papers (including non-human)

4. Full text Review
   Exclude Papers = 262

5. Analysis of included papers (not shown as focus was on evaluating research strategies)
Study Selection

1. Research Question
   a. Often evolving, iterative & responsive
   b. A compass not an anchor

2. Research Searching
   a. No hierarchy of evidence
   b. Poor indexing
11. Qualitative Filters

• McMaster University Health Information Research Unit Evidence-Based Health Informatics Search Filters for MEDLINE in Ovid Syntax and the PubMed translation http://hiru.mcmaster.ca/hiru/HIRU_Hedges_MEDLINE_Strategies.aspx

• Hawaii Medical Library evidence-based filters for CINAHL (Ovid) http://hml.org/WWW/filtrcin.html#qr-long
3. Research Appraisal

Appraisal Instruments for Qualitative Research
3. Research Appraisal

Appraisal Instruments for Qualitative Research

• **CASP** - Critical Appraisal Skills Programme
• **RATS** – Qualitative research review guideline
• **LSTM** - Criteria for evaluating qualitative studies
• **BSAMedSoc** – Criteria for evaluating qualitative research
• **JBI-QUARI** - Joanna Briggs Institute Quality Assessment & Review Instrument
• **Cabinet Office** – Quality in Qualitative Evaluation: A Framework for assessing research evidence
Quality summary score for qualitative studies
Downe et al, 2007: adapted from Jackson, unpublished

Key to quality rating
A – No or few flaws: The study credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability is high
B – Some flaws, unlikely to affect the credibility, transferability, dependability, and/or confirmability of the study
C – Some flaws, which may affect the credibility, transferability, dependability, and/or confirmability of the study
D – Significant flaws, which are very likely to affect the credibility, transferability, dependability, and/or confirmability of the study
4. Research Synthesis

1. Descriptive reviews
2. Summative reviews
3. Interpretive reviews
   - Meta-ethnography (Nicky Britten et al.)
   - Critical Interpretive Synthesis (CIS) (Dixon-Woods et al.)
   - Qualitative Research Synthesis (see Major & Savin-Baden, 2010).
Developing Third Order Interpretations


In An Introduction to Qualitative Research Synthesis. Routledge. Page 67
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Overarching theme</th>
<th>Second order theme/interpretation</th>
<th>Third order interpretation/theory</th>
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<td>Theme 1 =&gt;</td>
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<td>Theme 2 =&gt;</td>
<td>Composite theme =&gt;</td>
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<td>Theme 5 =&gt;</td>
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<td>Interpretation</td>
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<td>Theme 9 =&gt;</td>
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<td>Overarching theme Reciprocal</td>
<td>Second order theme/interpretation</td>
<td>Third order interpretation/theory ‘A line of argument’</td>
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<td>Practice</td>
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<td>The impact of innovation</td>
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<td>Creation of theory</td>
<td>Academic stances</td>
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<td>Understanding students</td>
<td>Notions of improvement</td>
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<td>Staff experiences</td>
<td>Learning spaces</td>
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<td>Community</td>
<td>Disciplinary communities</td>
<td>Academic cultures</td>
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<td>Online/e-learning communities</td>
<td>Communities of practice</td>
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<td>Inquiry-based learning communities</td>
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<td>Transfer</td>
<td>Transfer for shared practice</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Transfer related to policy</td>
<td><strong>My Thanks to Major &amp; Savin-Baden, 2011: 67</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
"A qualitative synthesis uses qualitative methods to synthesize existing qualitative studies to construct greater meaning through an interpretive process .... it involves using a rigorous and methodologically grounded approach for analysis that is filtered through an interpretive lens … deriving meaning from translation”

(Major & Savin-Baden, 2012:27)
Conclusions

Qualitative review or synthesis may
• provide new evidence;
• advance theory and knowledge;
• promote dialogue and debate;
• add further depth to existing qualitative studies;
• be cost effective;
• demonstrate impact & accountability – including ethical issues; and,
• ideally contribute to policy & practice
However

• DO NOT underestimate time & resources involved
• Be explicit about your position
• Be explicit about your methods
• Beware that it can limit your wider understanding of the field or conversely overwhelm you with data
• Your findings in conducting an interpretive review are not necessarily reproducible
• Qualitative research synthesis or review may still be accused of lack of precision; propensity for subjectivity and inherent bias
• Don’t forget the importance of intellectual endeavour and the amount of time it takes!
Thank you

Any Questions?
• Booth, A. 2001 Cochrane or cock-eyed? How should we conduct systematic reviews of qualitative research? http://www.leeds.ac.uk/educol/documents/00001724.htm
• Britten, N. Qualitative research and the take-up of evidence-based practice. J of Res in Nursing. Doi:10.1177/1744987110380611
• Britten, Campbell, et al., 2002. Using meta ethnography to synthesise qualitative research: a worked example. J Health Serv Res Policy Vol. 7 No 4
• Cochrane Qualitative Research Network (1998) http://www.cochrane.org/
• Hannes, Lockwood & Pearson, 2010. A Comparative Analysis of three Online Appraisal instruments in Qualitative research.
• Qualitative Health Research. http://qhr.sagepub.com/content/20/12/-1736


Thomas, J. & Harden, A. Methods for the thematic synthesis of qualitative research in systematic reviews. ESRC National Centre for Research methods.

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