

Research paradigms and methods: An interactive and applied workshop across the methodological spectrum

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Introduction/background:

In medical and health sciences education, it is important to consider the diverse set of research approaches required to answer multi-layered and often complex research questions. As senior lecturers who have research interests in this area and in the teaching of research paradigms and methods, we believe it is imperative for educational researchers to have an appreciation of the full breadth of the methodological spectrum, including quantitative, qualitative and mixed methods approaches. We will also consider the important theoretical world views which frame the various research paradigms and are operationalised in specific methods selected and data collected.

Purpose and outcomes:

This workshop is aimed at developing participants' conceptual understanding of the breath of educational research methods available.

The Specific Learning (Educational) Outcome is to identify and deliberate on the various research paradigms that can be applied in medical and health sciences educational research.

Issues for exploration or questions for discussion:

1. How can we determine the most appropriate research paradigms are being applied in reference to the research questions being asked?
2. How can we apply appropriate methods of gathering information dependent upon the research paradigm being employed?
3. What are the most appropriate research paradigms in reference to the different research examples to ensure more rigorous and sound research planning is being conducted?

Outline of workshop activities

Structure (duration - 4 hours)

1. The introductory session will focus on the historical background of key research paradigms and their application in medical and health sciences educational research.
 2. The session will consider data collection methods that can be used, and which best suit the research paradigm being employed.
 3. An interactive discussion will cover examples of research followed by teams working together to develop mini-research proposals dependent upon their area of interest.
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