

International Summer School explores the use of literature in the study of Global Education and Learning

The first International Summer School on Global Education and Learning¹, with a focus in “Using literature”, is a collaboration between the UNESCO Chair in Global Citizenship Education in Higher Education at the University of Bologna, the Academic Network on Global Education and Learning (ANGEL) and the Development Education Research Centre (DERC) of UCL, with the support of Global Education Network Europe (GENE). This initiative, along with other ANGEL network activities, is co-funded by the European Union. It took place from 21 to 24 of June 2022 at the Bertinoro University Centre (CEUB), located in a historic castle in the isolated village of Bertinoro, in the hills of Forlì. The 32 early career researchers in attendance – selected from over 100 applications – came from various European universities and research centres. Their nationalities were even broader: with students from Europe (Czech Republic, England, Finland, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Poland, Portugal, Spain), Japan, Brazil, Uruguay, Peru, Rwanda and Cameroon.

The Summer School, directed by Massimiliano Tarozzi (the current UNESCO chair), aimed to provide students with a theoretical overview of Global Education research and the practical skills to conduct a literature review, focusing on methods to (systematically) explore academic literature. The programme offered a wide range of approaches and practical tools for querying databases, conducting systematic and qualitative reviews. The lectures, delivered by prominent European academics, began with a conceptual module, led by Annette Scheunpflug (University of Bamberg) that aimed to identify the different nuances and conceptualisations of Global Education and Learning (GEL) terminology.

A second module, led by Clare Bentall (UCL), explored the role of literature analysis in research in general. The third, led by Karin Hannes (University of Ku Leuven), explored the transition from the research question to the systematic approach of literature analysis. The fourth and fifth modules were conducted by Rita Marzoli (INVALSI) and Luca Ghirotto (University of Verona). It detailed literature search guidelines for building an effective literature research strategy in the field of global education.

One of the aims of the Summer School was both improving the research skills of ANGEL members and DIGEST contributors and bringing researchers from outside our network closer to the field of GEL research. These goals were achieved, since the 86% of the respondents declared their willingness to participate in future ANGEL Summer Schools or similar events. The final feedback was very good and several participants are currently working as new contributors to the future edition of ANGEL'S Digest. In general, the appreciation rate was extremely high (around 90%). The theme of the Summer School was highly appreciated and the various lectures were found to be very informative.

According to participants' feedback, the content was found to be “extremely useful – relevant for literature reviews and research projects in general.” They learnt “different things especially from the rich heterogenous backgrounds of presenters and participants.” Moreover, it was “an amazing and special week, in terms of learning, interaction, sharing in a friendly and good environment.”

Some comments gave suggestions for the future: “For future events, I would suggest more lectures from guest speakers. We had fantastic lectures, but I found the systematic literature review a bit long.” Furthermore, a researcher comments: “It was good to have a rigorous session on explaining the process you must adhere to conduct a systematic review, but it seemed partial, as if a narrative approach could not stand up in terms of rigor and transparency.” In addition, another proposes: “It would have been interesting to discuss our approach to literature in relation to a range of research methodologies that go beyond the traditional social scientific approach, exploring post qualitative research approaches and the (post)human turn.”

Based on the students' comments, we identify three didactic aspects to increase this type of experience in the future: First offering more space to talk about students' research interests, second improving the group work organisation by providing an online platform already before the start of Summer School and third including individual lesson evaluations in the evaluation form to check the results of each module.

It is worth emphasising that the organisation of this Summer School was a challenge after two long years of distance activities. The fact that it fostered a high quality of relations between researchers and lecturers rewarded all efforts: “I am convinced that this experience was also valuable because it enabled professional and relational networking among GCE researchers. Sharing ideas, projects, points of view but also doubts and questions is in my opinion the enormous resource derived from this week together.”

Notes

1 International Summer School on Global Education and Learning. Access on 25.10.2022 <https://unescochairgced.it/en/2022/08/01/international-summer-school-in-global-education-and-learning-using-literature%E2%80%9C>

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