



Queen Margaret University
EDINBURGH

Re-engineering a credit-bearing information literacy module to foster critical and reflective global citizenship

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Context

Background to where the module lives

Context

- Digital Literacies module part of Podiatry programme
- Moved to Masters in Research (MRes) programme
- Masters in Research historically largely Health discipline
- Increasing intake to MRes of students researching Arts, Social Sciences and Management
- Move from Blackboard to Canvas
- Increase in use of online learning since beginning of COVID-19 pandemic

Master of Research (MRes)

The Master of Research (MRes) is for those thinking about a career in academic or professional research. It is also suitable for individuals who would like to develop their research skills within their professional field as part of your continuing professional development (CPD).

An MRes can give you a competitive edge in the researcher job market and can also be a valuable stepping-stone towards a PhD. In this course you'll gain advanced research skills, develop your own research project and earn an internationally recognised research qualification. You can study for the MRes full or part time.

While this course is delivered entirely online, some of the optional electives are available on-campus for those students based in the UK. International students will only be able to select from online electives as we are unable to sponsor students on a Student visa for this course.

NB This course is subject to review

Post-nominal award titles

A post-nominal award title means that the specific subject of your degree is named in its title. The award titles that we currently offer are:

- MRes (Business Administration)
- MRes (Global Health and Development)
- MRes (Psychology)
- MRes (Person-centred Practice)
- MRes (Public Administration)
- MRes (Rehabilitation Sciences)
- MRes (Speech, Language and Hearing)
- MRes (Sociology)
- MRes (Public Sociology)
- MRes (Cultural Leadership)
- MRes (Cultural Practice)
- MRes (Clinical Science)
- MRes (Education)
- MRes **

** The option of not specifying a subject remains open to all students

Modules on MRes programme

Module	Aim
Research Methods (20 credits)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">The aim of the module is to provide the student with an understanding of research principles, a range of quantitative and qualitative research methodologies and appropriate analysis for these. This will enable the student to develop the research skills and knowledge necessary to undertake an independent research project. (20 credits)
Communicating Research (20 credits)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">This module aims to provide the student with the skills and knowledge necessary to lead, manage and disseminate findings from research projects. (20 credits)
Proposing, Designing and Pre-registering Research MRes Research Project Part 1 (60 credits)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">To enable students to learn how to produce an in-depth and comprehensive literature review and to draw a research question out of that.To use this as the basis for creating into a full, transparent research proposal suitable for use as a research pre-registration.
Answering Your Research Question MRes Research Project Part 2 (60 credits)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">To enable students to develop and apply the skills of research and enquiry to produce original work which has the potential to make a contribution to a subject, field or profession, andTo enable students to develop and demonstrate their skills in reporting and disseminating the outcomes of conducting research.
Elective module (20 credits)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">A 20-credit option from masters level modules at QMU

XM030: Digital Literacies

20 credit module on Masters in Research programme, runs in semester 1

This is a largely practical module with a large number of the activities being based around engaging with the various technologies and concepts covered. These include:

- Self-assessment and reflection of your digital and information literacy
- Developing and implementing a search strategy appropriate to a topic or problem
- Critically evaluating the reliability, validity, authority and bias of information sources

We will focus on:

- Skills for searching for relevant research resources, including journal articles and grey literature
- Skills for retrieving, managing, storing and referencing resources
- Critical thinking for the evaluation of resources and tools
- Using social media to enhance and support your research

Values

Principles behind module content and design

Global citizenship

Global citizenship is a term used to describe the social, environmental, and economic actions taken by individuals and communities who recognise that every person is a citizen of the world.

Global citizenship involves...

- Exploring local and global connections and our views, values and assumptions
- Exploring issues of social justice locally and globally
- Exploring the complexity of global issues and engaging with multiple perspectives
- Applying learning to real-world issues and contexts
- Opportunities to make informed, reflective action and be heard

([Oxfam](#))

What is a global citizen?

Is aware of the wider world and has a sense of their own role as a world citizen

Respects and values diversity

Has an understanding of how the world works

Is outraged by social injustice

Participates in the community at a range of levels, from the local to the global

Is willing to act to make the world a more equitable and sustainable place

Takes responsibility for [their] actions

Four literacies of global citizens



Media and
information literacy



Health literacy



Ecological literacy



Democratic literacy

“Aligning curricula to these four literacies will help the next generation of students solve future global challenges”
([Saperstein](#), 2023)

Information literacy and global citizenship

Objectives:

- Find and evaluate information
- Distinguish facts from opinions
- Verify the reliability of sources

Topics:

- Introduction to the media landscape, research process, and critical thinking
- Print media versus digital media*
- Navigating through misinformation and disinformation
- The ethical use of information

Other values / principles

- Students (particularly in this cohort) have challenging lives outwith academic study – the shape of the module should provide flexibility in terms of time(s) to engage
- Assumptions about prior knowledge are not reliable – students should be given a chance to learn the metaliteracies and processes of academic research in a supportive environment
- Trust should be given to students to engage meaningfully in the learning process as best they can and non-engagement / engagement in questionable academic practices should be approached without judgement, but with curiosity

Course content

Ethical use of information

- Good academic practice
- Ethics of AI
 - ChatGPT wrote your assignment for you (or did it?)
- In development: critical perspectives on referencing

ChatGPT wrote your assignment for you (or did it...?)

I asked ChatGPT to write the reflective part of the summative assignment for this module for me. Here's what it came up with:

Title: Unraveling the Melody of Communication: A Reflective Journey through the World of Academic Resources on Prosody in Autism

Introduction:

Prosody, the melodic and rhythmic aspects of speech, plays a critical role in communication, aiding the conveyance of emotions, intentions, and social cues. For individuals on the autism spectrum, challenges in processing and using prosody can significantly impact their ability to interact and understand others. In this reflective essay, I recount my quest to explore the fascinating intersection of prosody and autism through academic resources. I will share the databases I searched, my approach to selecting keywords, and the reference management software that streamlined my research process, shedding light on the importance of comprehensive and efficient research in understanding this vital aspect of autism.

1. Navigating Academic Databases:

My journey into the world of prosody in autism began with the exploration of various academic databases, each offering a treasure trove of scholarly resources. As an essential starting point, I accessed PubMed, a robust database focusing on medical and life sciences. PubMed proved invaluable in providing a wealth of research articles, reviews, and clinical studies related to prosody and its impact on individuals with autism.

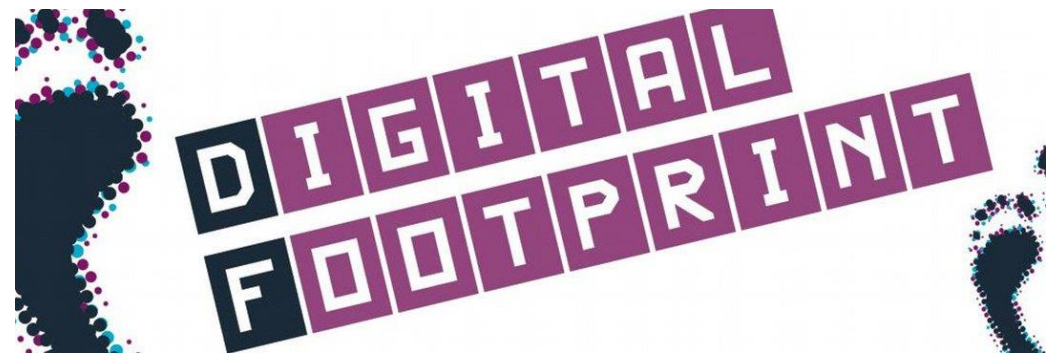
Next, I delved into PsycINFO, a comprehensive psychology database that enabled me to access a wide range of studies investigating the cognitive and emotional aspects of prosody in autism. Additionally, I explored Web of Science, which encompassed interdisciplinary literature from various scientific domains, including linguistics, psychology, and neuroscience, thus offering a holistic perspective on prosody in autism.

Moreover, I delved into specialized databases, such as ScienceDirect and IEEE Xplore, to access research publications on the neural mechanisms and technological advancements related to prosody perception and production in individuals on the autism spectrum.



Digital professionalism and ethics

- Students research (where relevant) professional body's recommendations for social media use
- Reflect on own practices
- Reading literature around benefits, responsibilities
- University of Edinburgh digital footprint course



[UoE DigitalFoot](#)

How the world works

- Connects to concept of scholarship as conversation ([ACRL, 2015](#))
- Explaining and exploring processes of academic publishing
- Fraud and academic misconduct in academic publications
- Peer review processes
- Academics sharing usable examples on social media

Example: Disability Studies

I wanted to provide an example of how engaging in social media can give access to almost 'behind the scenes' views of scholarly conversation, power dynamics and other aspects of academia, academic research and scholarly communication.

This is an article published by Jen Slater and Kirsty Liddiard in the journal *Canadian Journal of Disability Studies*:

Slater, J. and Liddiard, K. (2018) "Why Disability Studies Scholars Must Challenge Transmisogyny and Transphobia", *Canadian Journal of Disability Studies*, 7(2), pp. 83–93.

<https://cjds.uwaterloo.ca/index.php/cjds/article/view/424> ↗

Academic journals are managed by an editorial board, with an editor making decisions about whether a submitted article is within the scope of the journal, who submitted articles get sent to for review (the peer review process), if the amendments to articles are enough to be able to consider the article publishable in the journal (upholding standards), and ultimately act as the gatekeepers for scholarly communication as far as that journal goes. There may be a lot or very few journals that specialise in a specific subject area, or there may be some journals that are considered the 'gold standard' to publish in because of the reputation they have and how large their readership is. This is to say, journal editors have a degree of power over what gets published, by whom, and how widely it is read.

[This is a link to a thread Jen Slater shared on twitter](#) ↗, about their experience of getting this article published. Although they eventually published in the *Canadian Journal of Disability Studies*, it was originally set for publication in the journal *Disability & Society*. As you will see, they are calling for a boycott of this particular journal because of how they were treated by the editor of the journal (Michele Moore) and concerns around how the editor's personal (trans-exclusionary) views influence what is published in one of the most prominent and well-read journals in the field of Disability Studies.


[This is a link to a petition signed by academics](#) ↗ who have said they will not review for, publish with, promote, or subscribe to *Disability & Society* until Michele Moore resigns as the editor (to date, she is still in post).

This is the kind of information you can encounter when you follow academics, researchers and other people involved in the scholarly communications and research landscape in your field on social media. It goes beyond having your finger on the pulse in terms of emerging and popular areas of research interest and new publications, and can give you insight into the politics and power dynamics underpinning academia.



Respecting and valuing diversity

- Seeking diverse voices
- Identifying unheard perspectives
- Exploring grey literature
- Reading theory around epistemic injustice, inequality in academic research and publishing, critiques of hierarchies of knowledge
- Practical teaching around how databases, discovery layers, search engines etc. may not retrieve all sources equally

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Grey Literature: What is grey literature and why use it?

Search this Guide Search

What is grey literature and why use it? Tools for finding grey literature Sources of grey literature Statistics

What is grey literature?

The [Fourth International Conference on Grey Literature \(GL'99\)](#) in Washington, DC, in October 1999 defined grey literature as: "That which is produced on all levels of government, academics, business and industry in print and electronic formats, but which is not controlled by commercial publishers."

Grey literature is research which is either unpublished or published through channels other than commercial publishing. Most of it is not found in bibliographic databases. You should consider what type of literature you are interested in before you begin searching. Not all grey literature is relevant to all researchers and it will depend on the subject studied (clinical trials will not be relevant to research about the environment for example but research reports may well be relevant).

Types of grey literature

Types of grey literature			Creators of grey literature
Article pre-prints and post prints	Interviews	Press releases	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Government agencies• Research institutes• Academics• Researchers• Companies• Organisations• Associations• Campaign and pressure groups• NGOs
Annual reports	Lectures and lecture notes	Research reports	
Blogs	Legislation	Social networking platforms	
Bulletins	Maps	Speeches	
Clinical trials	Market reports	Standards	
Company information	News	Statistics and statistical reports	
Conference papers or proceedings	Newsletters or newspapers	Surveys	
Course materials	Pamphlets	Theses	
Discussion forums	Patents	Tweets	
Dissertations	Personal communication	Unpublished manuscripts	
E-mails and e-mail discussion lists	Photographs	Video sharing sites	
Factsheets	Policy statements or briefs	Wikis	
Geological and geophysical surveys	Posters	White papers	
Government documents and reports		Working papers	

Why include grey literature in your research?

Why should you use grey literature?

- It can record findings in niche or emerging research areas not found elsewhere
- To provide a comprehensive, balanced and unbiased picture of the research on a particular topic – negative results are more often included in grey literature so including unpublished material is a way of counteracting positive bias
- It can be more current than mainstream published literature and its findings may not find their way through into journals or books until years later after passing through lengthy peer review and editorial processes
- It can be more detailed than the literature published through commercial channels
- It can be a good source of raw data
- Enables the viewpoints of individuals less likely to publish in journals to be heard
- Provides valuable insight of a sector or industry perspective

Evaluating grey literature

Although grey literature can be very valuable and useful for your projects, it has often been through less thorough processes of reviewing and quality assurance. It is therefore crucial to carefully consider whether the grey literature you are using is trustworthy, reliable and accurate.

One tool you can use to help with evaluating grey literature is the [AACODS Checklist for appraising grey literature](#)



Delivery

Delivery method

- Online and asynchronous
- Each topic/week area (will) contain(s)
 - Video/s – short, chunked, manageable
 - Reading – varied, prioritised (essential/recommended/background), manageable
 - Activity – optional, ungraded
 - Discussion and reflection – optional, ungraded, peer support encouraged
- Students who prefer weekly structure and accountability encouraged to keep to schedule with announcements
- Students who prefer to engage in chunks encouraged to take part when works for them

Relationship with module leader

- Informal
- Respectful
- Approachable
- Honest
- Non-judgemental
- Accepting
- Valuing lived experience

All approaches to support people to feel confident, capable, accepting of themselves, like they belong, empowered to learn, in control of their experience, aware and critical of academic publishing landscape

These are aspects of experience that may lead to researchers who not only conduct research with awareness of social justice issues but also with awareness of own personal experience that informs research behaviours

Assessment

Formative assignment (ungraded)

- Search strategy using a search topic of students' choice

Slide presentation of 6-8 slides with notes or written document

Summative assignment (100%)

1. Annotated bibliography of a range of 10 valid resources
2. Reflective narrative on the experience of creating a search strategy and searching for resources

3,000 words total

Outcomes

- Higher quality summative assignment
- Higher quality dissertation research
- Engaged and critical global citizens
- Responsible and ethical researchers who value social justice
- Peer community supporting each other to make good decisions
- Independent, confident and knowledgeable students who feel well supported to continue research at doctoral level and beyond

What's next?

- Course subject to review
- Programme revalidation May 2024
- Potential duplication of content/assessment type across modules
 - Identify duplication
 - Clarify purpose/difference
 - Amendments
 - Possible relocation of module content to other modules
 - Possible inclusion of students from other programmes on module

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Thank you

Questions

