

LONDON REVIEW OF EDUCATION



SPECIAL FEATURE CALL FOR PAPERS SYSTEMATIC REVIEWS IN EDUCATION: PRODUCING AND ACQUIRING KNOWLEDGE IN TIMES OF CRISIS AND SOCIAL CHANGE

For publication from winter 2023

Edited by [Janice Tripney](#) and [Sabine Wollscheid](#)

Expressions of interest accepted until 28 February 2023

Deadline for draft papers 31 August 2023

The Covid-19 global pandemic required the production of systematic reviews and other forms of evidence synthesis at an unprecedented rate. Around the world, there was significant demand for rigorous evidence from decision makers in education, as governments, local authorities, and professional bodies moved quickly to commission reviews to support choices they had to make during the crisis. Policymakers' concerns about the effects of lockdown restrictions, for example, led to reviews on the potential impact of school closures on rates of learning and learning loss (Education Endowment Foundation, 2020) and strategies for tackling the mental health impact of Covid-19 among children and college students (Elharake et al., 2022).

The pandemic not only re-emphasised the importance of methodologically rigorous evidence synthesis to inform decision-making but also further illustrated the problem that the process to produce a systematic review is often too long and resource intensive. Reviews can fall quickly out of date, sometimes even before they are published (Borah et al., 2017). In the current era of data abundance and advances in research complexity, the challenges of completing well-conducted reviews to (often short) timetables are growing.

The research community has responded by engaging in methodological development, exploring novel and underutilised ways to meet the growing demand for high quality, timely synthesised evidence to inform decision-making. Significantly, the rapid pace of technological and digital transformation in recent years has supported numerous innovations in systematic review methodology (Khalil et al., 2022; Marshall & Wallace, 2019). For instance, many researchers are now using machine learning and other tools aimed at (semi-) automating systematic review processes, including search term development (Stansfield et al., 2017), screening prioritisation (Tsou et al., 2020), and data extraction (Schmidt et al., 2021). Others have turned to bibliometrics analysis (e.g., Walsh & Rowe, 2022; Gessler et al., 2021), crowdsourcing (Noel-Storr et al., 2022) or living reviews (Iannizzi et al., 2022) to support ongoing efforts to improve the trustworthiness and efficiency of systematic reviews.

Submitting contributions

This special feature plans to bring together a collection of articles on systematic review methods and their application in education and related fields. The intent is to provide an overview of the current state of research on these topics and to

characterise the major findings or implications of this research. Two categories of articles will be considered for submission.

We welcome:

- Systematic reviews that stand to make important contributions to the most pressing challenges facing decision-makers in education, including but not limited to reviews responding to the social crisis created by the Covid-19 pandemic. Suggested topics include digitalisation in education; curriculum innovations; international transferability of research evidence; and knowledge exchange activities in higher education.
- Articles highlighting technological or data-related innovations in methodology that are relevant to future systematic reviews in education and related subject areas. Examples of novel technologies and processes that can be used to strengthen the trustworthiness, efficiency and impact of evidence syntheses (including scoping reviews) are bibliometric analysis, machine learning, text-mining techniques, and crowdsourcing.

To that end, we invite contributions related to these suggested categories. We welcome papers across the entire spectrum of approaches to evidence synthesis (e.g., meta-analyses; thematic synthesis; scoping reviews; evidence maps), from review protocols to updates. Systematic reviews should be reported in a manner consistent with the PRISMA reporting guidelines (Moher et al., 2009). When preparing review protocols for submission, authors should follow the PRISMA-P reporting guidelines (Moher et al., 2015).

We look forward to publishing high-quality systematic reviews and related articles in this special feature.

Please consult the notes for authors on the [journal's webpage](#) of the UCL Press website.

The **deadline for early expressions of interest is 28 February 2023** in the form of an abstract of 300-500 words, up to six references, and a 50-word biographical statement should be sent by email to the handling editors, Janice Tripney and Sabine Wollscheid:

janice.tripney@ucl.ac.uk; sabine.wollscheid@nifu.no

The **deadline for submission** of articles is **31 August 2023**, through the journal's [submission site](#).

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