

ASSESSMENT 1

LEVEL 5 ASSESSMENT SPECIFICATION

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Identifying a Problem

It all started with the topic of a study, as I realized that there was brewing mental health epidemic rampant among students. Our world is increasingly filled with anxiety and sadness, but so few schools have made embedded mental health instructional intentional part of the curriculum. From this gap in addressing mental health within an educational setting it made me curious about closing the challenging space that is between academic attainment and student well-being. At first, I was just doing what felt like out of duty and reward- focusing on Mental Health especially in schools. Yet to me, such a large subject was equally daunting. The goal was to limit the scope of a larger, more pervasive issue that faced all students and make it something study-able.

Although, acknowledging the issue was step one and inhibited to light a much-needed fire. Initially, I had a lot of trouble narrowing down what it was that my concern focused on; however — through module resources and conversations with classmates—I eventually found the crux to be around mental health education in schools. And this emphasis allowed me to make connections that could be leveraged with current social issues, thus giving my results more merit and impact. In this phase, there was a huge reliance on the fundamentals of issue detection and feasibility. For me, it was crucial to realize that the problem statement defined at this stage is a foundation of your entire research. Probably by reducing the weight of it, I could solve a problem that still within my capacity but important. In particular, the problem of insufficient mental health education was relevant in light of increasing concerns over student wellness in a post-pandemic world.

On the whole, I learned that zeroing in on a specific aspect of mental health, like how schools include it in their lessons sharpened my research focus and made it more hands-on. Looking ahead, I'll make it a point to narrow down my study topics early to avoid getting swamped by big issues. For my next projects, I plan to devote more time to spotting problems and going through existing research to better uncover potential gaps to explore.

Setting a Research Question

After pinpointing the problem, I came up with this study question: "How important is mental health education in schools, and what effect does it have on students' well-being and grades?" This question aimed to explore the value of mental health education and how it impacts students, both in their emotional state and their schoolwork. Once I had this question, I felt good because it tied into current debates about education and matched my own interest in boosting student well-being. Still, I wasn't sure if the scope of the question was too wide or too narrow.

The research question had a guiding effect on the study's direction making sure all future research choices stemmed from this basic query. I saw that a specific research question brought focus and clarity, which helped in the research process. This stage highlighted important concepts like study scope, relevance, and specificity. To create the study question, we had to balance a topic broad enough to matter to many people yet specific enough to allow for deep analysis. The module talks taught me how valuable a well-crafted question is when it fills a specific gap in what we already know.

The research question had a good structure setting up a clear plan for the study. Looking back on this approach, I see how important it is to check and improve the research question as the study goes on. In future studies, I'll make sure to assess and adjust my research topic to avoid it not matching the study goals later on.

Deciding on Research Approach

This research employed an inductive qualitative approach to examine personal experiences and views on mental health education. The main methods to gather data included semi-structured interviews and focus groups. At first, I worried that qualitative methods might lead to subjective data. But I realized these methods fit best to explore the complex and sensitive topic of mental health education.

The qualitative approach allowed me to get in-depth insights into the experiences and views of those involved. This choice helped connect the research to real-world situations, which made the findings more relevant. Yet, I faced challenges, like how to organize and analyze qualitative data. I found that using qualitative methods aligns with the constructivist view of research, which tries to understand people's perspectives. The course materials on research methods pointed out

that inductive processes work well to draw theories from data, which was what this study aimed to do.

To sum up opting for an inductive and qualitative approach was crucial for conducting thorough research on mental health education. Nevertheless, I realised the importance of familiarising myself with qualitative data analysis methods before starting the project. My goal is to improve my qualitative analysis skills such as coding and theme analysis to boost my confidence and effectiveness in handling qualitative data for future studies.

Data Collection

I conducted interviews and focus groups with students, teachers and school counsellors to collect primary data on mental health education. To supplement my findings, I also reviewed existing research. While collecting data I was eager to gain insights but I was apprehensive about how individuals would respond to questions regarding a sensitive topic like mental health. Organizing these interviews required careful planning to ensure that participants felt comfortable.

The data collection process proved successful in providing insights. However, I found it challenging to schedule interviews and maintain engagement during focus group discussions. This experience highlighted the importance of adaptability in data collection especially, during interviews. The interviews allowed for replies leading to unexpected yet meaningful revelations. Additionally, the secondary research, which involved a literature review helped contextualize the primary data and support my conclusions.

The ways I collected data worked well, but I found that I should allocate more time for planning and conducting interviews. Additionally, it was crucial to strike a balance between primary and secondary data to validate my findings. In my research I intend to establish timelines and build in flexibility for interview scheduling. Moreover, I will develop a structured method for integrating primary and secondary data.

Presenting Your Idea

I had the chance to give a brief presentation to stakeholders like teachers and peers about my research idea. The aim was to highlight the significance of mental health education in schools and gather feedback on my research approach and initial results. At first, I was a bit hesitant about discussing my thoughts on mental health since it's a sensitive and challenging topic. However, I found motivation in being able to share my passion for the subject.

The feedback I received during the presentation helped me improve my research. Stakeholders suggested that I provide specific examples of how to integrate mental health education into existing education systems. This input made me realize the importance of grounding studies in practical solutions. Sharing my research topic allowed me to engage with diverse perspectives and critically assess my own approach. The module lessons on communication skills assisted me in structuring the presentation in a way. Additionally, I learned that seeking feedback, early in the process is crucial for enhancing the overall outcome.

This last assignment is something that I will apply in practice since its goal is also to enhance practical research. I understood that understanding other people's opinions is not only helpful for improving one's speech and expressiveness, but also enhances the subject as the given evaluators provide useful feedback. Those developing future plans should ask stakeholders for assistance in enhancing the research at the onset.

Data Analysis

This stage of analysis was concerned with the initial interpretation of the qualitative data obtained from interviews and focus groups. I began the thematic analysis by sorting the responses into groups seeking out common patterns, which were relative to the research question on the impact of mental illness education on pupils' wellbeing and academic performance. There was also a collection of secondary research from journals to validate and enhance the overall performance of the study.

The first thing that came to my mind was that there was too much of qualitative data and this was a source of a problem, because it was hard to read through the various views of the students and teachers and counselors. But after organizing the data and starting to look for patterns, I was encouraged and thrilled to be able to uncover valuable information. The theme approach worked

well for the analysis as it helped me to look for similar experiences, thus contributing to the analysis.

The thematic analysis yielded specific themes such as enhanced awareness on the issues of mental health, improved student coping skills, and benefits in academic performance with the incorporation of mental health education. This helped answer the problem statement of the study satisfactorily. And in my opinion, this is one area in qualitative data analysis which I had underrated out of ignorance, this is very tedious and needs great attention to detail.

In sustaining this phase, the curriculum material on qualitative research methodologies and topic analysis relied on qualitative research. I came to understand that data categorisation gets one into a thoughtful conflict about the need to recognize reiterations and to understand what they signify. The secondary data provided additional assets to my overall conclusions. The data analysis was successful as far as retrieving relevant information regarding the study problem was concerned but it exceeded time expectations. In future studies, I would put more effort to this step and even consider utilizing other writing software to aid in coding and identifying topics in order to save time and improve accuracy.

Formulating Conclusions

In the course of carrying out the study whose objective was to understand the need to advocate for mental health education in schools, I was able to make some—in the end—reasoned conclusions. As a result of these activities, multiple important discoveries were made with the aid of interviews, focus groups, and secondary sources. Education concerning mental health has proven to assist school children in understanding the issues of mental health, improving their coping skills and even their academic performance. On the other hand, the focus group discussed the limitations of carrying out this investigation such as lack of sufficient resources for training of the teachers, not enough time in the curriculum and too little resources to carry out mental health education schemes.

For several days, if not weeks, I enjoyed the sense of achievement and satisfaction drawn from the results reached, which correspond to and address the very formulated study problem. I was especially motivated by the positive effects of education on mental health considering the

respect that would be accorded to my work. But there were constraints and challenges that were brought out in the analysis that cut short my feeling of achievements. Clearly, however, in spite of the great potential in the fore of mental health education, its application involves major institutional change.

The results provided essential information about the contribution that mental health education may have towards the improvement of the students' well-being and academic lives as well. The beneficial outcomes, enhancing positive coping mechanisms and enhancing sometimes needed focus, were encouraging. The barriers emphasized the importance of breaks and political change to help ensure that mental health education is incorporated in most if not all, school schedules.

Developing those conclusions helped compare the theoretical knowledge which was collected throughout the study with practical implications for schools and policymakers. The studies revealed that, amongst the benefits of mental health education, it cannot be more effective without appropriate factors like preparedness of the teacher, integration of the taught curriculum and budget funds. This is in line with broader claims made in the fields of education and mental health which argue that the sustainability of such efforts is directly linked to the system of support which is provided.

The act of forming conclusions made me see the importance of trying to place the research findings in the context of what photos have tried to teach and in the context of academic culture more broadly. While mental health education had a benefit, the problems underlined the need for comprehensive solutions to overcome implementation gaps. In enhancing knowledge of suggested areas, the future study can also add by examining the possible issues such as psychosocial impact in the long run and better integration of mental health education in different school contexts.

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