

## 2009 International Campbell Collaboration (C2) Colloquium

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### Submitter Information

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### Abstract Information

**Abstract Title:**

Issues in the conduct and dissemination of rapid reviews of evidence

**Format:**

Symposium

**Themes:**

The need for relevant and reliable evidence

**Authors:**

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**Abstract:**

This symposium will explore the challenges and opportunities in quickly conducting and disseminating rapid reviews of evidence. Abrami and Bernard will present an overview of the issues including scope, complexity, reliability, completeness and bias. Wade will focus on the challenges of rapid reviews from the perspective of information retrieval including a contrast of a comprehensive review protocol versus a rapid review protocol. Slavin will present the review approach underlying the Best Evidence Encyclopedia and the ways to accomplish high quality reviews quickly and at low cost. Ungerleider will explain how and why the Canadian Council on Learning supports Question Scans as a preliminary review; he will also discuss the needs and interests of policy-makers for rapid reviews. Lipsey will explain the Campbell Collaboration's perspective on rapid reviews and reducing the time for a review by increasing the human resources dedicated to them. A guiding principle of a traditional or comprehensive, systematic review is that it must be an accurate reflection of the best available research evidence on a topic. One important feature of a comprehensive review concerns the methodological criteria that must be followed. For example, the care and comprehensiveness of a literature search help insure the review has not ignored research because that research is obscure, dated, unpublished or otherwise difficult to retrieve. The consequences of conducting a careful and comprehensive review are that they are often time consuming and labor intensive to complete. Unfortunately, policy-makers and others outside of academia to whom reviewers wish to provide evidence, neither always wants to wait long periods for review production, for example when issues require timely decisions, nor are always capable of paying the costs of a comprehensive review. A rapid review of evidence is an attempt to deal with the challenges of time and money faced by policy-makers and others who want a quick update on the evidence. A rapid review, scoping review, preliminary review, scanning review, quick and clean review, or basic review are all attempts to provide a portrait of the evidence quickly and often at lower cost than a comprehensive review. There are several ways to accomplish a rapid review. These include: a) using a much larger staff than usual so the comprehensive review can be completed as quickly as possible; b) narrowing the scope of the review so the focus is specific; c) reducing the timeframe of the review so only recent evidence is synthesized; d) examining only readily accessible documents (e.g., published research); e) eliminating or reducing steps in the review process, notably the analysis of substantive, methodological, and publication features to explain variability; f) reviewing only a handful of studies that meet stringent inclusion-exclusion criteria; and g) taking a sample of evidence and reviewing only it. Some biases may be controlled statistically. For example, the file drawer problem may be addressed by computing the fail-safe  $n$ . The use of confidence intervals helps bracket the mean effect size, emphasizing the probabilistic nature of any point estimation. A sample of studies should be drawn randomly not at the reviewer's convenience. And so on. Rapid is not another word for careless. For example, lumping all studies together regardless of their methodological quality is inappropriate for a rapid review. Using study qua

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