



DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND SPECIAL EDUCATION

QRM1804 Validity theory in educational measurement, 7.5 credits

Validitetsteori för utbildningsvetenskapliga mätningar, 7,5 högskolepoäng

Third-cycle level / Forskarnivå

Confirmation

This syllabus was confirmed by the Department of Education and Special Education on 2018-06-20, and is valid from Autumn semester 2018.

Responsible department/equivalent

Department of Education and Special Education, Faculty of Education

Entry requirements

For admission to the course, the applicant has to be registered as a doctoral student in the third cycle or have a doctoral degree. The applicant should also have documented prior knowledge corresponding to the learning goals in the QRM1800 course “Basic statistics for educational research, 7,5 credits”, or similar.

Learning outcomes

On completion of the course, the student is expected to be able to:

Knowledge and understanding

- identify different aspects of validity and explain what they entail,
- describe how the validity concept has evolved over time, and common arguments for and against different validity theories,
- describe the present consensus definition of validity,
- describe practical ways of validating different types of measurements or measurement instruments, based on a classical and modern definition of validity.

Competence and skills

- assess which aspects of validity that are especially relevant for different types of educational measurement, and how they can be evaluated,
- identify a framework for validating an instrument or measurement that is relevant to the

own research,

- evaluate what aspects of validity that are especially relevant for the own research, and what this means in practice.

Judgment and approach

- critically scrutinize different interpretations of the concept of validity, argue for their advantages and disadvantages, and in what contexts they can be more or less relevant,
- judge to what extent context and culture affect how validity is defined,
- argue for strengths and weaknesses in the frameworks that are suggested in the literature, both from a theoretical and a practical perspective.

Course content

Validity is the most important quality consideration in all research, and in educational research in particular, since such research often deals with how to measure, assess and evaluate constructs or phenomena that often are not easily observable or measurable. In this course, the meaning and use of the validity concept will be immersed and problematized, from the perspective of how validity has been applied and described over time. A coherent theme is to analyze the consequences of the different definitions on forms of assessment and measurement within the field of educational measurement research.

The course initially focuses on how the validity concept is defined and what the central aspects are and how this has changed over time. The validity concept is problematized from various practical perspectives, where both the traditional view as well as the modern view are linked to practical application, namely in what situations different aspects of validity are particularly relevant. Students will also be given the opportunity to reflect on how the views on validity and what the concept entails are affected by context and culture. Furthermore, the course will also focus on issues regarding how the validity concept can be operationalized, by discussing different forms of frameworks with criteria for validation, as well as strategies of analysis for evaluating validity in different ways. The course participants will work on formulating how the own research can be planned and discuss the chosen orientation and plan for validation. The chosen framework and the validation plan will then be described in a written paper, that will constitute an important part of the course examination.

Types of instruction

The main part of the course will be in on-line format. During the course, there will be three on-campus days (start at lunch day 1, a full second day, and end at lunch day 3) with lectures, seminars and workshops. In preparation for this meeting, individual literature studies will be performed. After the three on-campus days, the course continues as an on-line course with lectures, seminars, literature studies, supervision, and practical individual work. Course participants are expected to work independently and take responsibility for their own learning by reading the course literature, perform the practical work, and perform the tasks that are assigned by the course leaders.

Language of instruction

The course is given in English.

Swedish and English.

Grades

The grade Pass (G) or Fail (U) is given in this course.

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Types of assessment

To pass the course requires to individually write a report, consisting of 5-10 pages, where it should be argued which perspective on validity that is relevant for the own research and why, and describe the validity aspects that should be considered and the implications of this. Further, examinations take place at seminars, where the development of the concept of validity, from the traditional view to the modern view, and what this implies, is discussed and problematized. A Pass grade requires active attendance at all mandatory tasks at the campus days and on-line at the University of Gothenburg learning platform.

Course evaluation

Course evaluation will be carried out after the course. The evaluation will be used as advice for the future development and planning of the course.

Other information

This is a third-cycle course and a basic course within the national school of Quantitative Research Methods in education (QRM) for researchers. More information about QRM is available at www.qrm.gu.se.

Collaborating departments

Department of Education and Special Education, University of Gothenburg in collaboration with Department of Applied Educational Science, Umeå University.

Technical equipment

In order to participate in the course, access to own computer / laptop is needed together with computer accessories for online communication (camera, headphones, mic) and the required statistical software (see list of literature).

Participant limitation and priority

The number of participants is limited to 15. Priority will be given to doctoral students within the Educational sciences if the number of applicants for the course is exceeding the number of places.