

Professional Enquiry

Methods



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Activity 1

- What have **you achieved** since the last meeting?

Rules of engagement – one at a time.....

- 1 minute to present – no interruptions
- 1 minutes to ask questions
- One scribe





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Aim of the session

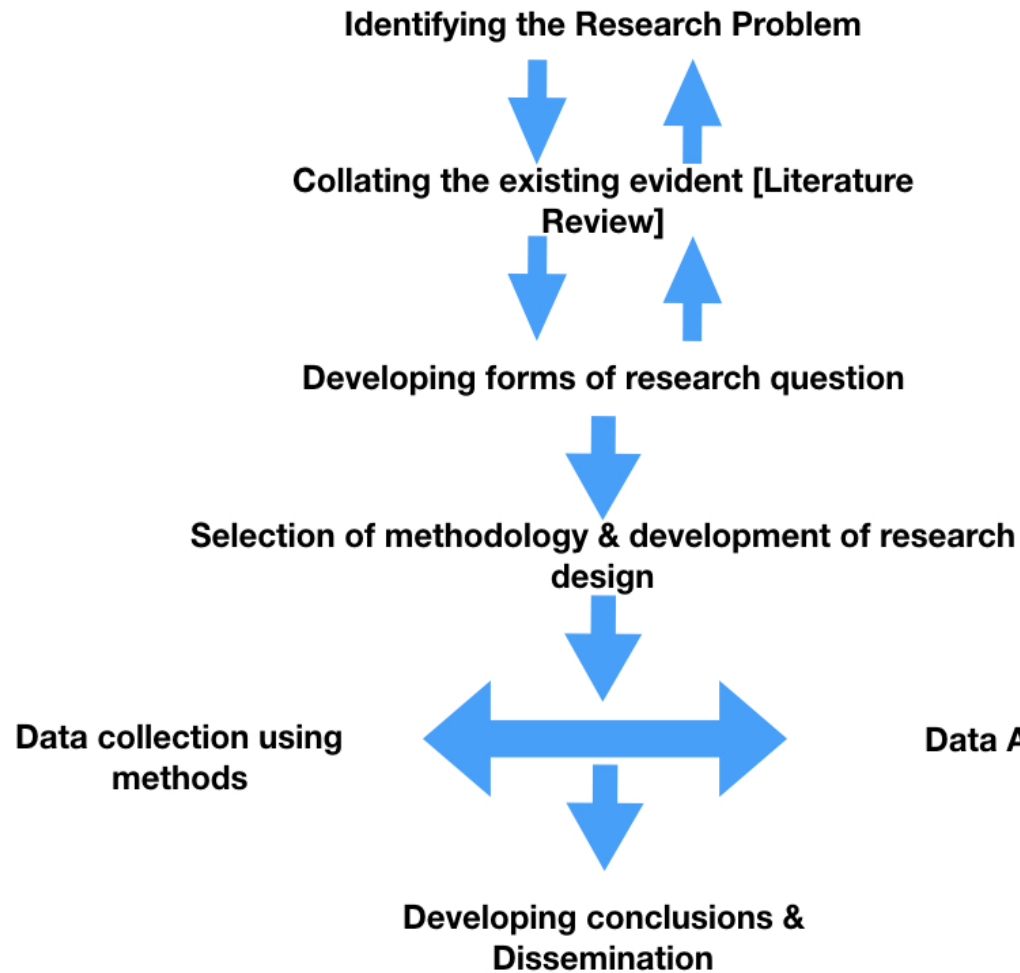
To consolidate and explore **professional enquiry methods?**



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How do we determine the method we will use?



Methodology = overarching set of principles/guidelines to frame development of questions (e.g. qualitative/quantitative methodologies)

Design = the blueprint on how to address the enquiry question (e.g. Action Research)

Method = The tools to collect data (e.g. observations)



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Enquiry Methods

You have started to plan your research with the **5 'Ws'**

Next ..

You move on to **'HOW'** you are going to collect your data?

Research Methods - tools you use to gather data



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Activity 2 in your group

1. What are the **advantageous** and **disadvantageous** of using these methods?
&
2. What top tips would you give for using these methods?

Interviews	Focus Groups	Surveys
Observations	Visual Methods	Reflective Diaries

National Foundation for Education Research (NFER) - <https://www.nfer.ac.uk/for-schools/free-resources-advice/research-in-schools-how-to-guides/>



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Focus Groups & interviews

Feedback



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Focus Groups & Interviews

Interviews & Focus groups

- Allow researchers to understand phenomena from the **participant's perspective** (Patton, 2002).
- Allow participant's feelings, thoughts, intentions and behaviours that took place in a previous point in time - cannot be achieved through observations (Patton, 2002)



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Focus Groups

Used to canvas **opinions** on exiting concepts and projects.

May need to **verify** the findings with other methods

Make sure the precipitants are **representative** of your intended end user / persons involved.

Can be expensive





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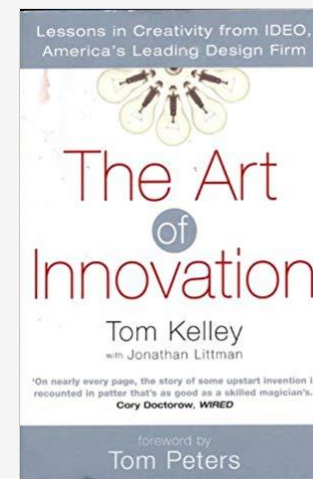
Focus Group

Getting the most from a focus group using (relevant) **probes**.

Why?



Books That Spark Creativity





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Strengths and Challenges of Focus / Discussion Groups

Potential strengths focus / discussion groups	Challenges with conducting focus / discussion group	Solutions?
Provides a number of different perspectives on a selected theme / question i.e., generates discussion & questions	Point of discussion can get off-track	
Helps people remember issues	Some people are not prepared to contribute, or be as open and honest as they would in one-to-one interviews.	
Allow group-dynamics to be explored wouldn't have arisen in one-to-one interviews	Powerful identity person dominates discussion	
Participants can bounce ideas/viewpoints off each other	Difficult to extract individual views Other people may contaminate an individual's view	
Participants interaction useful to analyse		(Dawson, 2017)



Interviews

- What is the **purpose** of the interview?
- What are the different type of interviews? What are their key features?

Unstructured	Semi – Structured	Structured
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Conversational• In depth• Partnerships - interviewer and interview partner• Rapport - prior• Trust• Remain alert• Natural emergence of topics (Patton, 2002).	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Same topics throughout but can be used interchangeably• Interview guide• Helps make most of limited time available• Most common	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Carefully worded questions asked in same order to every participant• Does not tend to include probes or follow on questions• Interview guide• Helps make most of limited time available



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Top tips - Focus / Discussion Groups & Interviews

1. Relationship / **rapport** , make participants feel comfortable
2. Get participants **talk** as much as possible – in relation to **aim** / theme
3. Interview guide - more systematic, comprehensive interviewing process
4. Semi-structured interview guide is **flexible**
5. **Know** your interview guide
6. **Listen** attentively, respond & be flexible
7. Use of **probes** - can you explain, elaborate
8. Use of **gestures** - nodding

(Kreuger, 1998; Patton 2002; Rapley, 2004)



Top tips– focus / discussion group

9. Include **all** members - every individual to contribute to the discussion
10. Good focus /discussion groups lasts **60-90** minutes
11. No more than **8** people
12. Consideration for gender, personality, roles (SMT)
13. Meeting with participants prior to focus / discussion

(Kreuger, 1998; Patton 2002; Rapley, 2004)



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Table report back on Surveys & Observations



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Surveys, questionnaires

Can capture the views of a **large representation** of the intended audience.

Always **pilot** **Why?**

Make sure the questionnaire has an **aim / purpose**

Be very considered in the **type** of questions you ask

Analyse results by **correlating** the answers of 2 or more question.

Consider how you get the survey out there.... Any examples?

Body language can sway the way a participant answers a question.





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Surveys

Surveys are **not the tool** to use to ask participants to *recall past behaviour* or *describe recent behaviour*, the reflection will not be accurate reflection of their actions. It is much easier to remember how you **felt** than what you **did**.

Use to **reach** a **large** audience where you aim to **quantify** concepts and analyses for **significant** difference.

Tips ... keep them brief and don't ask two questions in one. Mixture of open questions (but not too many) and multiple choice.



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Surveys

Style of questions that should be avoided ... why?

1. Are you excited about what we'll do next?
2. Do you think our sales team was not unhelpful, or were they helpful?
3. How long did it take you to complete the process and on what day of the week did you do it?

Avoid absolutes / closed questions they force a directionality to the answer.
Avoid too many open questions, they are harder to analysis.



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However, what people **say they do**, and what peoples **actually do** ...
sometimes **don't** correlate....

Why?



*"I'm very well
organised"*



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Observations

Observations is about **understanding** how people **behave**

Puts the researcher **within** the context of the study... *make sure you blend in!*

Can be used to understand **existing behaviour** and to understand / evaluate the implementation of a **new** idea.

This method is the **difference** between **behaviour** and **opinion**.



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Observations

Watch and **Listen** & capture the act in its **intended** environment.

Capture the data.

Can be used to gain insights and to test ideas early and frequently.



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Table report back on Visual Methods & Reflective Diaries

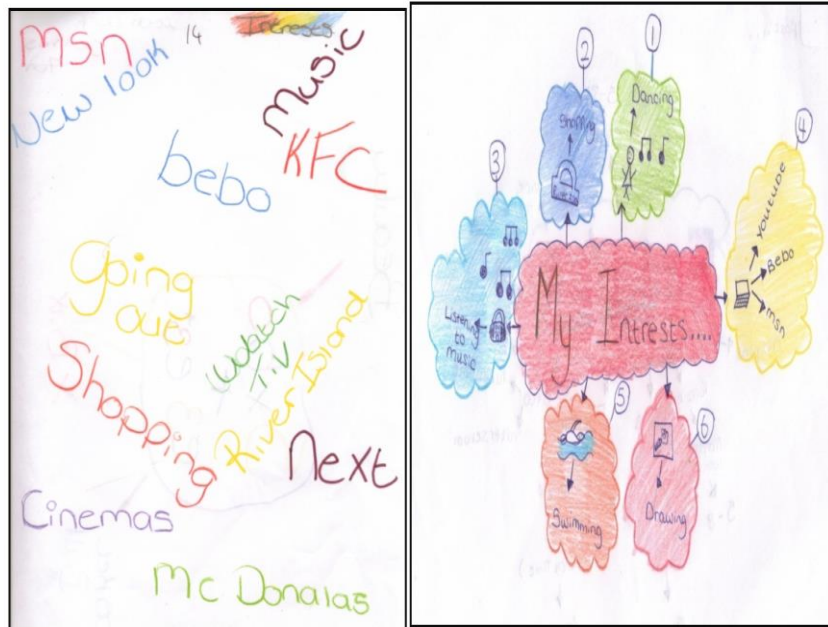


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Pupil-Centred Classroom Activities

Researchers found **less confident pupils/children** to be more challenging to engage and as a result may have underrepresented or neglected voice in research



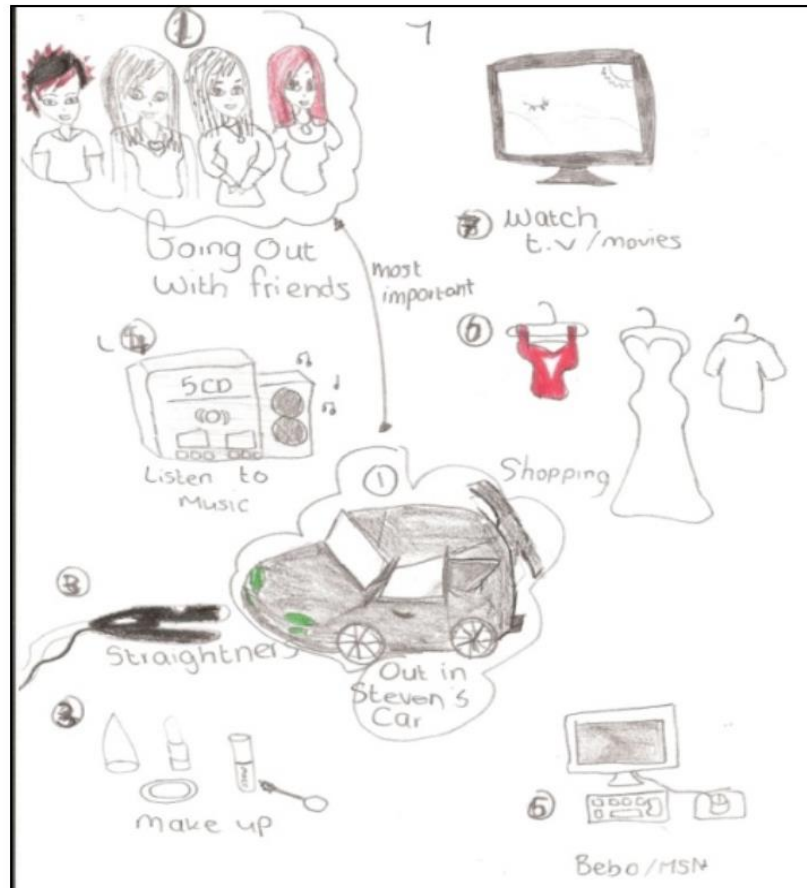
Key: Boxio = boxing;
Pel-droed = football; Pel
volley = volley ball;
Nofio = swimming.
*Note the name of the
club attended is placed
under the activity



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Pupil-Centred Classroom Activities





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Visual methods

Potential strengths visual methods	Challenges with visual methods	Solutions?
Extensive scope of participant recruitment and engagement	Limitations of what can be represented visually	
Additional depth - provide complementary insights that enrich understanding of participants' lives	Difficulty of interpretation and analysis - coding of complex visuals	
Can be used as probes for other methods i.e., focus groups	Additional ethical considerations for methods such as photos / videos	
Videos – additional dimensions - interaction & body language , Can enhance reflection		

(MacPhail and Kinchin, 2004).



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Reflective Diaries

- Used for **different purposes**

Keep your individual thoughts,
feelings and reflections
i) to capture your experiences of the
enquiry process

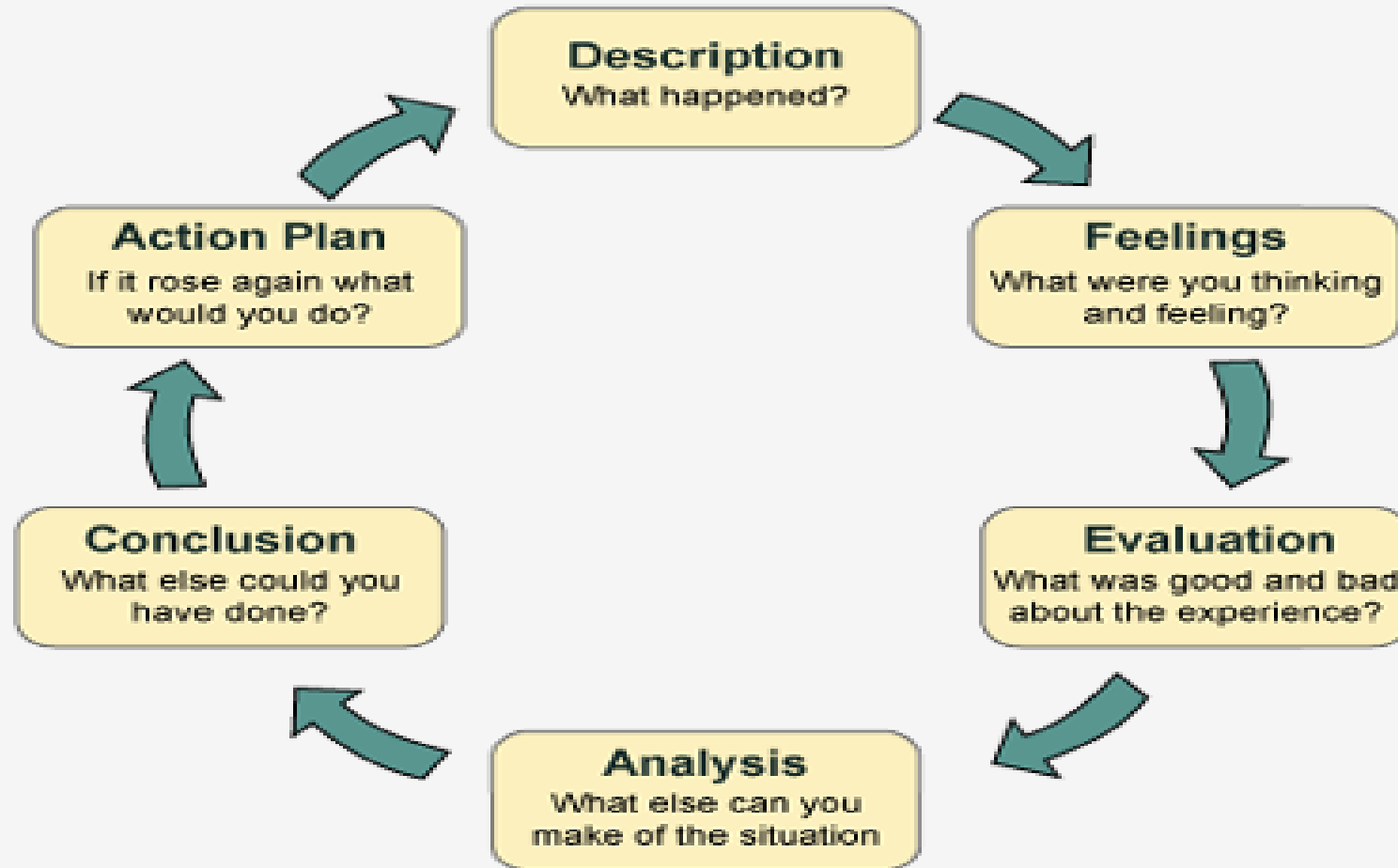
Ask participants to keep a diary
of their thoughts and feelings
of the process to track their
enquiry journey

Day in the life of ...

What?	So What?	Now what? (Action)
This is the description and self awareness level and all questions start with the word what	This is the level of analysis and evaluation when we look deeper at what was behind the experience.	This is the level of synthesis. Here we build on the previous levels these questions to enable us to consider alternative courses of action and choose what we are going to do next.
Examples: What happened? What did I do? What did others do? What was I trying to achieve? What was good or bad about the experiences	Examples: So what is the importance of this? So what more do I need to know about this? So what have I learnt about this	Examples: Now what could I do? Now what do I need to do? Now what might I do? Now what might be the consequences of this action?



Gibbs Reflective Cycle



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Gibbs' (1988) Reflective Cycle

- What happened? & What **action** did you take?
- What were the **consequences** (effects or outcomes) of this action?
- What if anything, would you have done **differently**? Why?
- What did you **learn** from this event?
- What action, further thoughts & questions were **generated** from this event?





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Reflective Diaries

Potential strengths reflective diaries	Challenges with reflective diaries	Solutions?
Can help you understand and empathise with the participant /s	Time constraint of an additional task for participants	
Is an intellectual and affective activity - can lead to new understanding of practice (practitioner effectiveness)	Determining who the reflections are written for? Personal? Organisation? Wider audience?	
Can help inform some anticipated challenges		
Develops critical thinking, self-improvement, self-awareness	(Cropley et al., 2010; Knolwes et al., 2007)	



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Increasing the quality of your 'enquiry'

- Pilot
- Participants
- Mixed method approach
- Lit / Contextual review – tried and tested methods



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