Exercises

# Chapter 3: Focusing a research project

## Exercise 1: Keep a research diary to reflect on your progress

Keep a research diary for a given period (one month for an undergraduate dissertation, three months for an MA project, at least six months for a PhD). Record:

* changes in your ideas about topic, data, theory and method
* new ideas from the literature or from lectures and talk
* meetings with your supervisor and their consequences
* life events and their consequences for your work.

At the end of your chosen period, reread your research diary and assess:

* what you have achieved in that period
* what would be required for you to do better in future
* your achievement targets for the next equivalent period
* what portions of your research diary could be used when you write up the methodology chapter of your dissertation.

## Exercise 2: Understand a constructionist approach to research

All three students discussed here used a broadly constructionist approach focused on how an aspect of the social world is put together by participants.

* 1. What specific features of one of these students’ work made their research constructionist?
  2. How could any one of their research topics be reformulated as a naturalistic study focused on subjects’ experiences?
  3. How could any one of their research topics be reformulated for a quantitative study?