Apply

# Exercise 3.1

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 talks

 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 3.2

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

 What specific features of one of these students’ work made their research constructionist?

 How could any one of their research topics be reformulated as a naturalistic study focused on subjects’ experiences?

 How could any one of their research topics be reformulated for a quantitative study?

## Suggested answers for exercise 3.2

What specific features of one of these students’ work made their research constructionist?

Answer: All three projects looked at the fine detail of how the participants’ activities produced particular social phenomena

How could any one of their research topics be reformulated as a naturalistic study focused on subjects’ experiences?

Answer: Moira might have treated what her interviewees told her as giving insights into the experience of grieving.

How could any one of their research topics be reformulated for a quantitative study?

Answer: By defining their topics in terms of variables that need to be correlated. For instance, sally might have asked: what causes homelessness. And Simon might have attempted to correlate teachers’ and parents’ background with the outcome of parent-teacher meetings