**Undertaking Interpretivist Research**

Exercise 1.3 in Chapter 1 of the book by Opie and Brown (2019) asks you to consider research you might carry out to find evidence to support or reject the theory that ‘*The new UK GCSE assessment structure has resulted in changes in the workloads of teachers and the students taking them*’.

This template may be of help to you in jotting down your thoughts when thinking about what interpretivist research you might carry out to gain evidence to support or reject this theory. Although you are considering a specific case, issues you come up with are likely to arise when trying to design any similar activity.

Start by designing research which you think might provide some evidence to support or reject the theory and then consider how you have addressed the questions that are posed.

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| Suggested research design |
| *Jot down your thoughts about the research design you might use:* |
| Questions | Notes |
| 1. *Who have you identified to consult to provided evidence to support or reject your theory? Subject teachers and students certainly, but how about school mangers or educational psychologists?*
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| 1. *Which subject areas have you identified e.g. English and Maths which were changed in 2015 for exams in 2017 and/or other subjects implemented in 2016 for exams in 2018? Why have you chosen the ones you have? Do you need to consider the ability ranges in different classes?*
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| 1. *Whilst there are ‘types of schools’ on what basis have you selected the school(s) you will use? If you focus on one type, what will this do the trustworthiness of your results? Similarly, is working just in one school acceptable? Is working in more than one achievable?*
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| *What procedures (see Chapter 9) will you use, e.g. questionnaires, interviews, observations? Which would be most appropriate?* |  |

What this exercise has set out to do is help you to become aware of the kind of things you need to consider when undertaking interpretivist research. Not only this, but if we remind ourselves of the typical timescale for undertaking your project, then this will impact upon the depth of detail you will be able to achieve when completing such research work.

The book offers examples of arguably successful pieces of interpretivist research carried out (see Chapter 8).

You might also like to repeat this exercise but with a theory of your own, which takes an interpretivist research approach, and discuss your notes with others.

Opie, C. and Brown, D. (eds) (2019)*Getting Started in Your Educational Research: A Student’s Guide to Design, Data Production and Analysis*. London: Sage.