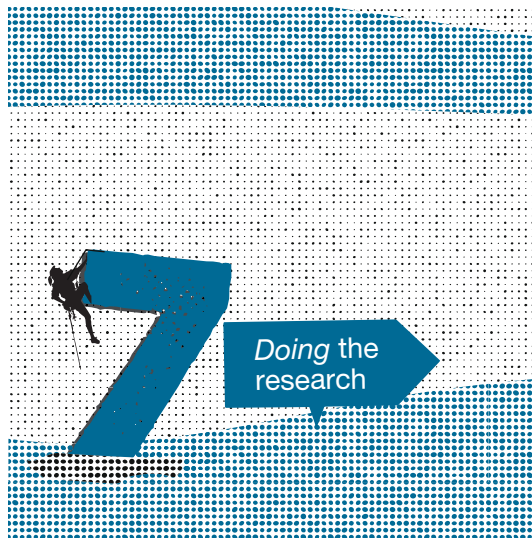


7

THE RIGHT TOOLS FOR THE JOB: DATA GATHERING



Chapter Table of Contents

Tools and methods

Be creative

Data-gathering tools mainly for use with words

Data-gathering tools – for use with words and/or numbers

Gathering image-based data

Data-gathering tools – mainly for use with numbers

This chapter will help you figure out how to . . .

- Gather data that uses mainly words (interviews, accounts, diaries, group interviews, focus groups, document interrogation)
- Gather data that uses words and/or numbers (questionnaires, observation, image-based methods)
- Gather data that mainly uses numbers (tests, official statistics, other numerical data)

For extra help, check out these other resources:

Interviews and accounts

Barbour, R. and Schostak, J. (2011) Interviewing and focus groups. In B. Somekh and C. Lewin (eds), *Theory and Methods in Social Research* (2nd edn.). London: Sage. A brief but useful account.

Gouseti, A. (2014) *Digital Technologies for School Collaboration*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan. Mainly about the use of digital technology in schools but with some good ideas for everybody.

ESOMAR (2011) ESOMAR guideline on social media research. Amsterdam: ESOMAR. Available at <https://www.esomar.org/uploads/public/knowledge-and-standards/codes-and-guidelines/ESOMARGuideline-on-Social-Media-Research.pdf> (accessed 23 November 2016). From the world organisation for market research, this useful guideline covers the collection of social media data and has especially useful information on ethics.

INVOLVE (2014) Guidance on the use of social media to actively involve people in research.

Eastleigh: INVOLVE. Available at: <http://www.invo.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/9982-Social-Media-Guide-WEB.pdf> (accessed 15 October 2016). This gives examples and discussion of the use of social media to gather data and involve research participants. Good advice is also proffered on ethics and social media.

Jones, C. (2011) Ethical issues in online research. British Educational Research Association. Available at: <https://www.bera.ac.uk/researchers-resources/publications/ethical-issues-in-online-research> (accessed 16 October 2016). Particularly useful on issues of anonymity, confidentiality and consent in online research.

Diaries

Altricher, H. and Holly, M. (2011) Research diaries. In B. Somekh and C. Lewin (eds), *Theory and Methods in Social Research* (2nd edn.) London: Sage. Short and to the point.

Bolger, N., Davis, A. and Rafaeli, P. (2003) Diary methods: capturing life as it is lived. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 54, 579–616. This is a thoroughgoing academic review. All the information you would ever want on diaries, and more.

Corti, L. (1993) Using diaries in social research. *Social Research Update*, 2. Available at <http://sru.soc.surrey.ac.uk/SRU2.html> (accessed 23 November 2016). This is an excellent, practical webpage on the use of diaries.

Focus groups

Bloor, M., Frankland, J., Thomas, M. and Robson, K. (2001) *Focus Groups in Social Research*. London: Sage. A comprehensive overview.

Parker, A. and Titter, J. (2006) Focus group method and methodology: current practice and recent debate. *International Journal of Research and Method in Education*, 29 (1), 23–37. A good up-to-date account treated with academic rigour.

Questionnaires

Oppenheim, A.N. (2000) *Questionnaire Design*. London: Continuum. Regarded as a classic text on the subject, and deservedly so.

Observation

Structured observation

Croll, P. (1986) *Systematic Classroom Observation*. Lewes: Falmer Press. A good, balanced overview.

Unstructured observation

An excellent outline of participant observation is given at www.infed.org/research/participant_observation.htm.

Image-based methods

Kent County Council (2013) *Cameras and images within educational settings*. Maidstone: Kent County Council. (Enter 'kelsi' and the title into your search engine.) This web-based booklet on using images in schools provides invaluable information and advice, especially on issues such as ethics and copyright. It has some really helpful sample consent forms for the use of images. If you can't find it via your search engine, it is available at <http://bit.ly/2fnW1sW>.

- Mukherji, P. and Albon, D. (2015) *Research Methods in Early Childhood*. London: Sage. Contains an excellent chapter (Chapter 14) on the use of images, particularly drawings, with young children.
- Prosser, J. and Loxley, A. (2008) *Introducing visual methods: ESRC National Centre for Research Methods review paper*. Available at: <http://eprints.ncrm.ac.uk/420/1/MethodsReviewPaperNCRM-010.pdf> (accessed 17 October 2016). An easily accessed and thoroughgoing overview offering practicality and rigour. It covers everything from respondents with cameras to photo elicitation and graphical elicitation.
- Prosser, J. (ed.) (1998) *Image-Based Research*. London: Routledge. The bible of theory and practice on this subject with contributions from a range of experts. It is more technical and discursive than Prosser and Loxley (2008).
- Rose, G. (2016) *Visual Methodologies* (4th edn). London: Sage. An authoritative text on interpreting visual culture, which spans an enormous range of visual material from archival photography to documentary film, websites and social media.

Tests



<http://www.gl-assessment.co.uk/> Includes access to tests and various online assessments.

Official statistics

- Smith, E. (2008) *Using Secondary Data in Educational and Social Research*. Maidenhead: Open University Press. An invaluable sourcebook for official statistics and how you can use them.

CHAPTER 7 CHECKLIST

You may find it helpful to copy this table and write down the answers to the questions. Have you ...

	Notes	
1 ... thought about the different kinds of data you can collect?	What kinds of data are these? Write them down here.	
2 ... decided on the method (or methods) you will use to collect data?	What is this? Write it down here.	
3 ... begun to think about how you will analyse these data in the context of answering your research question?		