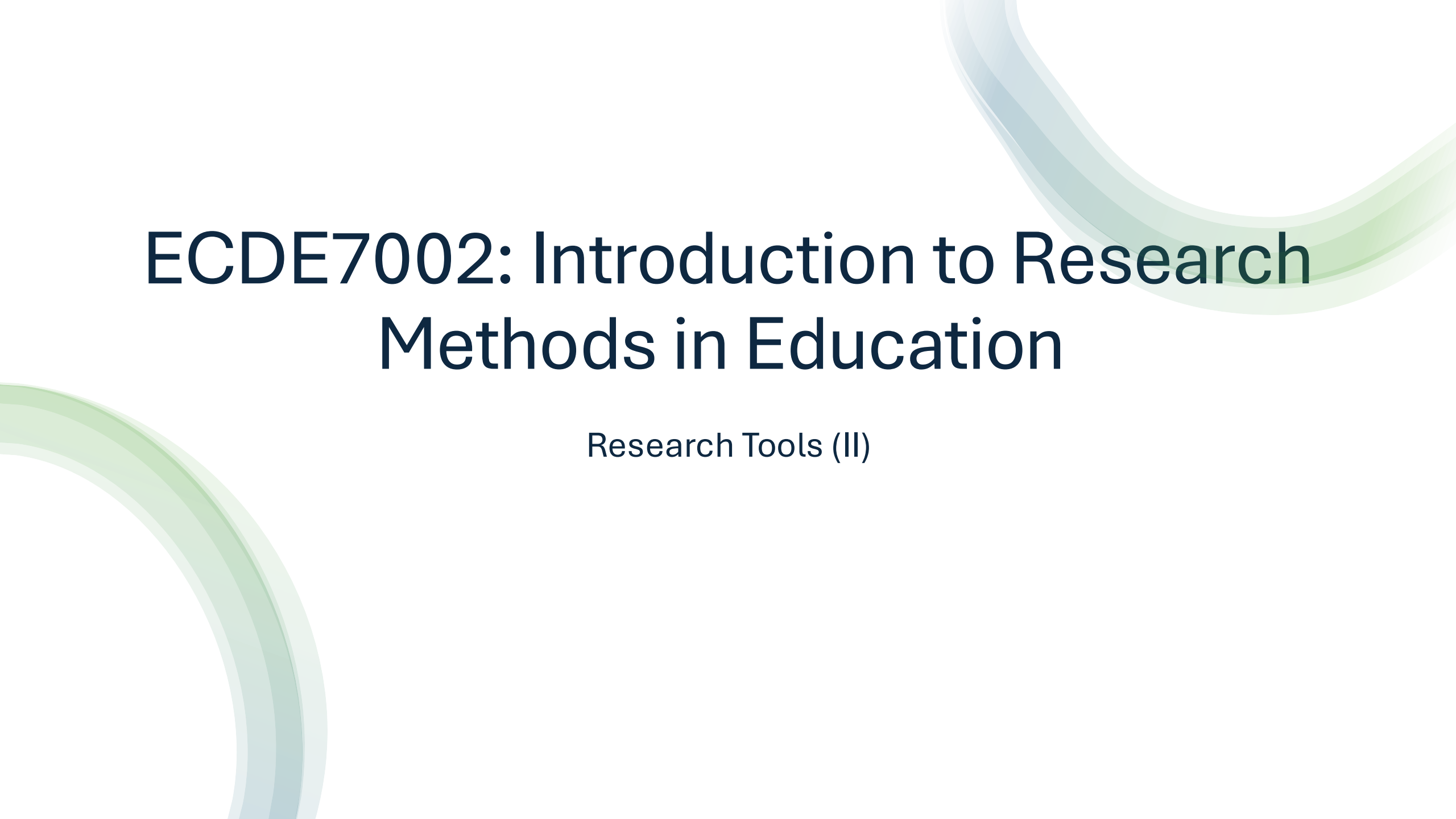




ECDE7002: Introduction to Research Methods in Education

Research Tools (II)

Aims of the session

- To evaluate the appropriateness of interviews as a research tool
- To apply interviews to own research questions
- To explore suitable sampling strategies for an identified research project



Task

- Into the chat function, please paste one of your research questions that you think could be explored through interviewing.

A photograph of a man with short dark hair, wearing a light blue button-down shirt and a dark blue tie, sitting and talking to two young girls. The girl on the right is wearing a teal jacket over a dark blue shirt and is gesturing with her hands while speaking. The girl on the left is wearing a pink and grey striped shirt. The background is a blurred classroom setting with a whiteboard and some furniture. The word "INTERVIEWS" is overlaid in large white capital letters in the center of the image.

INTERVIEWS

Interviews

- An 'interview' is typically a face-to-face conversation between a researcher and a participant involving a transfer of information to the interviewer (Cresswell, 2012).
- Three types:
 - Structured
 - Unstructured
 - Semi-Structured



What is the difference?

Structured interviews...

can be a **quantitative** research method where the interviewer a set of prepared questions in the form of an interview schedule which he/she reads out exactly as worded.

Interview schedules have a standardised format which means the same questions are asked to each interviewee in the same order.

Structured interview example

- Q1 Can you tell me about the way in which you use IT in your work?
- Q2 What do you believe are the advantages and disadvantages of using IT?

The interviewer:

- will not deviate from the interview schedule (except to clarify the meaning of the question);
- will not probe beyond the answers received.

Unstructured interviews...

have no set questions.

Instead, the interviewer asks open-ended questions based on a specific research topic and will try to let the interview flow like a natural conversation. The interviewer modifies his or her questions to suit the candidate's specific experiences.

More like a 'guided conversation' than a strict structured interview.

Unstructured interview example

Good morning. I am carrying out some research on teachers' use of IT in their work. Would you tell me about this?

Semi-structured interviews...

are widely used in qualitative research.

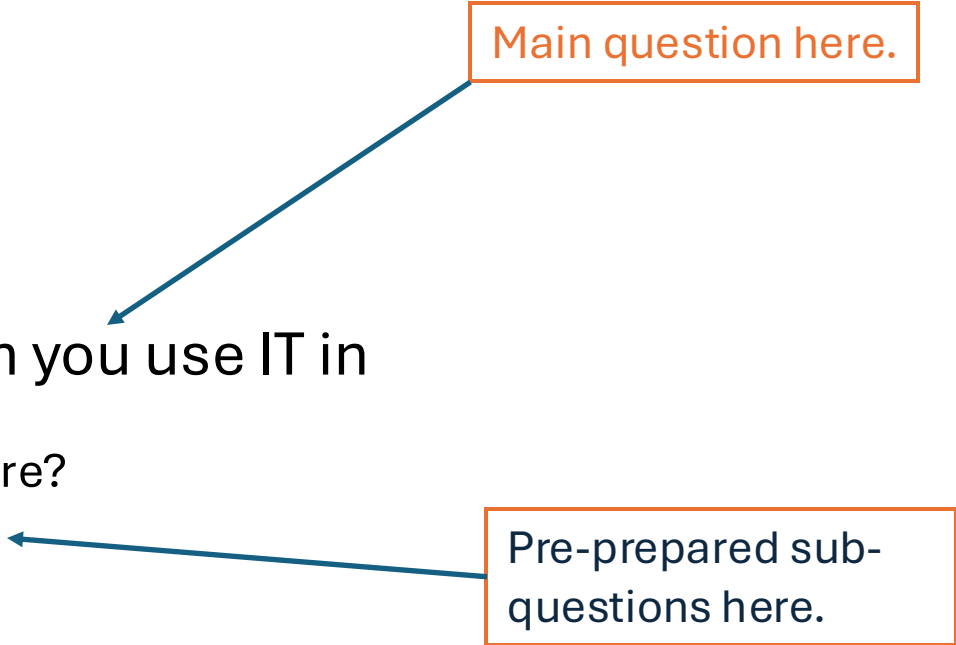
They take a slightly more open-ended approach than a structured interview.

The questions are loosely structured and give interviewees more opportunities to fully express themselves.

The unstructured part of semi-structured interview gives participants more space to ask for clarification on answers and to express free flow of thoughts, so the interviewees normally feel less stress during the interview.

Semi-structured interviews...

Main question here.



- Q1 Can you tell me about the way in which you use IT in your work?

- Do you use specific programmes?/apps?/software?
- Do you use these for specific purposes?
- Is there a reason why you like / don't like?

Pre-prepared sub-questions here.

- Q2 What do you believe are the advantages and disadvantages of using IT?

- You have spoken about several advantages. Are there any disadvantages? For yourself? For others?

Semi-structured Interviews



STRENGTHS?



LIMITATIONS?

Semi-structured Interviews

Strengths

- ✓ Positive rapport between interviewer and interviewee
- ✓ People are able to talk about something in detail and depth
- ✓ Complex questions and issues can be discussed / clarified
- ✓ Easy to record

Limitations

- ❖ Depends on the skill of the interviewer
- ❖ Interviewer may give out unconscious signals
- ❖ Time Consuming
- ❖ Depth of information may be difficult to analyse
- ❖ Validity



Task

- In breakout rooms, review the questions added to the chat, select 2-3 and discuss:
- Would interviewing help answer this? Why / why not?
- What kind of interview (semi-structured etc.) would be most appropriate?”
- What kind of data would you expect?

Reflection

- What are the challenges or things we may need to consider around using interviews as a research tool?



Group Interview (or Focus Group Interview)

- A group interview is a form of qualitative research in which a group of participants are asked about their perceptions, opinions and attitudes towards, for example, a lesson/lecture, their learning, a teaching strategy.
- Questions are asked in an interactive group setting where participants are free to talk with other group members.
- The interview is conducted in an informal and natural way where participants are free to give views.



Focus groups

Group Interviews

Krueger, R.A. & Casey, M.A. (2000) *Focus Groups. A Practical Guide for Applied Research* (3rd Edition). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Morgan D. L. (1997). *Focus groups as qualitative research* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Vaughn S., Schumm J. S., Sinagub J. (1996). *Focus group interviews in education and psychology*. Thousand Oaks, Sage.

Keep in mind that people behave differently in groups

Understand why you are choosing a group of participants rather than individuals since responses may change – is it for a valid reason?

The researcher should have a marginal role in discussions

4–12 per group (Krueger & Casey, 2000, pp. 73–74)

According to Morgan (1997) and Vaughn et al. (1996), well-designed focus groups usually last between 1 and 2 hours.

Helpful Resources

Krueger, R. (2002) Designing and Conducting Focus Group Interviews.

www.eiu.edu/ihec/Krueger-FocusGroupInterviews.pdf

Onwuegbuzie, A. J., Dickinson, W. B., Leech, N. L., & Zoran, A. G. (2009). A Qualitative Framework for Collecting and Analyzing Data in Focus Group Research. International Journal of Qualitative Methods, 8(3), 1-21.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/160940690900800301>

Writing Interview Questions



Writing questions

Use open-ended questions

- What did you think of ...?
- How did you feel about ...?
- What did you like best about ...?

**Be cautious of phrases such as
'how satisfied' or 'to what extent'.**





Writing questions

Avoid dichotomous questions

These questions can be answered with yes/no, true/false and may not allow participants to extend their answers.

Writing questions

Use "think back" questions.

- Take participants back to an experience and not forward to the future

(particularly if they are children)





Writing questions

Use different types of questions:

Don't be afraid to use questions that get participants **involved**.

For example;

- Reflection
- Examples
- Choices
- Ranking
- Drawings, etc.

Writing questions

Avoid leading questions:

- Don't you think...?
- Wouldn't you say that...?
- That must have been...?
- Don't you agree that...?



Writing Questions

- Be clear.
- Use clear, concise, and uncomplicated language while trying to avoid acronyms, technical terms or jargon that may confuse your participants.
- Consider the age of the participants.



Writing questions

Focus the questions:

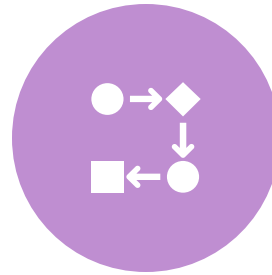
in a sequence that goes from
general to specific.



If you select interviewing as a research method, you should:



1. Write a long list of questions relating to your research focus;



2. Narrow down your list so that you have a suitable number;



3. Order the questions so that they make sense;



4. Pilot the questions.



Piloting



What is a 'pilot' in research?

A pilot study can be defined as:

“a small study to test research protocols, data collection instruments, sample recruitment strategies, and other research techniques in preparation for a larger study”

Hassan, Z.A., Schattner P. & Mazza, D. (2006) Doing A Pilot Study: Why Is It Essential? Malays Fam Physician. Aug 31;1(2-3):70-3.

[Key considerations for testing and piloting surveys.pdf](#)
([unhcr.org](#))

Piloting research tools – why bother?



Piloting is **crucial** – in order to:



ensure that the researcher has included questions that are necessary to measure the concept being studied (Dikko, 2016)



help identify any flaws or limitations within the interview design that allow necessary modifications to the study (Kvale, 2007)



ensure validity and reliability

Why pilot...

QUESTIONNAIRES

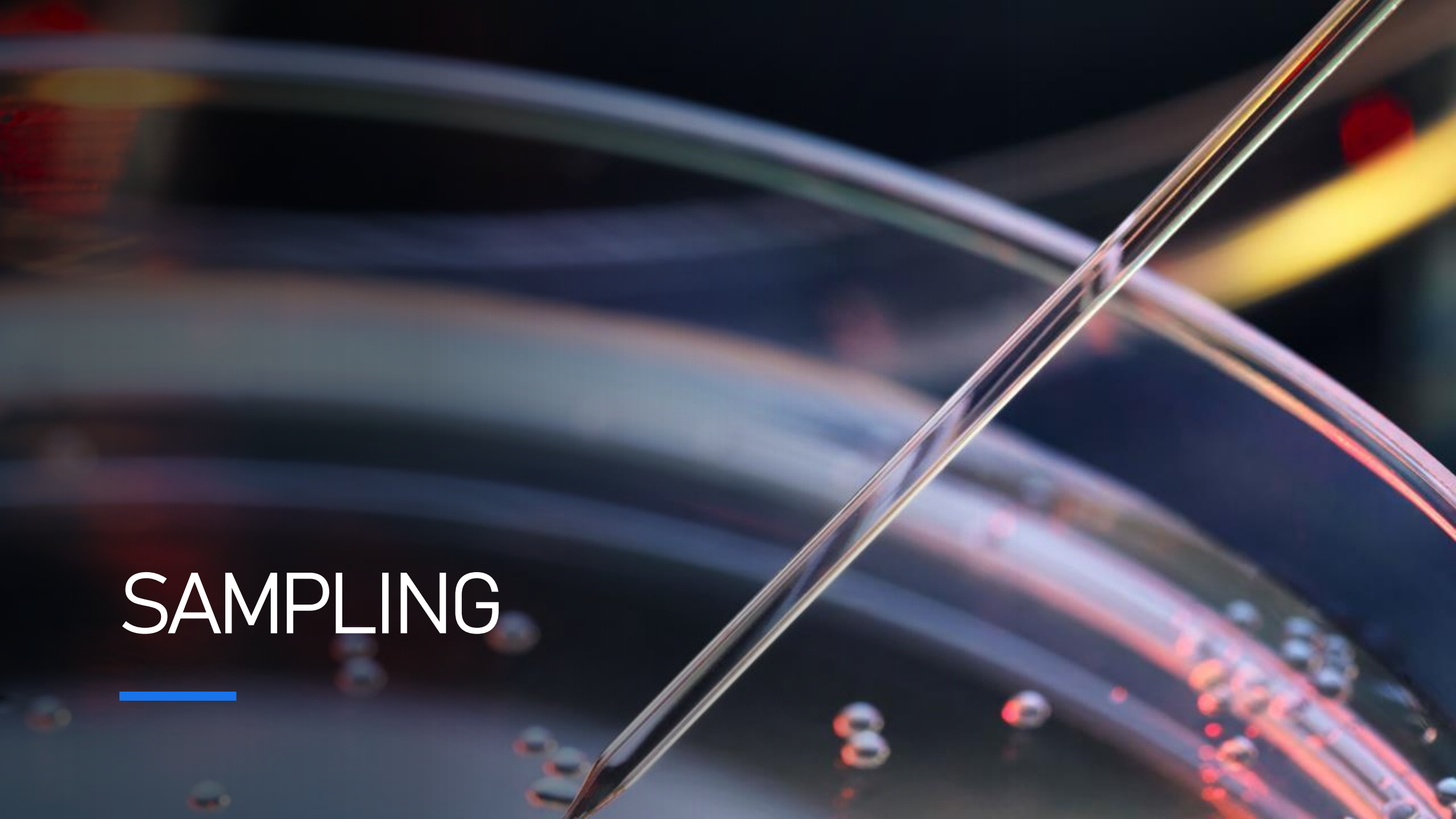
- Check that respondents understand the **terminology** used in the questionnaire;
- Check that respondents understand the **instructions** (e.g. 'If yes, go to Q4);
- Check that leading questions have not been used;
- Ensure that the questionnaire can be completed in a reasonable amount of time.

[Key considerations for testing and piloting surveys.pdf](#)
([unhcr.org](#))

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

- Identify flaws or limitations in the questions – can the questions be answered?;
- Test the validity – are the questions clear and asking what you think you are asking?
- Is the interview too long / short?

[\(PDF\) Piloting for Interviews in Qualitative Research: Operationalization and Lessons Learnt](#)
([researchgate.net](#))



SAMPLING

Assessment Component 2

Section	Suggested content	Suggested word count
Introduction	Briefly introduce your topic and the research question that you have chosen to focus on in this part of the assignment. What is the aim of your study?	200
Chosen method	What is/are your chosen method(s)? • Quantitative • Qualitative • Mixed-methods approach	1000
Sampling	What is/are your sampling method(s)?	600
Ethics	What are the ethical considerations that relate to your study?	500
Research tool(s)	What is/are the research tool(s) that you have selected?	1000
Data analysis method(s)	Which method(s) of data analysis have you chosen?	400
Conclusion	<u>Summarise</u> your intentions.	50

What is a sample?
Why use a sample?

Question:

Should the sample always be representative?



Convenience sample

(non-random sampling)

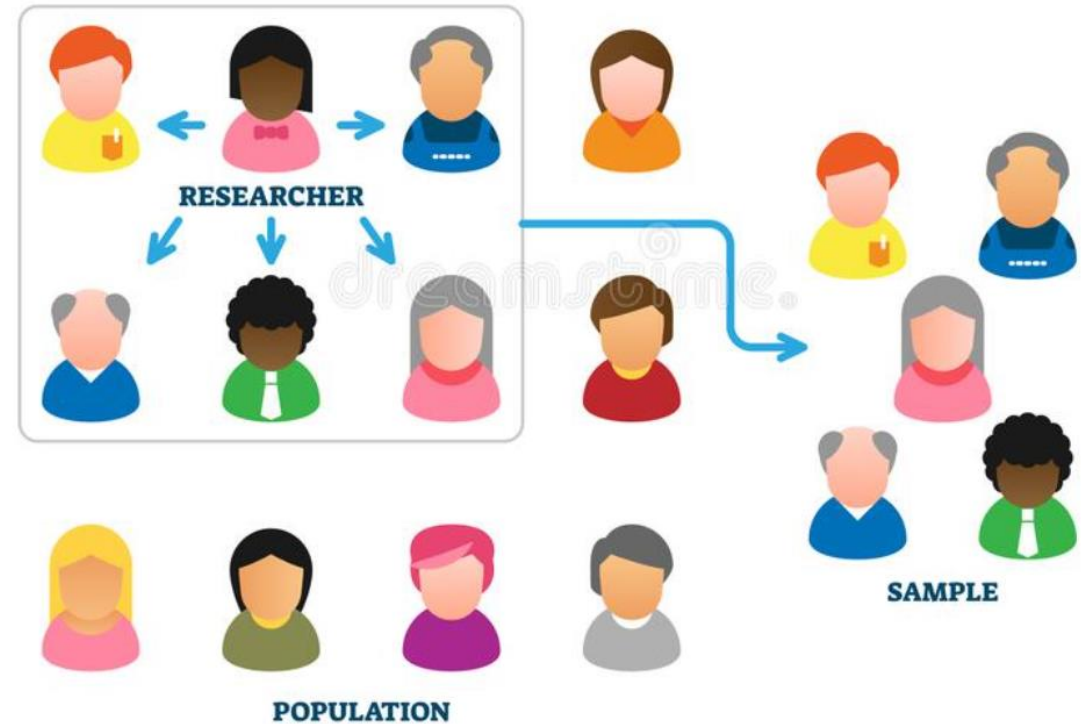
Example:

Deliberately choose a group of people who are most likely to provide information that will answer your research question (e.g. teachers from a school who you know use a specific strategy)

Benefit:

You have participants that are likely to give you the information you want to get

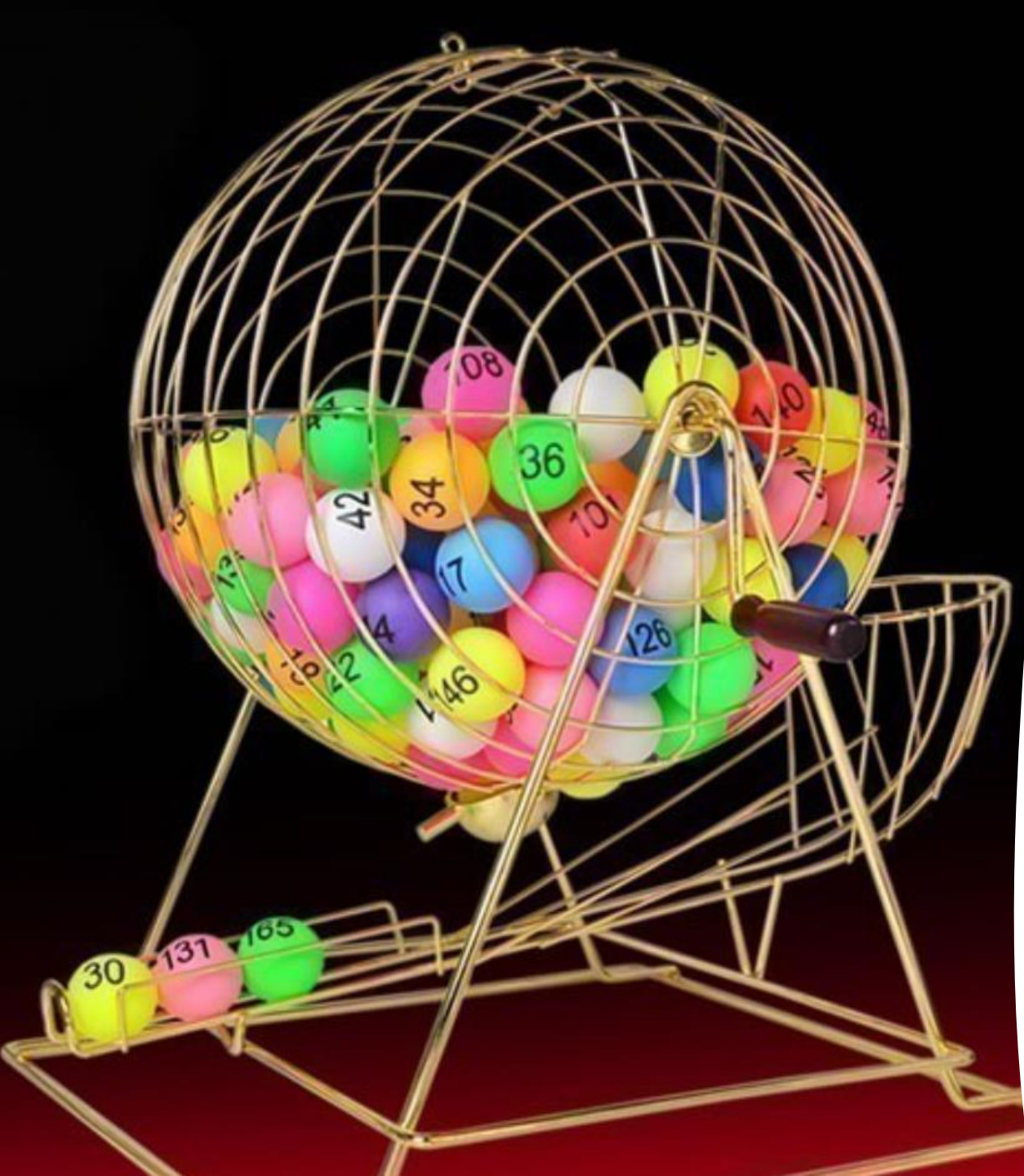
CONVENIENCE SAMPLING



Limitations:

Does not produce a representative sample of the population and this can distort the results.

Findings cannot be generalised to the wider population.



Simple random sample

Question: How might we select a simple random sample?

Benefit:

Simple random samples are usually representative of the population we are interested in since every member has an equal chance of being included in the sample.

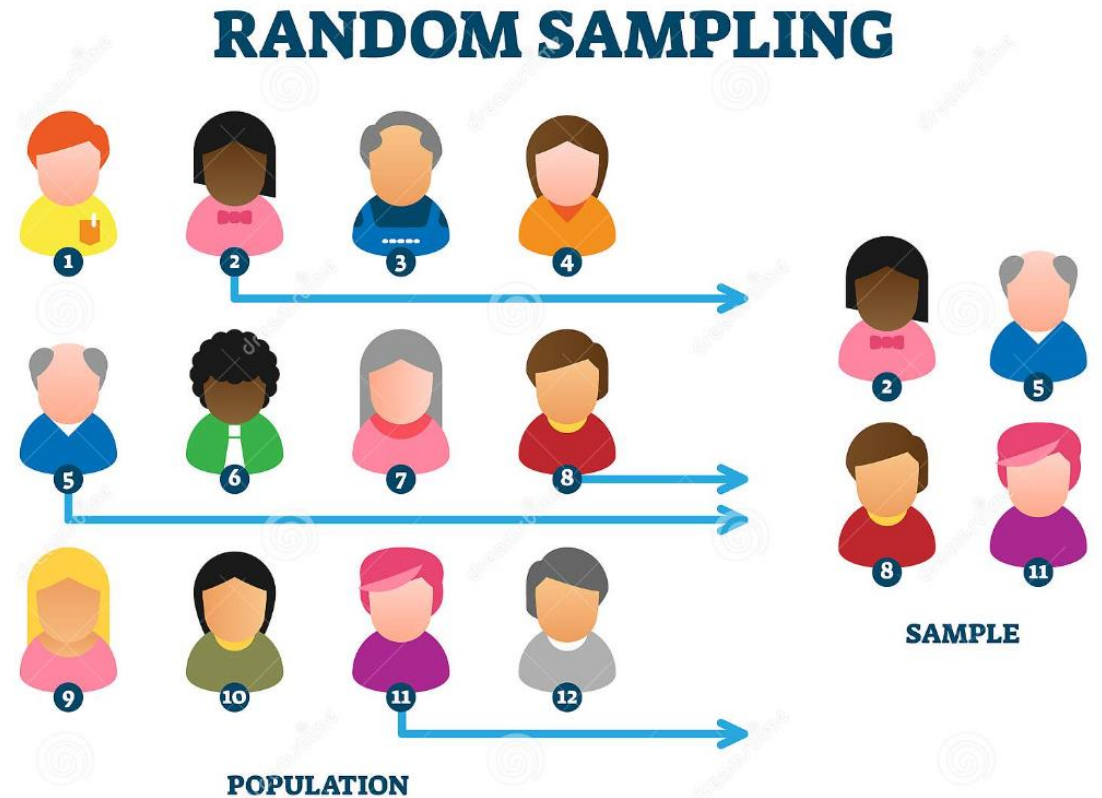
Systematic random sample

Example:

Create a list in alphabetical order based on the surname of all your students, randomly choose a starting point, and pick every 3rd student to be in the sample.

Benefit:

Systematic random samples are usually representative of the population we are interested in since every member has an equal chance of being included in the sample.



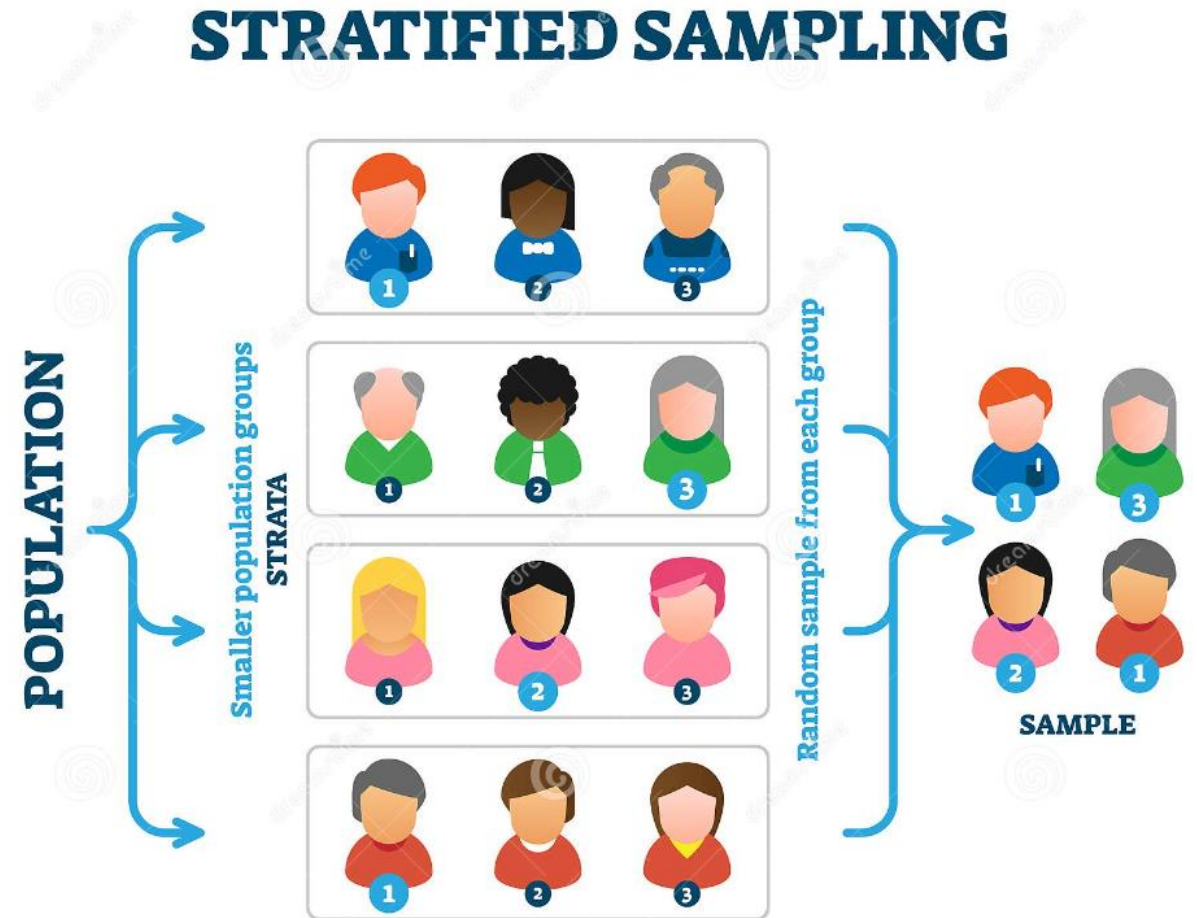
Stratified random sample

Example:

Split up all students according to their year group – Year 5, Year 7, Year 9 and Year 11. Randomly select 25 students from each grade to be in the sample.

Benefit:

Stratified random samples ensure that an equal number of students from each year group are included in the sample.



Task

- In the chat, add in what your intended sample will be for your research project?

Next session

- Saturday 14th March – IQ304 from 09.30-15.00
- Please be prepared to deliver a 5 minute presentation (slides optional) to your peers on the ethical considerations pertinent to your proposed research topic.

Reference list/further reading

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