



Prifysgol Cymru
Y Drindod Dewi Sant
University of Wales
Trinity Saint David

ECDE 7021

Exploring Contemporary Issues in Education **2: Applying critical skills, contributing to knowledge: leading improvement**

Session 1: 21st April 2026

Module Lead: Dr Julia Holloway
j.holloway@uwtsd.ac.uk

Trawsnewid Addysg, Trawsnewid Bywydau
Transforming Education, Transforming Lives

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Welcome to ECDE7021



Module Handbook

ECDE 7021

Exploring Contemporary Issues in
Education: Applying critical skills,
contributing to knowledge: leading
improvement

Doctorate in Education (EdD)

Level 7

Year 1 Term 3: 2026

Module
handbook



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Exploring Contemporary Issues in Education 2: applying critical skills, contributing to knowledge: leading improvement (ECDE7021)

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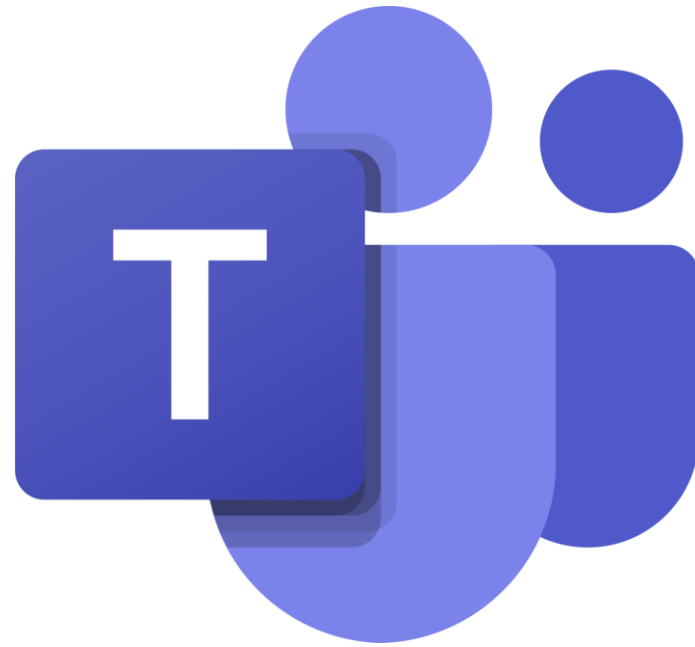
Welcome to ECDE7021

Module Lead: Dr Julia Holloway

j.holloway@uwtsd.ac.uk



Welcome to ECDE7021 - the final taught module on your EdD Programme.



EdD (FT)_GRP

Overview of Sessions:

ECDE 7021 Dates and Times:

Date	Time
April 21 st 2026	9-4
April 28 th 2026	9-1
May 12 th 2026	9-4
May 19 th 2026	9-1
June 2 nd 2026	9-1
June 9 th 2026	9-1
June 16 th 2026	9-1
July 7 th 2026	9-1
September 2 nd 2026	9-1
September 16 th 2026	tbc

Assessment Points:

Submission dates:	Assessment component
1 st May 2026	Component 1:
2 nd September 2026	Component 2:
30 th September 2026	Component 3:

Assessment component 1:

- Complete an ethics form
- **Written assignment – completion of an ethics form (in preparation for component 3).**
- **1500 words (equivalent)**
- **10%**
- *Written assignment:*
- *You will be asked to submit an ethics form outlining your research design and ethical considerations surrounding a small-scale research project to be conducted as part of assessment component 3.*
- *Submission date: 1st May 2026 at 10:00*

APPLICATION FOR ETHICAL APPROVAL

RESEARCH STUDENTS

This form is to be completed by the student within **SIX** months for full-time students and **TWELVE** months for part time students, after the commencement of the research degree or following progression to Part Two of your course.

Once complete, submit this form via the ***MyTSD Doctoral College Portal*** at (<https://mytsd.uwtsd.ac.uk>).

This document is also available in Welsh.

RESEARCH STAFF ONLY

All communications relating to this application during its processing must be in writing and emailed to pgresearch@uwtsd.ac.uk, with the title 'Ethical Approval' followed by your name.

STUDENTS ON UNDERGRADUATE OR TAUGHT MASTERS PROGRAMMES should submit this form (and receive the outcome) via systems explained to you by the supervisor/module leader.

In order for research to result in benefit and minimise risk of harm, it must be conducted ethically. A researcher may not be covered by the University's insurance if ethical approval has not been obtained prior to commencement.

The University follows the OECD Frascati manual definition of **research activity**: "creative work undertaken on a systematic basis in order to increase the stock of knowledge, including knowledge of man, culture and society, and the use of this stock of knowledge to devise new applications". As such this covers activities undertaken by members of staff, postgraduate research students, and both taught postgraduate and undergraduate students working on dissertations/projects.

The individual undertaking the research activity is known as the "principal researcher".

Ethical approval is not required for routine audits, performance reviews, quality assurance studies, testing within normal educational requirements, and literary or artistic criticism.

Please read the notes for guidance before completing ALL sections of the form.

Assessment component 2:

- *Presentation (20%) - 20 minutes*
- *Present your small-scale research project design, include your research questions, offer a critical justification for your methodological choices, the research tools and the ethical processes adopted. You should also include an outline of the intended approach to data analysis and any initial findings.*
- 2nd September 2026

Assessment component 3

- Written assignment– 10,500 words
- *Present a research report of your small-scale research project. The report should include a literature review, research questions, justification of methodology and research tools employed, description of method and data analysis, findings, critical discussion of the implications of the findings for practice or future research and an evaluation of the research process.*
- 70%
- 30th September 2026

ECDE7021 Possible Assignment Structure

Suggested Content	Approximate Word Counts
Chapter 1 – Introduction Including: Rationale School and/or Local Context	700
Chapter 2 – Literature Review This section could end with: Research Question(s) Importance of the Study	2500
Chapter 3 – Research Design and Methodology (or could be separated into two chapters if you prefer) The Research Design section could include: Epistemology / Ontology etc. Researcher Positionality and Reflexivity Theoretical Framework The Methodology section could include: Sampling Data Collection Methods Data Analysis Ethical Considerations	2500 You may find that you need more words in this section.

Chapter 4 – Findings / Data Analysis	2500
Chapter 5 – Discussion This section could include: Limitations / Reflections on Data Collection Contributions to the field	2000
Chapter 6 – Recommendations This section could include: Evaluation of the research process Implications for future research Final Reflections	300
References	
Appendices	

Upcoming sessions on ethics

The Ethics Committee are holding monthly drop-in sessions for students (and staff) to ask any ethics related questions. Whether you need support with your PG2 form or grappling with an unexpected ethical issue in your research, this is for you!

22nd April 2026 13:00

More details and joining link can be found on the DC Platform events page here.

<https://doctoralcollege.uwtsd.ac.uk/events>

Today's
session



Post-It Task:

- What were the key learning/ development points from ECDE7018 and ECDE7020?
- Can you note what you need or would like to develop further during ECDE7021?



Task 1:

Review your proposal for a research project for ECDE7020.

Consider the following: -

Is this a project you want to take forward?

If so, what alterations might you make?

If not, identify an area of research interest that you want to explore as part of this module.

KEY QUESTIONS

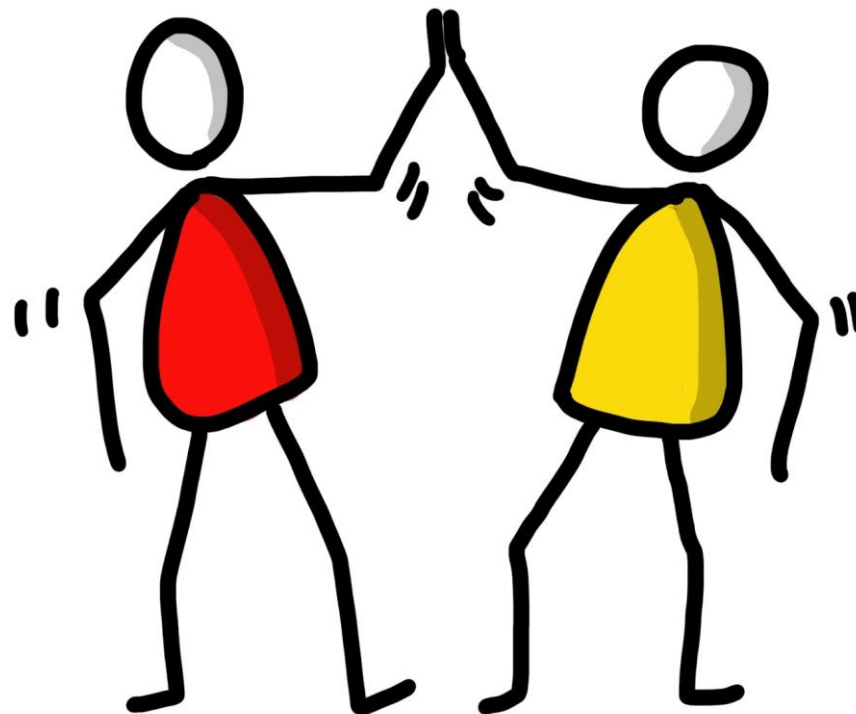
- What is/are the gap(s) in knowledge or understanding that the research project seeks to fill?
- What is/are the research question(s) that will address these gaps?
- What is the nature of the knowledge or understanding to be generated?

Why this, why now?

What makes you think this?

What else do you need to know / to tell the reader?

Find a
partner to
discuss your
research
focus:





Task 2

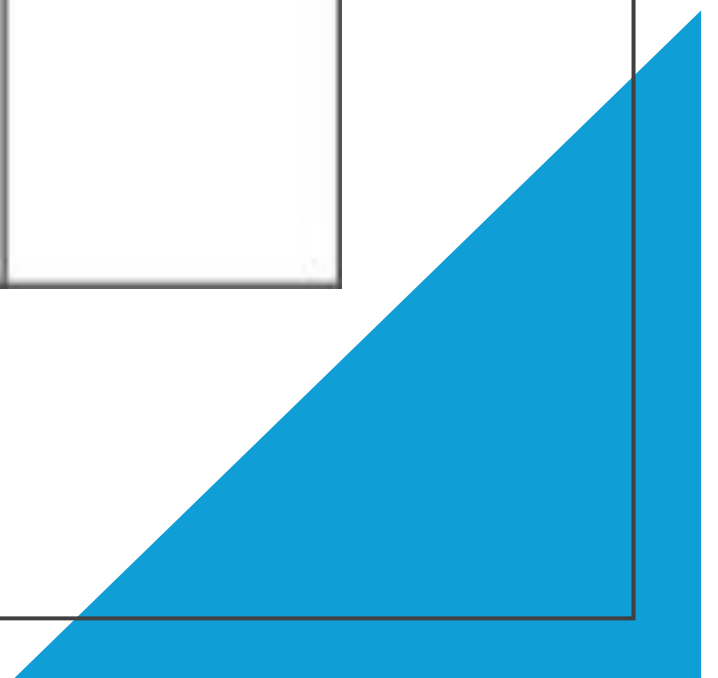
Are you able to answer the following questions?

- ⌚ What is the area of research that you want to explore? - a research problem being addressed? (What? Why?)
- ⌚ Do you have ideas of research questions?
- ⌚ Do you know what your research methods will be? (How? Why?)
- ⌚ Do you know what your research paradigm might be? (Why?)
- ⌚ What perspectives and experiences do you bring to your research that might influence the outcomes?
- ⌚ Is there any further reading that you need to plan for?

[illegible]

KWL Task

K	W	L



Aims and Objectives

Aims: the overall driving force of the research – what is it that you want to find out?

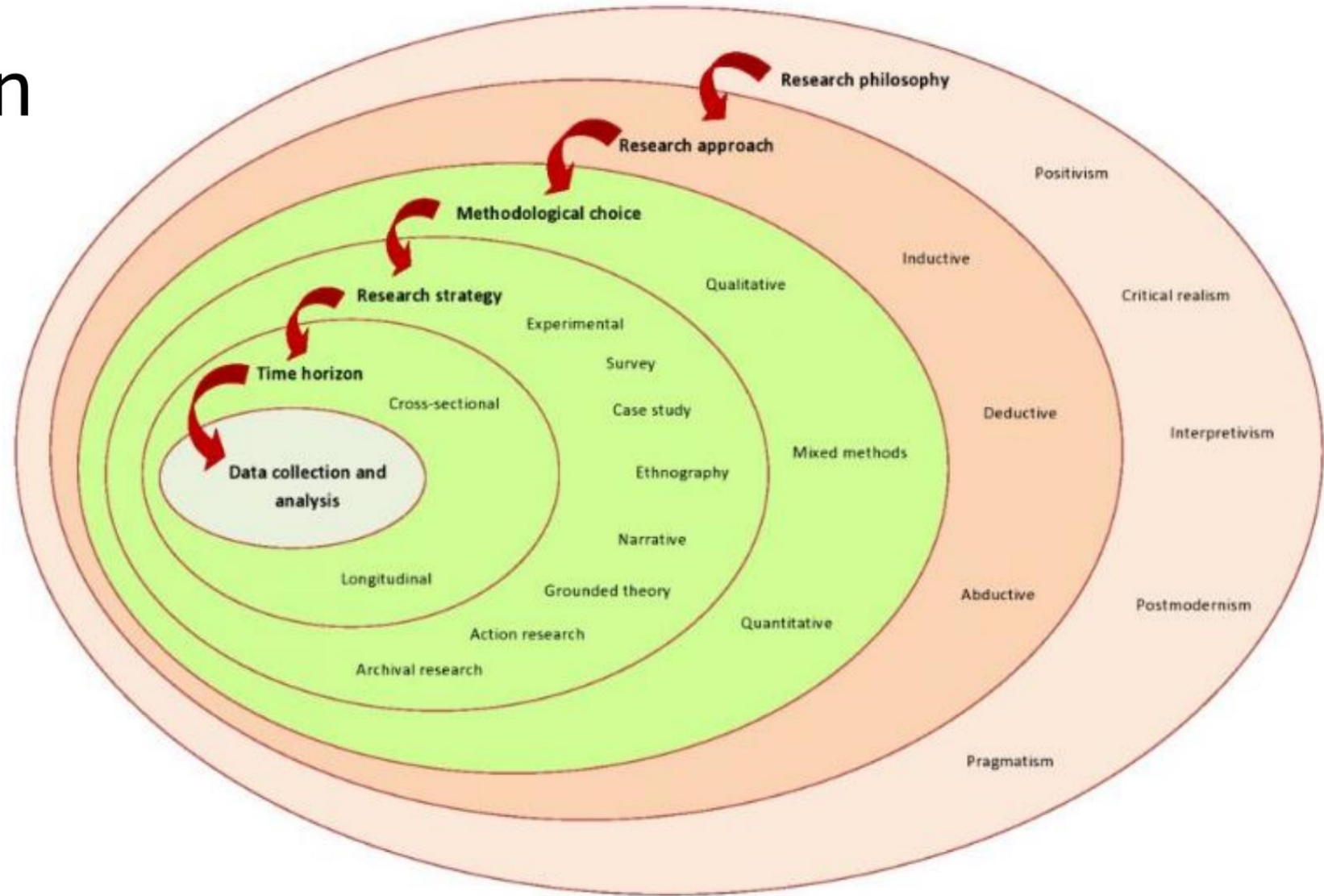
Objectives: the means by which you intend to achieve the aim. How will you find this out?

The Research Onion

Start from the outside and peel each layer away until you reach the core.

These layers are broken up into six main areas:

- research philosophy;
- research approach;
- research methodology choices;
- research strategy;
- time horizons;
- data collection techniques and analysis.



(Saunders et al., 2007)



Research Problem

Research Problem Statement: a clear, concise summary of the problem that you wish to address. It should:

- Contextualise the problem. What do we already know? Where and when does the problem arise? Who does the problem affect? What attempts have been made to solve the problem? Has the problem been defined/explored in academic literature?
- Describe the exact issue your research will address. What do we still need to know?
- Show the relevance of the problem. Why do we need to know more about this? What will happen if the problem is not addressed? Who will feel the consequences? Does the problem have wider relevance or significance? How will resolving the problem advance the understanding of the topic?
- Set the objectives of the research. What will you do to find out more?



Example:

"Despite the increasing prevalence of mental health issues among adolescents, there is a lack of effective school-based interventions that address these challenges. This research seeks to investigate the impact of a peer support program on reducing anxiety and depression levels in high school students. By identifying the specific needs of students and evaluating the effectiveness of peer support, this study aims to contribute to the development of more effective mental health resources within educational settings."

The Research Question



Does your question require a descriptive or an explanatory answer?

- What are the main ways in which pupils arrive at school?
- What are the predominant ways in which anti-infection measures are being ignored in Hospital X?
- What are consumers' most trusted commercial websites?
- What factor are determining pupils' choices concerning travel to campus?
- Why has there been resistance to anti-infection measures being implemented in Hospital X?
- Are there factors associated with consumers' trust of commercial websites?

Generating a question:

- Think about your current situation (work/study)– is there something, unusual, perplexing about it?
- Ask a colleague or friend about issues in their working day
- Are there reports or stories in the media that seem intriguing or puzzling?
- Use the internet/websites to find out what is topical
- Thomas (2017) suggests the following websites:

www.secondarydataanalysis.com

<http://campbellcollaboration.org/>.



Ask yourself:

1. Does the question deal with a topic or issue that interests me enough to spark my own thoughts and opinions?
2. Is the question easily and fully researchable?
3. What type of information do I need to answer the research question?
Is the scope of this information reasonable (e.g., can I really research 30 online writing programs developed over a span of 10 years?)
4. Given the type and scope of the information that I need, is my question too broad, too narrow, or okay?
5. What sources will be able to provide the information I need to answer my research question (journals, books, Internet, government documents, people)?
6. Can I access these sources?
7. Given my answers to the above questions, do I have a good-quality research question that I actually will be able to answer by doing research?



Developing a Working Question into a Research Question

Working Question	Working Research Question	Revised Research Question
<i>Too easy to answer; low stakes; not specific enough.</i>	<i>Higher stakes; more specific</i>	<i>More complex question; higher stakes; very specific</i>
What do people eat in Vietnam?	What does Vietnamese food reflect about Vietnamese culture?	How does Vietnamese cuisine reflect a history of colonialism?
Are people in the U.S. more obese than they used to be?	Have obesity rates in the U.S. increased over the last 100 years?	Is there a correlation between obesity rates and economic instability in the U.S. over the last 100 years?
What is the role of religion in the Middle East?	How has religion influenced politics in the Middle East in the last 50 years?	How has religion's influence on government impacted the day-to-day lives of Qatari citizens?

Task: Refining the
research question

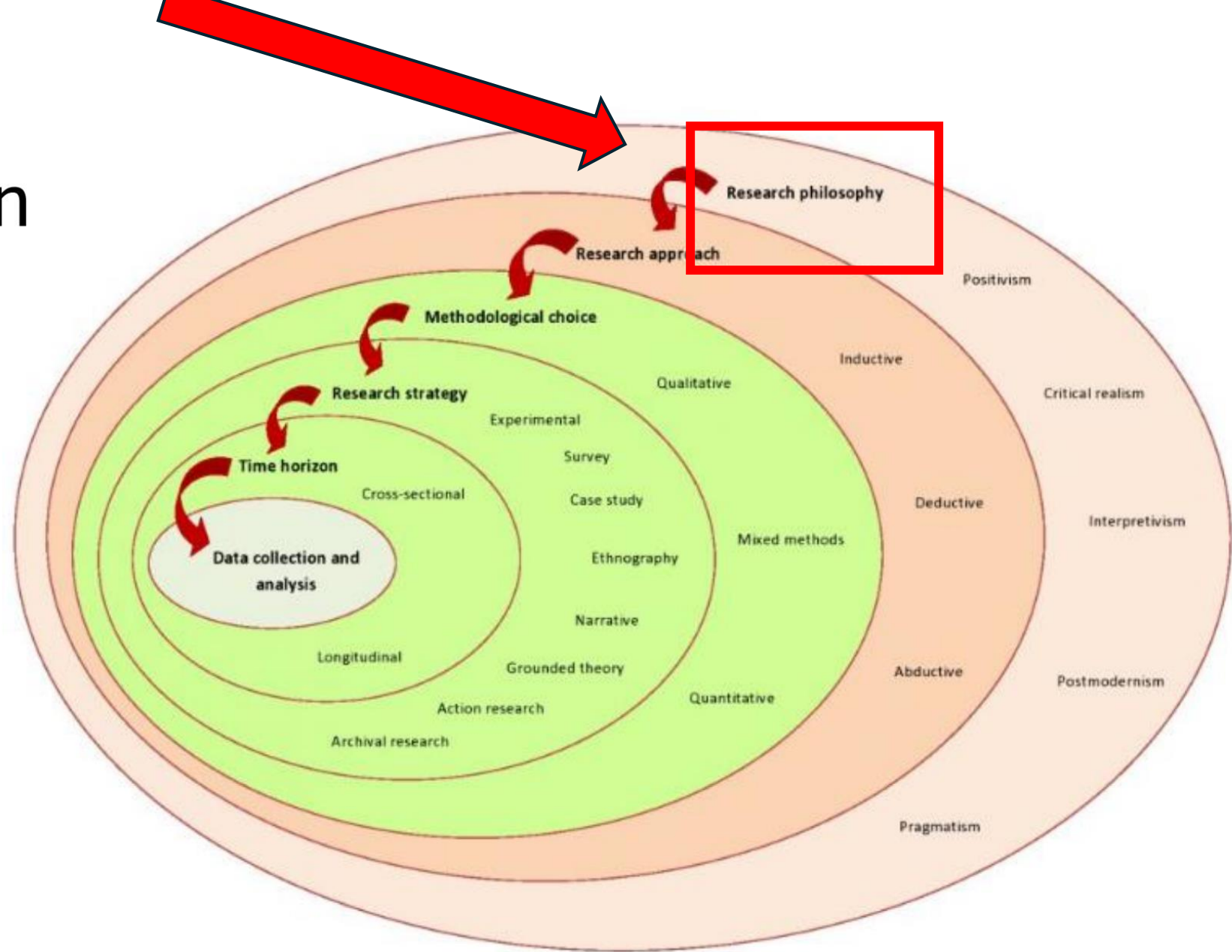


The Research Onion

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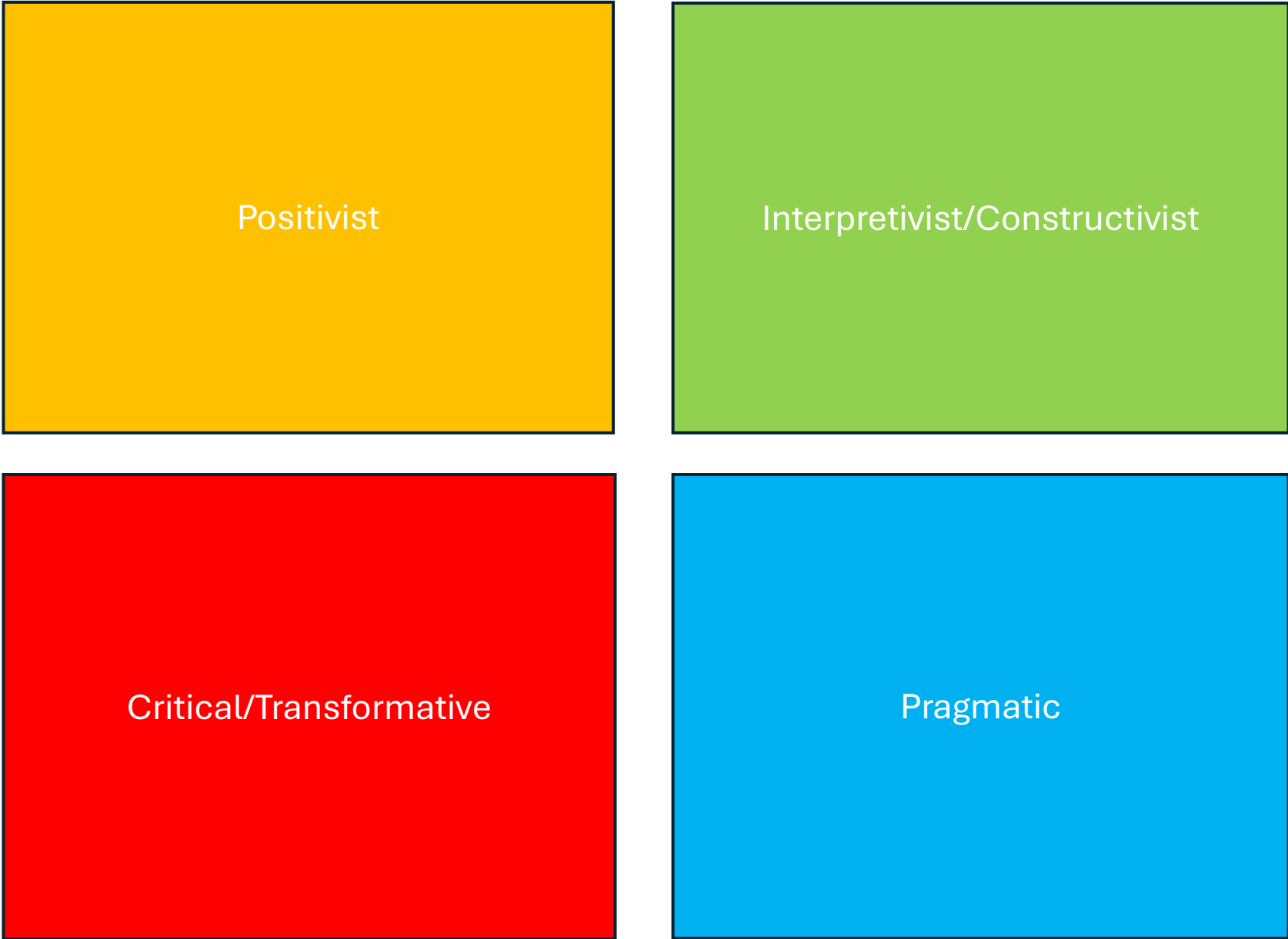
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(Saunders et al., 2007)

Key paradigms in educational research:



Positivist

Interpretivist/Constructivist

Critical/Transformative

Pragmatic



Which
paradigm/worldview
is most appropriate
for your scenario?
Why?



QUESTIONS

