



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

BMPF 7004/5/6: Work-based Research

Session 1

Research Methods; Research Design; Philosophical
Background to research

Dr Christine Davies

Trawsnewid Addysg; Trawsnewid Bywydau
Transforming Education; Transforming Lives



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Aims for Session 1

1. Introduce the module
2. Explore Research methods
3. Consider research design
4. Discuss philosophical background to research

Your module

- BMPF6/7004: 10 credits
- BMPF6/7005: 15 credits
- BMPF6/7006: 20 credits

MODULE LEARNING OUTCOMES

- **BMPF7004/5/6:** critically evaluate a range of methodological approaches, research designs, and research methods appropriate to gather data from complex work-based settings, with due consideration to research ethics and issues of insider research;
- **BMPF7006 only:** critically analyse, explain, and draw conclusions from relevant data from a work-based setting.

MODULE LEARNING OUTCOMES

BMPF6006:

- evaluate a range of methodological approaches, research designs, and research methods appropriate to gather data from complex work-based settings, with due consideration to research ethics and issues of insider research;
- analyse, explain, and draw conclusions from relevant data from a work-based setting

What do we mean by 'Research' in this module?

Our focus is on **primary research**: ie. research that generates **new** information or 'data'

What do we mean by 'Data'?

- Any knowledge/information generated by research
- **Primary (empirical) data**: data newly-generated by research (directly observed/ measured/ recorded)
- **Secondary data**: data generated in the past/ by someone else
- **Quantitative data**: numbers, measurements etc
- **Qualitative data**: non-numerical data in a variety of forms, e.g. text, video, pictures

Research Methods

Some Research methods

Qualitative

- Interview
- Dialogue /Narrative
- Focus group
- Observation
- Case study
- Action research
- Diary/ log

Quantitative

- survey
- Structured interview
- measuring
- Experiment
- Content analysis

More on **quantitative** methods



Measuring

- **Variables** such as height, weight, number, time are straightforward to measure
- Other variables might be **concepts** (eg. 'self esteem'; 'happiness'; 'satisfaction')- harder to measure
- Use '**indicator**' such as **Likert Scale**



Experiment

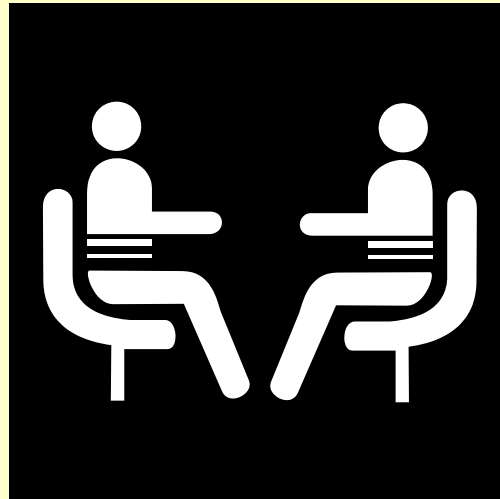


- There is an **experimental group** (randomly assigned) in which a variable (**independent variable**) is manipulated, and **dependent variable(s)** measured
- There is also a **control** group in which there is no manipulation
- Researchers need to be aware of **confounding variables/ experimental artefact**

Surveys

- Use of questionnaires/interviews in **large** groups
- Often generate large amounts of data, but relatively easy to analyse
- Could be administered online, by post
- Often involves a self-completion **questionnaire**
- Questions often '**closed**', involving specific options- eg. Likert Scale
- Surveys may be carried out via **structured interview**

More on **qualitative** research methods



Interviews

Interview:
researcher asks
questions to
individual: could
be **closed** or
open

Chat pane: why
might you choose to
use **open** questions
in an interview?

Qualitative interviews:

Structured interviews	Semi-structured interviews	Unstructured interviews
➤ Interviewer follows scripted questions; no deviations from question order. ➤ Wording of each question asked exactly as written. ➤ No adjusting of level of language. ➤ No clarifications or answering of questions about the interview. ➤ No additional questions may be added. ➤ Similar in format to a pencil-and-paper survey (although the latter almost always uses fixed responses).	➤ Asymmetrical structure ➤ IR initiates questions and poses probes in response to IE's descriptions. ➤ Questions may be re-ordered during the interview. ➤ Level of language may be adjusted. ➤ Interviewer may answer questions and make clarifications. ➤ Interviewer may add or delete probes to interview between subsequent subjects.	➤ Free-flowing conversation. ➤ Completely unstructured. ➤ No set order to any questions. ➤ Both IR and IE initiate questions and discuss topics. ➤ Level of language may be adjusted. ➤ Interviewer may answer questions and make clarifications. ➤ Interviewer may add or delete questions between interviews.

IR = Interviewer; IE = Interviewee

Table adapted from Berg, B. L. (2004). *Qualitative Research Methods for the Social Sciences* (5th ed., p.79) Boston: Pearson.

focus groups:

researcher provides discussion points for group to discuss. May be recorded

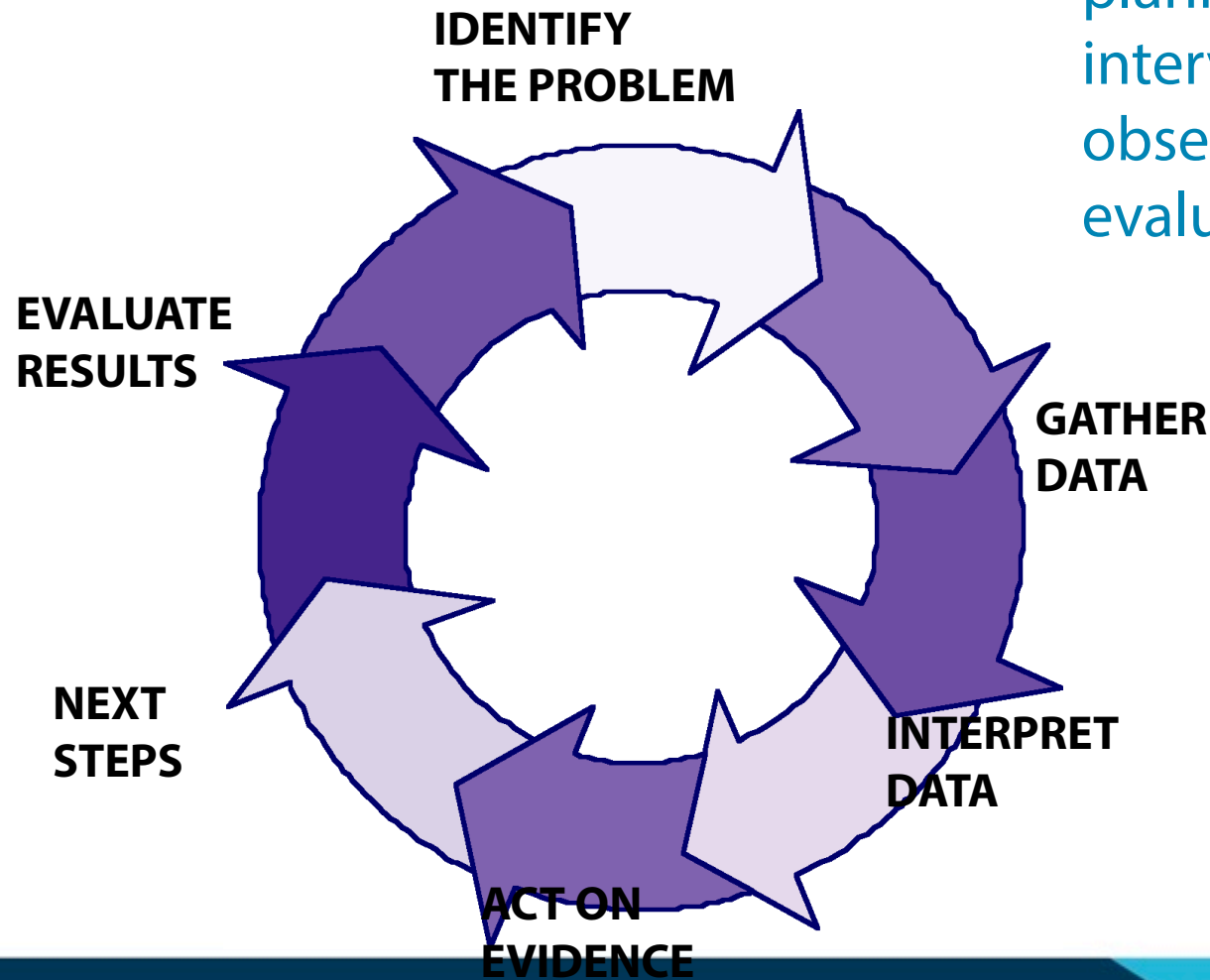


- **Observation:** what people do in their 'natural' environment – could be work, home etc (ethnography)
- **Case Studies:** all material relating to a specific case



Action Research

Action Research:
ongoing cycle of
planning,
intervention,
observing &
evaluating impact



Re-cap: Some Research methods

Qualitative

- Interview
- Dialogue /Narrative
- Focus group
- Observation
- Case study
- Action research
- Diary/ log

Quantitative

- Survey
- measuring
- Structured interview
- Experiment
- Content analysis

What is the difference between ‘method’ and ‘methodology’?

Methodology

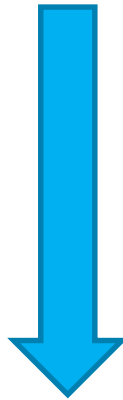
- o The ‘framework’ indicating the types of research. The two main types are **qualitative** and **quantitative**.

Method

- o The actual steps taken, and tools used, to conduct research

Methodology influences the research methods selected

Methodology



Methods

Two main methodologies

Quantitative	Qualitative
Data focuses on 'quantities' (numerical), eg. measurements of height, time; numbers of people, etc	Data collected have 'qualities' that are predominantly not numerical eg. narrative, observation, video, case studies
Approach tends to look for cause and effect; testing theory ('deductive')	Approach tends to look for meaning, experience; developing theory ('inductive')

Research Design

What is involved in a research design?

This incorporates methodology and methods, and gives the overall plan of the research

What?

Who?

How?

When?

Where?

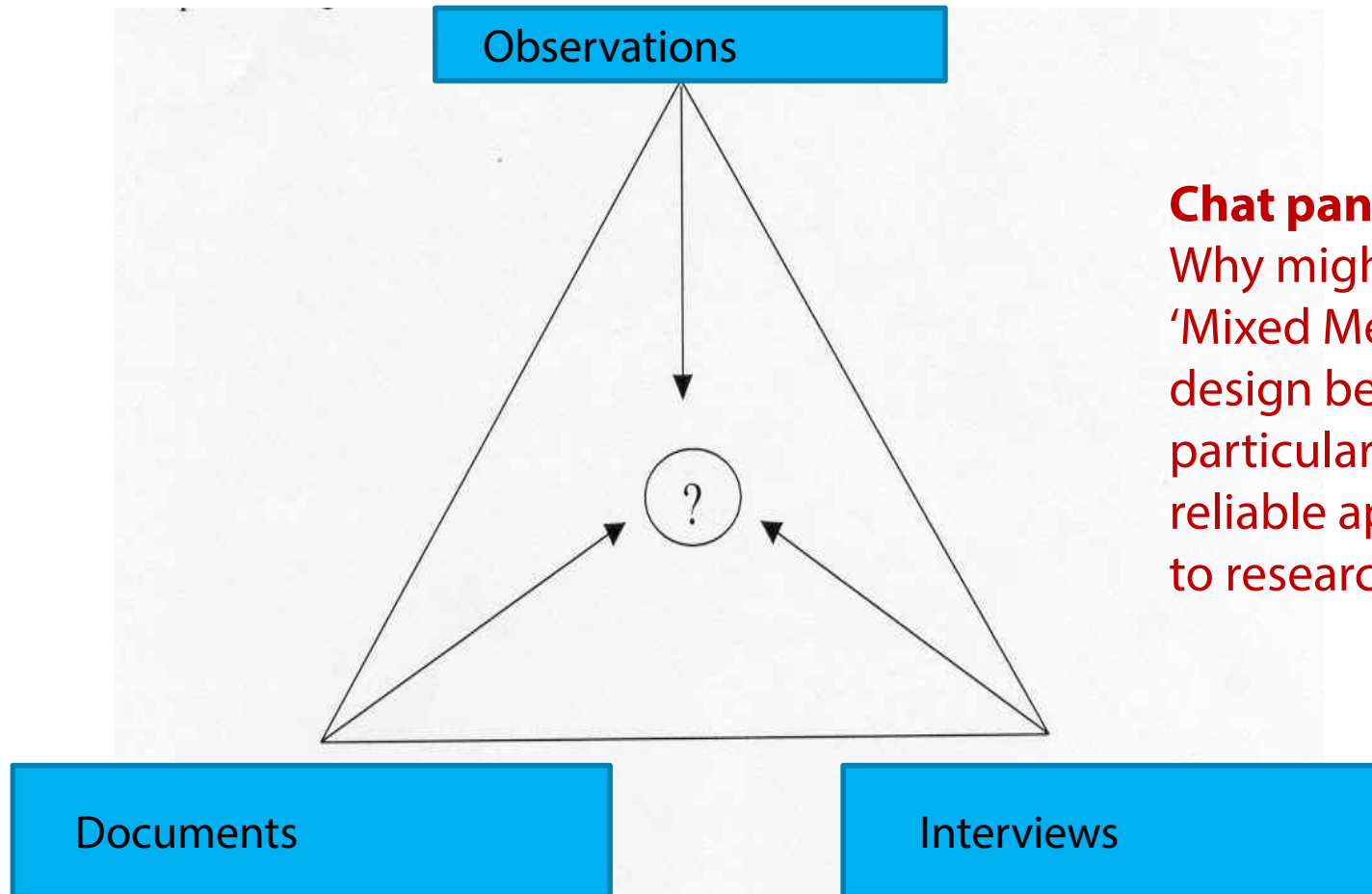
Some key research designs

Research Design	What's involved?	Examples?
Case study	Focus on a specific 'case' (person, building, event etc). Several different methods could be involved, and different types of data	
Experiment	Experimental group(s) in which a variable is changed plus control group where it is not changed. All other variables kept constant	
Action research	Cycle of plan, implement, obtain evidence, reflect/evaluate (could have qualitative & quantitative elements)	
Mixed methods	Combination of both qualitative and quantitative methods.	

Mixed Methods design

- Some researchers will use *either* qualitative or quantitative methodology
- Many researchers in the social sciences use '**Mixed Methods**' (or 'mixed methodologies'), ie. using methods of both types
- The selected approach needs to be carefully justified

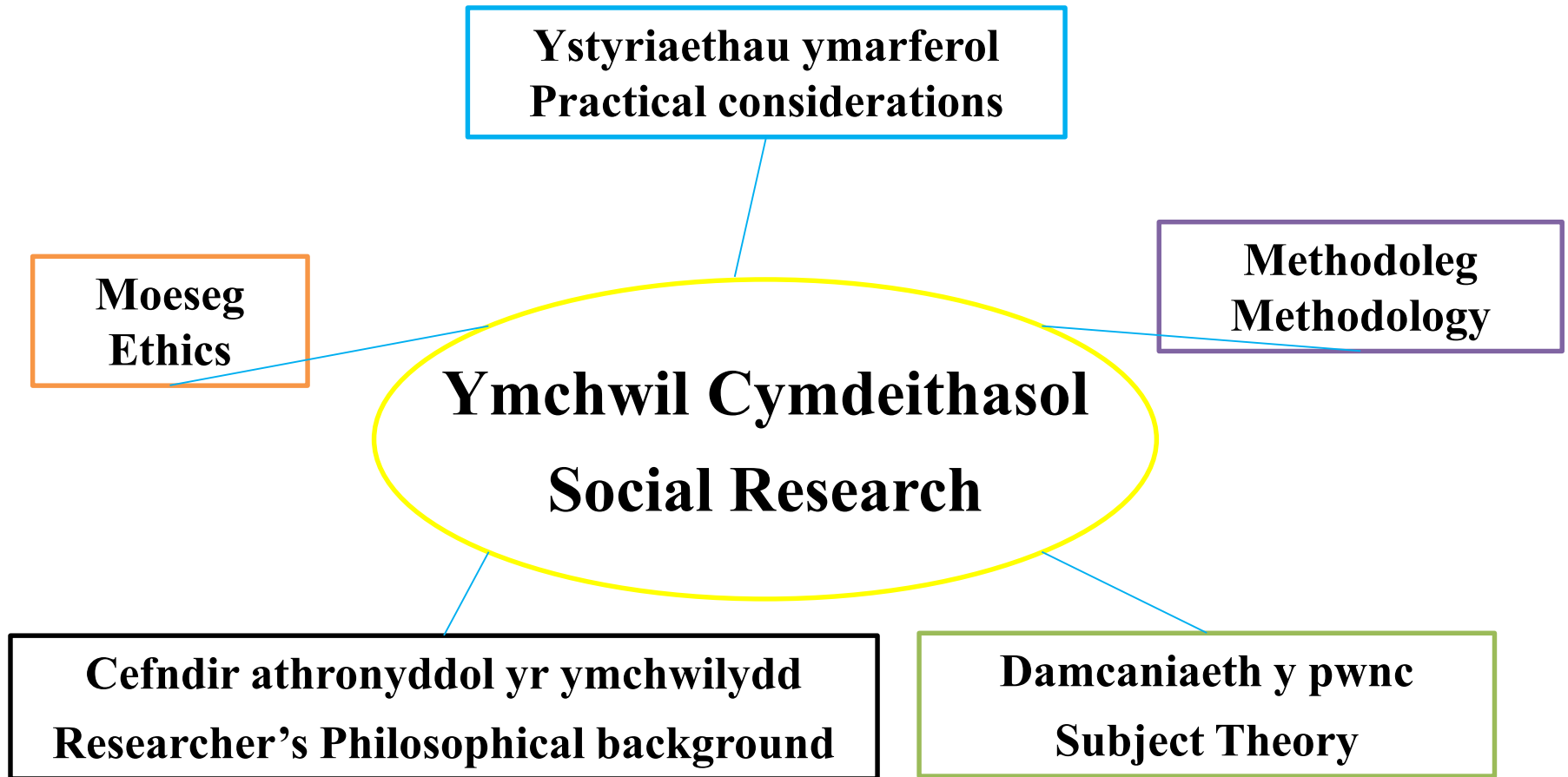
Triangulation



Chat pane:
Why might a
'Mixed Methods'
design be a
particularly
reliable approach
to research?

Philosophical Background to research

Research design is influenced by several factors:



Chat pane:

Imagine that you are asked to undertake an academic study on crime in a block of flats.

- What are your thoughts?
- How would you approach the research?



[This Photo](#) by Unknown Author is licensed under [CC BY-NC-ND](#)

Philosophical Background to Research

- Upbringing, experience etc may influence our approach to research.
- Researchers from different backgrounds may approach research very differently

Before embarking on research, we need to:

- acknowledge what we consider to be 'real' / important: This is: ONTOLOGY
- recognise what we consider to be 'worthy' knowledge, and how to obtain it: This is: EPISTEMOLOGY

More about 'Ontology'

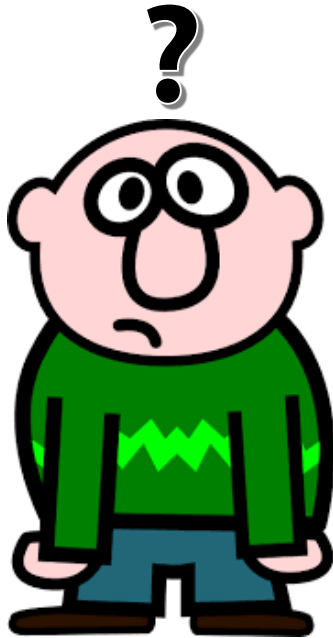
- The word 'Ontology' comes from the Greek (onto = being; logia = study)- i.e. it is the study of 'being' (branch of metaphysics)
- A person's 'ontology' is the answer to questions such as:
- 'What is reality?'
- 'What are the important features of reality?'

Two important ontological positions are:

Objectivism	Subjectivism
Reality is objective, and independent of other external /social factors	Reality is subjective, and cannot be considered independently of experience, viewpoints, social factors

More about 'Epistemology'

This relates to 'theory of knowledge' and what is regarded as valid knowledge and how it is created



Example: How could we find out how happy someone is?

- Counting how often the person smiles?
- Interpreting what the person says?
- Working out the ratio of time in and out of work?
- Asking them to complete a questionnaire?

Two important epistemological positions are:

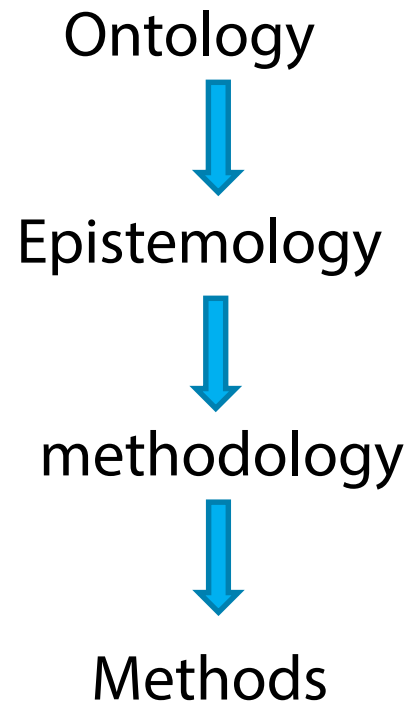
Positivism

there is a positive, objective reality that can be observed and measured using the senses following a scientific approach ('the scientist'!)

Interpretivism

people and their institutions are fundamentally different from the natural sciences, and they need to be understood and interpreted ('the detective'!)

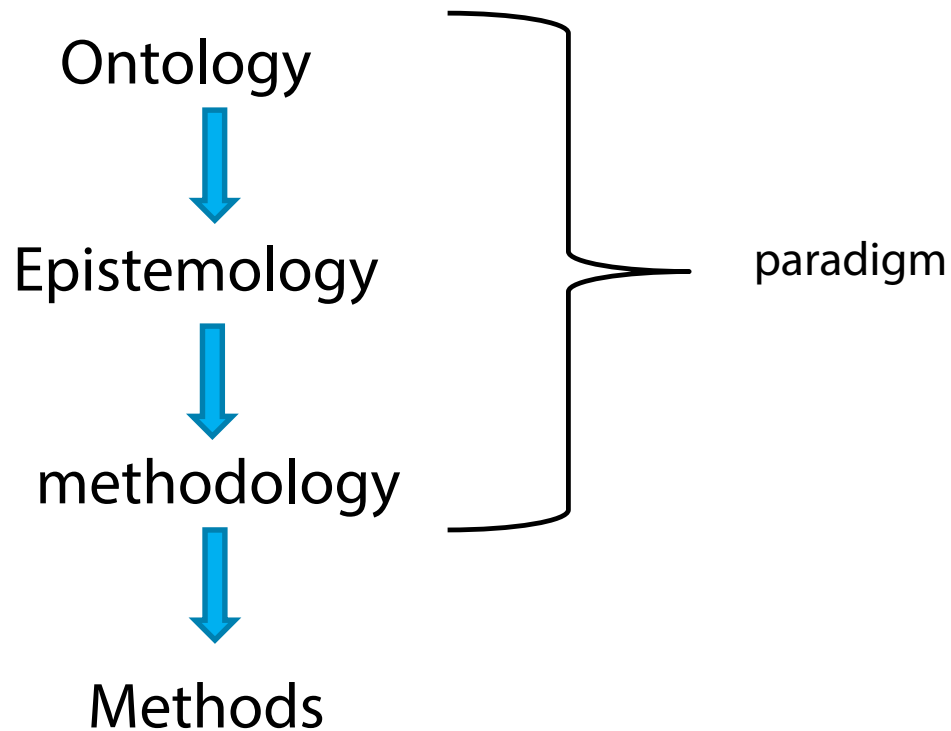
Ontology influences Epistemology, and both influence Methodology and Methods



What is a 'research paradigm'?



- A viewpoint, or way of approaching, research
- A combination of **ontology, epistemology, and methodology**
- A researcher's paradigm influences the research methods selected



Key terms (and two parallel philosophical 'strands')

Ontology	objectivism	subjectivism
Epistemology	positivism	Interpretivism
Research methodology	quantitative	qualitative
Research method	Eg. survey	Eg. narrative



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BMPF 7004/5/6: Work-based Research

Session 2:

Re-cap; Ethics & Insider Research; Assessment overview

Dr Christine Davies

Trawsnewid Addysg; Trawsnewid Bywydau
Transforming Education; Transforming Lives



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Aims for the session

1. Re-cap Research Methods, Design, Methodologies; philosophical background to research
2. Overview of ethics & insider research
3. Overview of Assessment
4. Outline of resources and referencing

Key terms (and two parallel philosophical 'strands')

Ontology	objectivism	subjectivism
Epistemology	positivism	Interpretivism
Research methodology	quantitative	qualitative
Research method	Eg. survey	Eg. narrative

Some key research designs

Research Design	What's involved?	Examples?
Case study	Focus on a specific 'case' (person, building, event etc). Several different methods could be involved, and different types of data	Case study of tourism at a Welsh Castle
Experiment/ Quasi-experiment	Experimental group(s) in which a variable is changed plus control group where it is not changed. All other variables kept constant	Investigating whether changed dinner hour affects job satisfaction
Action research	Cycle of plan, implement, obtain evidence, reflect/evaluate (could have qualitative & quantitative elements)	Improving the teaching of art
Mixed methods	Combination of both qualitative and quantitative methods.	Evaluating HR processes in an industrial plant

Ethical issues



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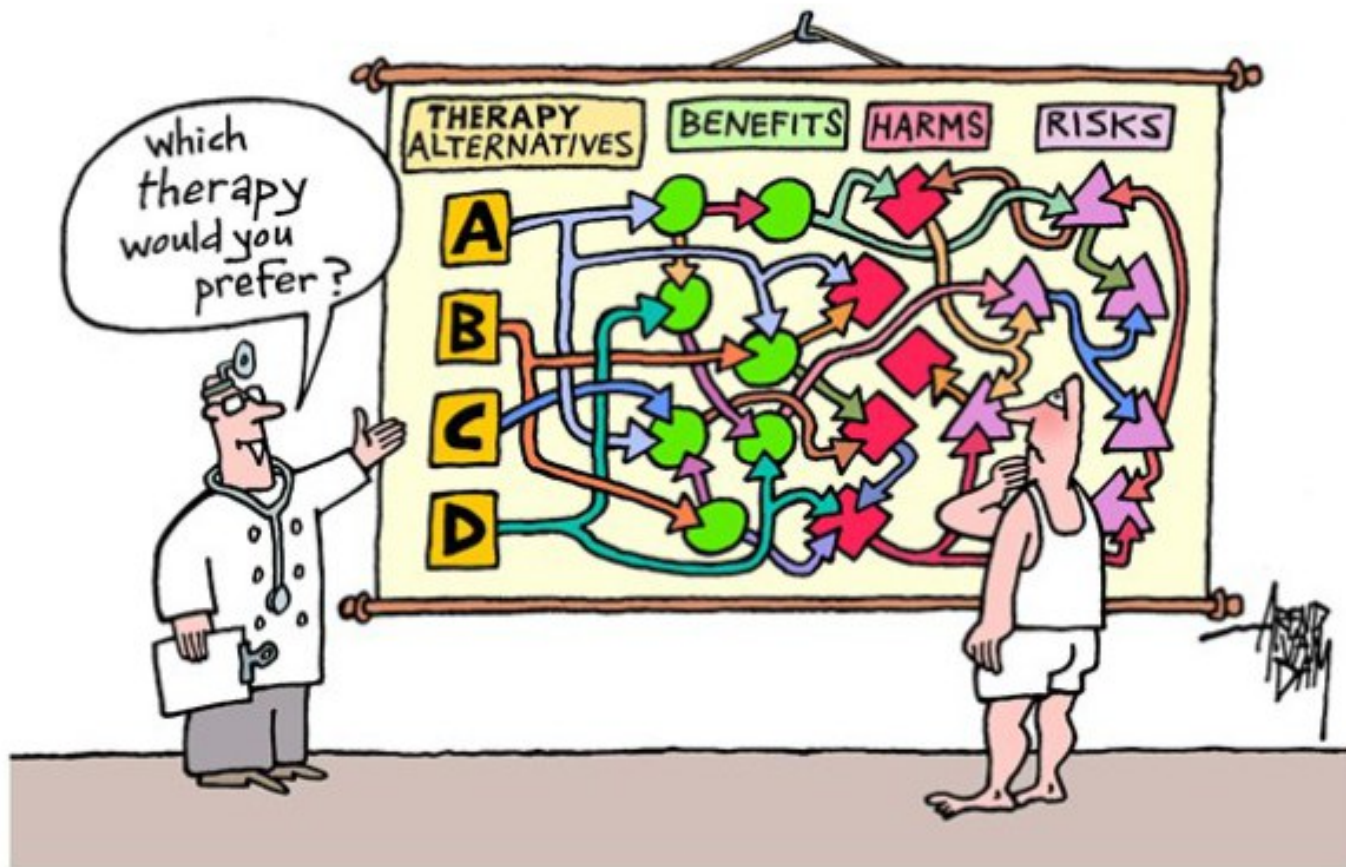
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<http://www2.carleton.ca/psychology/ethics/>

What are the ethical considerations linked to each of the following pictures?

Use the **Chat pane** to give your comments



informed consent

[Cartoon](#) from the Cagle Post by [Arend van Dam](#)



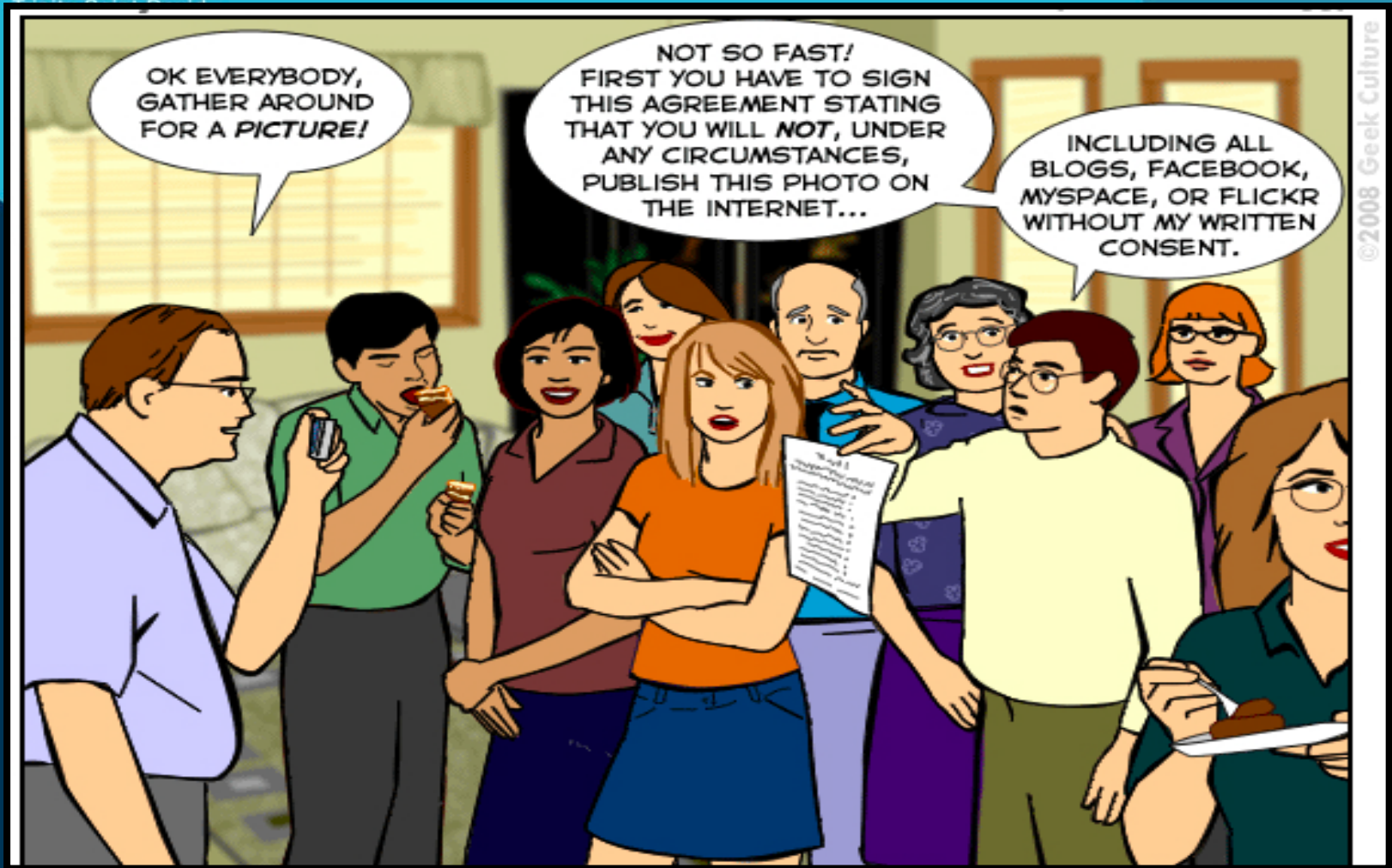
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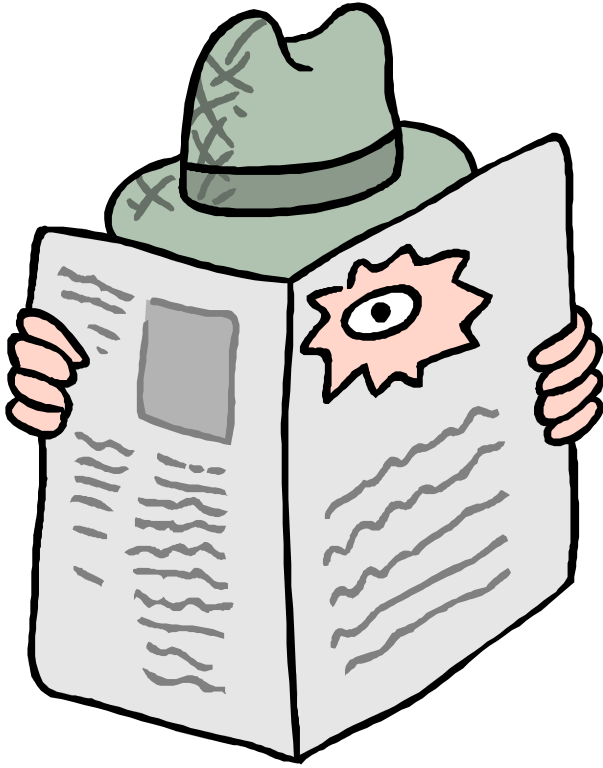


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The Insider-Researcher



- An '**insider researcher**' is someone who carries out research from inside an organisation, ie. an employee of the organisation

Chat pane:

- What are the advantages and/or disadvantages of researching an organisation 'from the inside'?

Module Assessment

ASSESSMENT: BMPF7004/7005 /7006

- **Coursework – L7:**
- **Task:**

Provide a critical evaluation of a range of methodological approaches, research designs, and research methods appropriate to gather data from complex work-based settings, with due consideration to research ethics and issues of insider research

- BMPF7004: 3000 words
- BMPF7005: 4500 words
- BMPF7006: assessment component 1 (50%): 3000 words

Guidance on Moodle

ASSESSMENT: BMPF6006 (20 CREDITS)

- **Coursework – L6: 5000** words (total)
- **Assessment Component 1:** provide an evaluation of a range of methodological approaches, research designs, and research methods appropriate to gather data from complex work-based settings, with due consideration to research ethics and issues of insider research (50%; **2500** words)
- **Assessment Component 2:** analyse, explain, and draw conclusions from data obtained from a work-based setting. (50%; 2500 words)

Guidance on Moodle

Assessment Component 1: possible approach

- Introduction; philosophical background to research
- Explanation of research design, methodology, methods
- Describe in details, and evaluate, a specific selection of designs and/or methods giving examples/context
- Outline issues of ethics and insider researcher
- Conclusion/ summary

Writing your account

Make sure your writing is

- **Clear**
- **Coherent**
- **concise**
- cover all key topics
- Give examples/context
- Level 7: Ensure there is **critical evaluation**

Sources and Referencing

Sources of Information

- See reference list on module descriptor
- Use UWTSD online library
- Look up articles in your professional field

Referencing

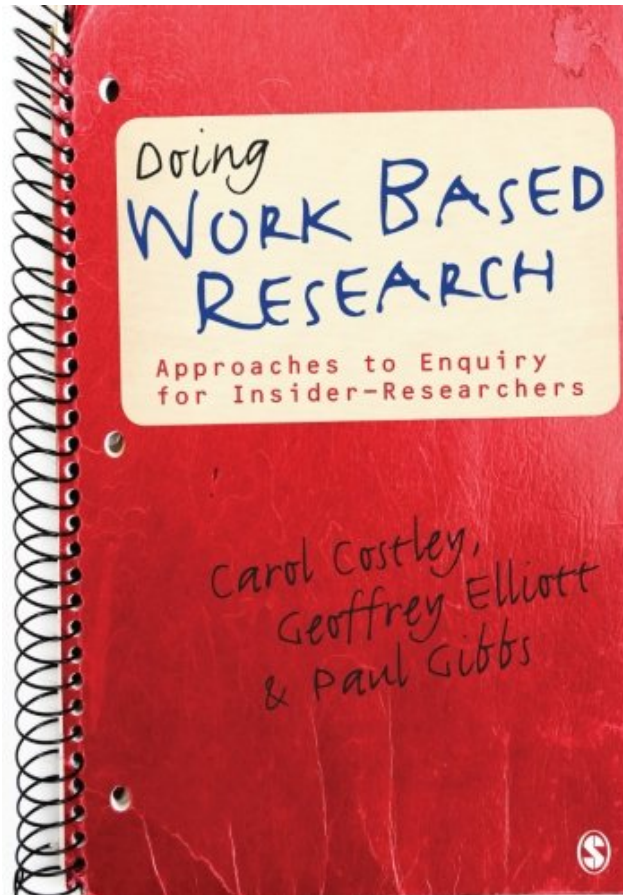
- UWTSD Harvard system
- Booklet available on Moodle and Library website

Further module information

Resources

- Resources to support the module are available on **Moodle**.
- Some recommended reading (see further slides)
- UWTSD Library has a very good selection of research methodology / methods books available (including e-books).
- There are also some good resources available on-line





- [Costley, C.](#), [Elliott, C. G.](#), [Gibbs, P.](#) (2010) *Doing Work Based Research: Approaches to Enquiry for Insider-Researchers*. London: Sage
- (eBook available)



The good research guide : for small-scale social research projects

Author: [Martyn Denscombe](#)

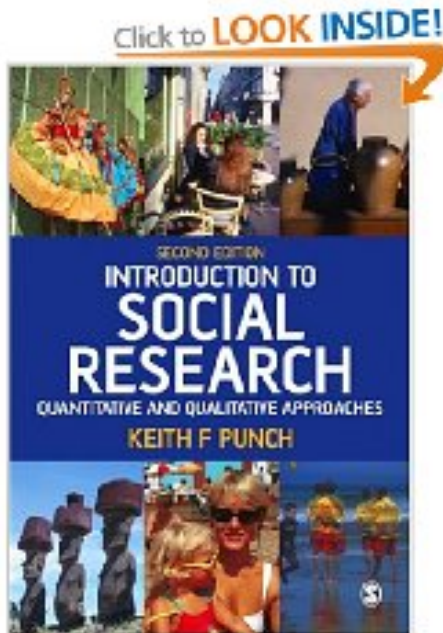
Publisher: Maidenhead : Open University Press, 2007.

Series: [Open UP study skills.](#)

Edition/Format:  eBook : Document : English : 3rd ed [View all editions and formats](#)

Database: WorldCat

Summary: Written for anyone undertaking a small-scale research project, either as part of an academic course or as part of their professional development, this book provides: an introduction to data collection methods and data analysis; explanations of the key decisions researchers need to take; and, essential checklists to guide good practice.



- o Punch K, *Introduction to Social Research Methods: Quantitative and Qualitative Approaches*, London: Sage, 2005.

Contact Details

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