

Module Code: BMPF7005
Title: Undertaking Research in Workplaces

Name: Sam Donovan
Student number: 2246695

Word count - 4913

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.

This paper will begin with an exploration of various ontological and epistemological ideas. I will then focus on a variety of paradigms with a critical evaluation of their appropriateness for guiding future research endeavours. The subsequent section will involve an in-depth analysis of both quantitative and qualitative research methods, each scrutinised for their relevance to the intended study. Following that, ethical considerations pertaining to my upcoming research proposals will be addressed, coupled with an investigation into the potential consequences of adopting an insider researcher role in shaping my research. I will do this subjectively at first and then examine this in the context of exploring the welfare benefits of acting classes for adults. It is hoped this comprehensive approach to an exploration of theoretical foundations, methodological choices, and ethical dimensions, will lay the groundwork for robust and well-rounded future research endeavours.

Ontology refers to the foundational set of core beliefs a researcher holds about the nature of reality. This framework serves as the researcher's fundamental perspective on the essence of existence (Easterby-Smith et al. 2012). Ontology encompasses two facets: objectivism and subjectivism. Objectivism proposes that social entities have an external existence beyond those interacting with them. This realist viewpoint asserts the existence of universal and objective truths that exist independently of individual consciousness. In contrast, subjectivism argues that any social phenomena is formed as a result of the interplay between perspectives and behaviours of individuals (Saunders et al., 2009). This relativist standpoint proposes the existence of various potential realities constructed through individual histories and experiences. The researcher will hold personal perspectives on whether social reality is shaped by individual consciousness and cognition or if it exists externally to individuals and possesses an objective nature (Cohen et al., 2007). I believe individuals interpret and construct their own understanding of reality based on personal experiences and cultural contexts and therefore, for me at least, subjectivity is inherent in these interpretations.

An interview based UK study across six UK Arts for health projects found participation in the arts contributed to self perceptions of well-being (Taylor et al., 2015). Semi structured interviews allowed researchers to investigate each participant's subjective view of their perspective on their own well being.

Advocates of Objectivism may assert that there exist universally applicable benchmarks for well-being that surpass individual and cultural variations. They could argue that specific metrics, such as enhanced mental health or heightened social involvement, can be objectively assessed and are relevant across a wide range of populations. A national survey in Italy presented fifteen cultural activities to 1500 participants. These ranged from jazz music concerts to poetry reading. The results showed that cultural access ranked as the second most important factor in psychological well being (Grossi *et al.*, 2011). This quantitative study argues that its findings can be statistically analysed in a rigorous manner and allow for generalisations across Italy.

Epistemology is centred around knowledge and, instead of addressing questions about what exists, it focuses on questions about how we come to know what exists. Epistemology investigates how it is possible to understand or know that reality referred to in your ontological perspective (Gray, 2004, p16). The choice of epistemology for your research project has a profound impact on the study's approach. Your selected epistemological framework not only shapes the methodology but also significantly influences the overall direction of the research. For instance, if you adopt a positivist perspective, your emphasis will likely be on quantitative data and objective observations. An example of this could be a data scientist who believes in a singular truth; in such cases, an objective approach will likely be adopted, emphasising statistical analyses. Alternatively, embracing a constructivist stance may lead to a qualitative approach, emphasising subjective experiences and interpretations. Imagine a sociologist who embraces the idea of multiple realities perceived through a social lens. Here the research outcomes may be more subjective in nature, with understanding contextualised within the specific social context. The chosen epistemological stance not only shapes the research process but also determines the interpretation and presentation of findings. I hope that by exploring these diverse perspectives, I can gain insights into the varied approaches within my professional domain.

Within epistemology, two primary subdivisions are positivist and constructivist philosophies. These philosophies are the basis of the Positivist and Constructivist Paradigms.

The **Positivism paradigm** believes that the rational examination of the social world through reason and observation allows for a logical explanation of human behaviour (Comte, 2003). Positivists aim to find absolute knowledge about an objective reality. (Scotland, 2012) The researcher is thought to be entirely separate to the subject of the investigation. Crotty (1998, p. 8) wrote

"A tree in the forest is a tree, regardless of whether anyone is aware of its existence or not. As an object of that kind, it carries the intrinsic meaning of treehood. When human beings recognize it as a tree, they are simply discovering a meaning that has been lying in wait for them all along."

Positivists gain data through quantitative measurements (Guba & Lincoln, 1994).

Constructivism offers what first looks like a diametrically opposed alternative to positivism. Constructivists argue that individuals play an active role in the construction of knowledge, asserting that it is shaped through their interactions with the environment and social context. The significance of personal experiences, perceptions, and interpretations is underscored in shaping one's comprehension of the world. Within the constructivist framework, learning is conceptualised as a dynamic process, involving the assimilation of new information into existing knowledge structures. It is argued that individuals actively contribute to the creation of meaning, with learning being most impactful when it holds personal relevance. Moreover, constructivists draw attention to the influential role of social and cultural factors in knowledge construction, maintaining that collaborative and interactive experiences significantly contribute to the cultivation of understanding. They contend that

comprehending an individual's behaviour and perception of the world necessitates an insider perspective, with the researcher actively adopting the same frame of reference as that individual. (Cohen et al. 2011) Interestingly, when looking at an educational setting the constructivist theory of learning, with an educational basis from Piaget, proposes that the learning process relies on connecting new knowledge to pre-existing knowledge. The constructivist model is founded on the idea that the brain instinctively finds meaning from the world using existing knowledge to interpret experiences. Subsequently, it constructs and elaborates on new knowledge. (Dennick, 2016).

In the context of the welfare benefits of acting classes for adults there are some arguments against employing a positivist approach. Positivism relies heavily on objective and measurable data, but the welfare benefits are often subjective in nature and vary from person to person. Engaging in artistic activities has been identified as a catalyst for cooperative behaviour toward the collective welfare (Van der Vyver and Abrams, 2017). The comprehensive longitudinal analysis establishes that, irrespective of influential factors such as personality traits, demographics, financial status, education, and participation in other social endeavours like sports, individuals actively participating in the arts exhibit elevated levels of prosocial behaviour. The study involved lots of qualitative research in order to consider the vast amount of variables and worked with participants to define pro social behaviours. Positivism emphasises quantitative data, potentially overlooking the qualitative aspects of well-being associated with hobbies. Enjoyment, personal growth, and emotional satisfaction derived from hobbies may not be adequately captured by quantitative measures alone. Positivist approaches may struggle to account for the cultural and contextual differences in how people perceive and value hobbies. A hobby that is considered beneficial in one cultural context might not be universally applicable, leading to a narrow and potentially biased assessment. Positivism tends to focus on short-term, observable outcomes, but the welfare benefits of hobbies may extend over the long term, influencing aspects like mental health, resilience, and overall life satisfaction. These long-term effects therefore may not be adequately captured in a positivist framework. It may also be that these benefits change over time and are dynamic in nature. A positivist longitudinal study may be extremely difficult to put into practice given the resources available and the time frame of the MA. Positivism tends to isolate variables for measurement, but the benefits of hobbies often interact with various aspects of life, such as social relationships, personal development, and overall well-being. Failing to account for these interconnected variables may provide an incomplete understanding.

However there are also arguments against a purely constructivist paradigm. When applied to the measurement of welfare benefits associated with acting classes, the lack of standardisation and the emphasis on individual interpretation may hinder the development of universally applicable measures. It has been suggested that businesses should focus on mental health improvements for staff in order to promote workplace productivity, (Hamberg-van Reenen, Proper, Van den Berg, 2012). Art based activities have been shown to improve mental health (Eschelmen et al. 2014). This research, as it focused on personal experiences, perceptions, and meanings may make it difficult to quantify and measure welfare benefits in a way that allows for statistical analysis and objective comparisons. The companies may question the replicability of research findings. In the same way emphasising

the uniqueness of individual experiences and contexts may make it challenging to draw overarching conclusions about the welfare benefits of hobbies.

My research has led me to discover other paradigms that may offer a more preferable foundation for my research. I was interested to explore the **interpretivist paradigm**. I liked its shared relativist ontology with constructivism but also the subtle difference that constructivism focuses on how individuals actively construct their own understanding, while interpretivism emphasises the importance of interpreting and making meaning of experiences. Participants in acting classes engage in a process that transcends mere skill acquisition, encompassing self-expression, self-discovery, and interpersonal dynamics. These aspects are inherently subjective and context-dependent, potentially emphasising the need for an interpretivist lens to capture the depth and diversity of individual experiences. Interpretivism highlights the importance of social and cultural contexts in shaping meaning. I believe the social and cultural dimensions of adult participation in acting classes are integral to the overall experience, and an interpretivist perspective allows for an in-depth examination of how these contextual factors shape individuals' well-being. I also hope to research the multifaceted ways in which participation in acting classes impacts the well-being of adults. These questions revolve around the meanings individuals attribute to their experiences, the personal transformations they undergo, and the contextual factors influencing the perceived welfare benefits. An interpretivist approach aligns seamlessly with the epistemological assumption that knowledge is socially constructed and that understanding the subjective perspectives of participants is essential. Interpretivism does, however, attract the same critiques as constructivism and, as so many of my aims have not been investigated yet in other research, it would perhaps be sensible to find a more flexible paradigm.

The **pragmatism paradigm** integrates elements of both positivist and constructivist approaches. Pragmatism, as a research paradigm, proposes researchers should use the approach best suited to the specific research problem under investigation. (Tashakkori and Teddlie, 1998). It acknowledges the possibility of either a singular or multiple reality at the same time. These realities are then subject to empirical investigation. (Creswell and Clark, 2011) This appeals to me as it encourages flexibility in selecting research methods. I could therefore employ a variety of approaches, including both qualitative and quantitative methods, to capture the multifaceted aspects of well-being that may arise from participation in such classes. There is very limited research on the welfare benefits of acting classes and this approach would allow me to pivot my research based on findings. As it is problem-solving oriented I can use this paradigm to identify issues related to well-being that individuals may seek to address through acting classes. For example, individuals might join acting classes to cope with stress, improve mental health, or develop coping mechanisms, and a pragmatist perspective facilitates understanding and addressing these real-life concerns. For example quantitatively measuring cortisol levels during participation in hobbies has been used as a method to measure and analyse potential stress reduction (Zawadski et al. 2015). Qualitative methods may be the best way to measure increased feelings of happiness. However, pragmatism may be limited in its contextual and problem-centred nature (Thompson, 1997) . It may not be able to recognize and analyse structural social problems. The limitations arise from the pragmatic approach's emphasis on practical outcomes and its contextual orientation, making it challenging to address broader

structural issues. In workplace productivity for instance, we may find some people are more willing to report their own success based on cultural or structural social bias. Productivity may have improved but culture may dictate it is inappropriate to brag.

Research methodology involves the practical aspects of conducting a research study, focusing on the procedural approach adopted by the researcher. It encompasses the design of the study to ensure the generation of valid and reliable results, effectively addressing the research aims, objectives, and questions. The methodology plays a crucial role in guiding the researcher through the entire research process, from data collection to analysis. In essence, research methodology is a strategic tool that aids researchers in achieving meaningful and accurate outcomes in their studies.

The three methodological approaches within research are quantitative, qualitative and mixed methods. **Quantitative** research relies on objective, measurable data and aims to produce objective truth (Little, 2014). It often requires large sample sizes to ensure statistical significance with the aim of applying generalities to a broader population. This numerical data collected in quantitative research is subjected to statistical analysis. The goal of many quantitative studies is to generalise findings from the sample to a larger population. This assumes that the sample is representative of the population (Kawulich, 2001). Quantitative research strives for objectivity and neutrality. Researchers aim to minimise biases and personal interpretations in data collection and analysis. In terms of measuring the welfare benefits of acting classes, quantitative methods may exclude factors that are challenging to measure, such as emotions, beliefs, or attitudes. If participants are limited to responding to predetermined questions or variables, reducing their ability to express nuanced opinions or provide detailed narratives, we may struggle to identify certain phenomena. For example there may be different reasons why students are reporting increased happiness from their involvement in classes. Some may report it because of the restorative effect of detachment/recovery and some may be reporting it because of a growing sense of mastery (Newman et al. 2014). Research measuring increased happiness with a reductionist approach isn't breaking down complex phenomena into isolated variables for analysis. This reductionism could oversimplify the intricate nature of a social, psychological, or cultural phenomena. **Qualitative research** involves gaining insights into life from the viewpoint of individuals experiencing it firsthand (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994). It emphasises the importance of context, recognizing that social phenomena are embedded in specific cultural, historical, and social contexts. Qualitative research encompasses various approaches and methods used to explore how individuals comprehend, undergo, interpret, and contribute to social phenomena (Creswell, 1994) In terms of the process I wish to undertake and against a backdrop of a dearth of research in the field, qualitative research could respond to the evolving nature of the research process. As this type of research often features a flexible and iterative design, it could allow me to adapt my approach based on emerging findings. Sceptics contend that qualitative research is susceptible to researcher biases, as the interpretive nature of the approach may allow subjective perspectives to influence data collection and analysis (Carr, 1994; Denscombe, 2010). I will expand on this further in my discussion on ethical considerations. There are also challenges of generalising qualitative findings to broader populations, as the emphasis on context and depth may come at the expense of broader applicability. **Mixed method** research combines both quantitative and qualitative research methods. It is a mix of positivism, constructivism and pragmatism. This integration with pragmatism allows researchers to utilise the strengths of both

methodologies, aiming to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the research question or phenomenon under investigation. The aim is to gain a more holistic and nuanced perspective (Cresswell, 2014). One potential drawback is that a mixed methodology, especially for the limitations of my own research, typically involves more resources in both the collection and analysis of data (O’Cathain, Murphy, Nicholl, 2007). My personal time and experience limitations as a researcher may make this design and implementation more difficult to execute.

The relationship between quantitative and qualitative research and specific research designs/methodologies, such as case studies, experiments, action research, hermeneutics, and ethnography, can be understood through the lens of research goals, data collection approaches, and the overall **research design**. A **case study** involves an empirical investigation examining a phenomenon within its authentic context. It is particularly useful when the distinctions between the context and the outcome are unclear. This research approach seeks to gain an in-depth understanding of the complexities inherent in real-life situations. It emphasises the exploration of nuanced relationships and conditions surrounding the studied phenomenon.(Yin, 2014). However, the research findings may be “case specific” and therefore not aid generalisations across a population (Yin, 2014). In terms of my research I think the emphasis on qualitative data collection methods such as interviews, observations, and document analysis would help me to gain an in-depth understanding of specific cases. This would be particularly valuable as the students I teach report such a range of welfare benefits. For example I have a student, a consultant doctor, who has reported that her severe cardiac issues have improved through acting classes and a University Philosophy lecturer who feels the acting classes have had more of an effect on his suicidal tendencies than the therapy he undergone. An **experiment** is an organised methodical procedure aimed at establishing the validity of a hypothesis. It involves manipulating variables under controlled conditions to observe and analyse their effects on a dependent variable (Kerlinger, 1986). It is argued that providing a controlled testing environment allows for more reliable statistical analysis. The structure allows for the manipulation of variables and a systematic exploration of cause and effect. The emphasis on control and statistical scrutiny enhances the reliability and validity of findings in experimental research (Rosenthal & Rosnow, 2008). In the cortisol experiment cited earlier (and recorded whilst participants were experiencing the hobby) Zawadski showed it could be implemented in real time in a quantitative manner and interesting results were found. Yet the students were aware they were part of an experiment. This raises a question of whether experiments have a real life ecological validity because of the controlled conditions (Campbell & Stanley, 1963). **Action research** aims to combine theory and practice, creating a partnership between researchers and those directly involved in the situation or community being studied. It is reflective and allows everyone to understand the practices, and the situations in which the practices are carried out (Carr & Kemmis, 1986). Practitioners engaged in action research observe the impact of their insights on their actions, constructing personal theories that undergo continuous testing. This process involves ongoing assessment, ensuring that these theories withstand critical scrutiny and maintain peer validity through responsiveness to constructive feedback from others. The iterative nature of action research encourages practitioners to refine their theories based on reflective practices and collective input.(Whitehead & McNiff,2006). The idea that this can lead to real change and change that remains sustainable is very interesting to me (Lewin, 1946). My students regularly report a desire to change as a motivation to start classes. Working more collaboratively with them

and for the benefit of future participants marries with the aims of community teaching. **Hermeneutics** is primarily associated with qualitative research, focusing on the art of interpretation and understanding of texts (Gadamer, 1960). These texts can be written or verbal. It prioritises understanding over predictions (Ricoeur, 1976). In terms of my research I would hope this openness to exploration would contribute to the generation of new ideas and uncovering unforeseen insights. I think it may also help in the building of robust theoretical foundations. Again, given the lack of research in the specific area, the openness of this approach would allow the flexibility to pivot. I would have to be aware of the potentially diverse readings that could occur (Gadamer, 1960). Perhaps action research from a hermeneutic perspective could offer more rigour to these potentially subjective interpretations through peer observation. **Ethnography** is a qualitative research method. Participant observation and authentic observations are used to study and understand the, behaviours, and viewpoints, and culture of a particular group or community. Like other branches of anthropology it attempts to understand the how of the manner in which people live their lives (Wolcott, 1999). For me, the attempt to gain a deep understanding of a community in its context would be a holistic starting point for further research that could then potentially become more quantitative in nature. However, ethnography is hugely time-intensive which may make it impractical due to a lack of resources. (Spradley, 1980).

In summary, while some research designs/methodologies are traditionally associated with either quantitative or qualitative research, researchers often use mixed methods to leverage the strengths of both approaches. For instance, a case study may involve quantitative data to complement qualitative findings, and an ethnographic study may include quantitative measures for certain aspects. I may use the quantitative element to decipher trends in demographics in my community of students for example. The integration of both quantitative and qualitative elements can lead to a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of research problems and be more helpful for me to create population generalisations.

A research design serves as the structured blueprint employed to address a specific research query, delineating the systematic approach to inquiry. It outlines the overall framework, guiding the implementation of chosen research methods to achieve the study's objectives. A **research method** functions as the means by which the plan is executed. For instance, a qualitative research design may involve the in-depth exploration of participant experiences (Teddle and Tashakkori, 2009). On the quantitative front, researchers may employ experimental methods to generate numerical data for statistical analysis (Plano Clark, 2010). They are of course interconnected. By defining research design and methods as distinct yet interrelated components we gain a more nuanced understanding of research (Greene & Caracelli, 1997; Tashakkori & Teddle, 1998). Denscombe advocates for researchers to carefully assess their strategy, weighing the pros and cons of chosen research methods to ensure alignment with the desired answers (Denscombe, 2003). Several **research methods** can be used for both quantitative and qualitative research, allowing researchers to adopt a mixed methods approach or choose a method based on the specific needs of their research question. Bell emphasises the simplicity yet essential nature of the advice: conducting extensive research is futile if it jeopardises timely completion of the project (Bell, 2005). I am rejecting an ethnographic design based on this advice and I will choose the following methods to consider for my own research project. I am keen to pursue a pragmatic interpretivist paradigm and am drawn to an action research design from a hermeneutic perspective. **Surveys and questionnaires** are generally quantitative research

methods involving the systematic collection of data through standardised sets of questions, aiming to gather information on various aspects of a research topic from a large and diverse sample. Surveys provide a structured, efficient, and cost effective means to gather large-scale data, allowing researchers to quantitatively analyse trends, patterns, and relationships within a population (Dillman, 2007) I have 250 weekly students so through well-designed surveys I may be able to reach a a scale not easily achievable with qualitative methods (Creswell, 2013). My concern would be that standardisation may oversimplify the phenomena and lead to a superficial understanding of the results (Patton,2002). A mixed method approach may allow complementary qualitative methods with open ended questions to find a more comprehensive understanding (Babbie, 2015). **Interviewing** is a qualitative research method that involves direct engagement with participants through structured or unstructured conversations to gather in-depth information, insights, and perspectives on a specific topic or phenomenon. Semi-structured or unstructured interviews allow for in-depth exploration of participants' experiences and perspectives. Interviews allow participants to articulate their thoughts, emotions, and lived realities in their own words and therefore examine an intricate tapestry of human experience (Seidman, 1998). They allow researchers to establish a meaningful connection with participants, providing an avenue to access the profound personal narratives and cultural nuances that contribute to shaping the broader research context (Kvale, 1996) Structured interviews with standardised questions can yield quantifiable data. This lends itself to the pragmatist paradigm. Unfortunately the scale of data collected to extract meaning from such complex texts can sometimes outstrip resources (Easterby-Smith, M., Thorpe, R. & Jackson, 2012). **Focus groups** are a qualitative research method involving structured group discussions led by a moderator, aiming to explore participants' perspectives, experiences, and attitudes on a specific topic. It is hoped that these interactions uncover shared meanings and diverse viewpoints (Morgan, 1997). The strength of these is that they can generate insights that may not be readily apparent through individual interviews (Stewart, Shamdasani, & Rook,2007)This would help with the multifaceted phenomena I hope to investigate. When employing this method researchers must guard against dominant voices within the group, conformity or groupthink and a decrease in individual expression (Kitzinger,1995). Trusting other participants to remain confidential could be an issue for my students (Barbour,2007). Many of them socialise together as well and may fear the effects of disclosures in future social settings.

The significance of **ethics** in research, particularly within the realm of performance coaching, cannot be overstated. Adhering to ethical principles ensures the integrity of the research process and protects the rights and well-being of participants. Engaging with participants in their environment recognizes participants as individuals rather than mere objects of scientific investigation (Guba and Lincoln, 1997). Honesty, objectivity, integrity, carefulness, openness, respect for intellectual property, confidentiality, and responsible publication further guide researchers in maintaining ethical standards (Sangay, 2012) . Approval from an Ethics Committee underscores the commitment to ethical conduct within specific research settings (Bell, 2005). Additionally, the incorporation of participant consent forms serves to inform participants about the research, their role, and their right to withdraw—an essential aspect of ethical research practice (Denscombe, 2003). In considering the ethical dimensions of research, researchers should conduct themselves as reflective practitioners, consistently questioning the ethics and politics of their research practice (Mason 1996). Bell and Bryman's ten principles of ethical practice (2007), underscore the commitment to safeguarding participants' interests and ensuring accuracy in results. However, it is crucial to

recognize the nuanced and incremental ethical issues researchers may encounter,(Easterby-Smith et al., 2012).

Engaging in **insider research** within a work-based project presents both advantages and ethical challenges. Insider researchers possess unique insights, specialised knowledge, and the ability to effect meaningful changes (Costley et al., 2010). They can also establish rapport easily and extract authentic data due to their familiarity with the context (Saidin and Yaacob, 2016). However, ethical considerations cannot be ignored. There is the potential for impartiality issues and challenges in maintaining objectivity (Costley et al. 2010) Researchers may prioritise certain issues differently than outsiders (Saidin and Yaacob, 2016) .

The above research coupled with my ten year experience as a teacher of adult acting classes aligns with the notion that insider knowledge can enhance research outcomes. I believe I will have a valuable perspective on the welfare benefits of acting classes having spent so much informal time discussing with students and from my own observations of changes in individuals over a number of years. However, strict adherence to ethical guidelines is paramount to ensuring unbiased research objectives, reinforcing the importance of ethical considerations throughout the research process.

In conclusion, this paper has navigated through key theoretical frameworks, methodological considerations, and ethical dimensions in the context of exploring the welfare benefits of acting classes for adults. My chosen **ontological** stance, embracing subjectivism, aligns with a perspective that acknowledges the subjective nature of reality, emphasising the unique experiences of individuals involved in acting classes. Within the realm of **epistemology**, a constructivist orientation has been adopted, recognizing the importance of socially constructed knowledge and the interpretative nature of human experiences. The **research paradigm** that best suits the scope and objectives of my study is pragmatic interpretivism. This paradigm allows for flexibility and acknowledges the practical implications of the research findings, aligning well with the dynamic and applied nature of investigating the welfare benefits of acting classes. While ethnography initially appealed to me as a research design due to its immersive and holistic approach, practical constraints, particularly in terms of time, have led me to choose Action Research from a hermeneutic perspective. This approach enables a cyclical and reflective process, allowing for ongoing adjustments based on the evolving understanding of the research context. For **data collection**, interviews and focus groups emerged as my preferred methods, offering rich insights into participants' experiences and perspectives. These methods align with the participatory nature of Action Research, encouraging collaboration and dialogue among students. **Ethical considerations** have been diligently addressed, especially in the context of being an insider researcher. Acknowledging my role in the community and the potential impact on participants, ethical safeguards will be implemented to ensure confidentiality, informed consent, and respect for the autonomy and dignity of all involved. In summary, the methodological choices, grounded in a subjectivist ontology, constructivist epistemology, pragmatic interpretivism paradigm, and Action Research design, are well-aligned with the exploration of the welfare benefits of acting classes for adults. I hope the selected methods and ethical considerations reflect a comprehensive and thoughtful approach to conducting meaningful and responsible research in this area.

Reference List

Babbie, E. (2020) *The practice of social research*. 15th edn. Belmont, CA, USA: Wadsworth Publishing.

Barbour, R. S. (2018) *Doing Focus Groups*. London: SAGE Publications.

Bell, J. (2010) *Doing your research project: A guide for first-time researchers in education, health and social science*. Open University Press.

Campbell, D. T. and Stanley, J. C. (1966) *Experimental and quasi-experimental designs for research*. Boston, MA, USA: Houghton Mifflin (Academic).

Carr, L. T. (1994) 'The strengths and weaknesses of quantitative and qualitative research: what method for nursing?', *Journal of advanced nursing*, 20(4), pp. 716–721. doi: 10.1046/j.1365-2648.1994.20040716.x.

Carr, W. and Kemmis, S. (1986) *Becoming critical: Education knowledge and action research*. London: Falmer Press.

Cohen, L. (2007) *Research methods in education*. 6th edn. Routledge.

Costley, C., Elliott, G. C. and Gibbs, P. (2010) *Doing work based research: Approaches to enquiry for insider-researchers*. London: SAGE Publications.

Creswell, J. W. and Clark, V. L. (2011) *Designing and Conducting Mixed Methods Research*. Sage.

Crotty, M. (1989). *The foundations of social research* (no date).

Crozier, G., Denzin, N. and Lincoln, Y. (1994) 'Handbook of qualitative research', *British journal of educational studies*, 42(4), p. 409. doi: 10.2307/3121684.

Dennick, R. (2016) 'Constructivism: reflections on twenty five years teaching the constructivist approach in medical education', *International journal of medical education*, 7, pp. 200–205. doi: 10.5116/ijme.5763.de11.

Dillman, D. A. (2011) *Mail and internet surveys: The tailored design method -- 2007 update with new internet, visual, and mixed-mode guide*. 2nd edn. John Wiley & Sons.

Easterby-Smith, S. (2012) 'Thinking through things', *Studies in history and philosophy of science*, 43(1), pp. 208–212. doi: 10.1016/j.shpsa.2011.09.014.

Gadamer, H.-G. (2014) *Truth and Method*. London: Bloomsbury Academic.

Gray, D. E. (2004) *Doing research in the real world*. Christchurch, New Zealand: Sage Publications.

Greene, J. C. and Caracelli, V. J. (1997) 'Defining and describing the paradigm issue in mixed-method evaluation', *New directions for evaluation*, 1997(74), pp. 5–17. doi: 10.1002/ev.1068.

Guba, E. G., & Lincoln, Y. S. (1994) 'Competing paradigms in qualitative research'.

Hollweck, T. (2016) 'Robert K. Yin. (2014). Case Study Research Design and Methods (5th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. 282 pages', *The Canadian Journal of Program Evaluation*. doi: 10.3138/cjpe.30.1.108.

Kerlinger, F. N. and Lee, H. B. (2008) *Foundations of behavioral research*. 5th edn. Wadsworth Publishing Company.

Kitzinger, J. (1995) 'Qualitative research. Introducing focus groups', *BMJ (Clinical research ed.)*, 311(7000), pp. 299–302. doi: 10.1136/bmj.311.7000.299.

Kvale, S. (1996) *InterViews: An introduction to qualitative research interviewing*. Thousand Oaks, CA, USA: SAGE Publications.

Leavy, P. (2022) *Research design: Quantitative, qualitative, mixed methods, arts-based, and community-based participatory research approaches*. 2nd edn. London: Guilford Press.

Lewin, K. (2004) 'Action research and minority problems (1946)', in *Resolving social conflicts and field theory in social science*. Washington: American Psychological Association, pp. 143–152.

Mason, J. and Davies, K. (2011) 'Experimenting with qualitative methods: Researching family resemblance', in *Understanding Social Research: Thinking Creatively About Method*. 1 Oliver's Yard, 55 City Road, London EC1Y 1SP United Kingdom: SAGE Publications Ltd, pp. 33–48.

Morgan, D. L. (1997) *Focus Groups as Qualitative Research*. Thousand Oaks, CA, USA: SAGE Publications.

No title (no date) *Study.com*. Available at:
<https://study.com/academy/lesson/comtes-3-stages-of-society-theory-of-positivism.h03>
(Accessed: 28 January 2024).

O'Cathain, A., Murphy, E. and Nicholl, J. (2007) 'Why, and how, mixed methods research is undertaken in health services research in England: a mixed methods study', *BMC health services research*, 7(1), p. 85. doi: 10.1186/1472-6963-7-85.

Ricoeur, P. (1979) *Interpretation theory: Discourse and the surplus of meaning*. Fort Worth, TX, USA: Texas Christian University Press.

Roberts, D. P. (2003) 'Ground rules for good research Martyn Denscombe Ground rules for good research Open University 220 £45 (hardback) £14.99 (paperback) 0335206522 (hardback) 0335206514 (paperback) 0335206522 0335206514', *Nurse researcher*, 11(1), pp. 80–81. doi: 10.7748/nr.11.1.80.s10.

Rosenthal, R. and Rosnow, R. L. (2007) *Essentials of behavioral research: Methods and data analysis*. 3rd edn. Maidenhead: McGraw Hill Higher Education.

Saidin, K. (2016) 'Insider researchers: Challenges & opportunities', *Proceedings of the ICECRS*, 1(1). doi: 10.21070/picecrs.v1i1.563.

Saunders, M., Lewis, P. and Thornhill, A. (2009) *Research Methods for Business Students*. New York: Pearson.

Scotland, J. (2012) 'Exploring the philosophical underpinnings of research: Relating ontology and epistemology to the methodology and methods of the scientific, interpretive, and critical research paradigms', *English language teaching*, 5(9). doi: 10.5539/elt.v5n9p9.

Selecting a research approach: paradigm, methodology and methods Bagele Chilisa
Barbara Kawulich (no date).

Stewart, D. W. and Shamdasani, P. N. (2014) *Focus groups: Theory and practice*. 3rd edn. Thousand Oaks, CA, USA: SAGE Publications.

Takona, J. P. (2023) 'Research design: qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches / sixth edition', *Quality & quantity*. doi: 10.1007/s11135-023-01798-2.

Thompson, L. (1997) *Children Talking: The Development of Pragmatic Competence*. London: Multilingual Matters Publisher.

Two Decades of Developments in Qualitative Inquiry: A Personal, Experiential Perspective
(no date).

Van de Vyver, J. and Abrams, D. (2018) 'The arts as a catalyst for human prosociality and cooperation', *Social psychological and personality science*, 9(6), pp. 664–674. doi: 10.1177/1948550617720275.

Whitehead, A. J. and McNiff, J. (2006) *Action Research: Living Theory*. Thousand Oaks, CA, USA: SAGE Publications.

Wittenberg, R. (2000) 'Abbas Tashakkori und Charles Teddlie: Mixed methodology. Combining qualitative and quantitative approaches. Applied social research method series,

volume 46: Thousand Oaks/London/New Delhi: Sage 1998. XI und 183 Seiten. ISBN 0-7619-0071-3 (pbk). Preis: \$ 21,95', *Kölner Zeitschrift für Soziologie und Sozialpsychologie*, 52(1), pp. 180–183. doi: 10.1007/s11577-000-0023-9.

Wolcott, H. F. (1999) *Ethnography: A way of seeing*. Thousand Oaks, CA, USA: SAGE Publications.

Zawadzki, M. J., Smyth, J. M. and Costigan, H. J. (2015) 'Real-time associations between engaging in leisure and daily health and well-being', *Annals of behavioral medicine: a publication of the Society of Behavioral Medicine*, 49(4), pp. 605–615. doi: 10.1007/s12160-015-9694-3.