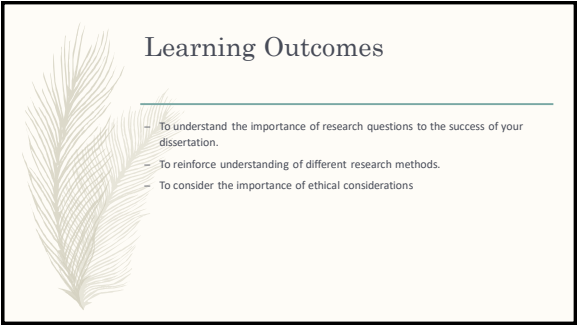
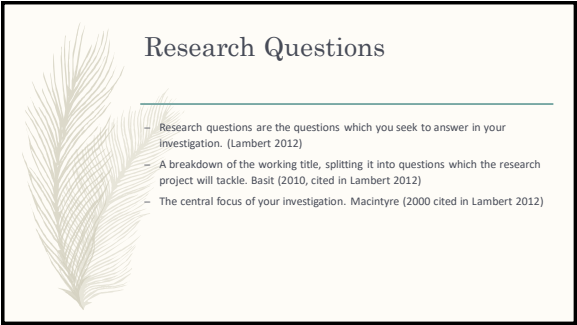










Why do you need research questions?

- Carefully thought out questions will ensure your project is well defined and manageable.
- The reader will know exactly what it is all about from the start.
- They keep you focussed on the important aspects



Research Questions

- You may adapt your questions to make them more relevant as you go along.
- Alternatively you may need to change what you are doing in order to 'keep on track'
- How many? No hard and fast rule but approximately 3 questions



How important and effective is nursery education for a child's social development?

- What role do the teachers play in helping to promote social skills?
- What resources are available to contribute to the development?
- How effectively are friendships formed?



An investigation into boys' achievement in literacy

- What are the levels of achievement in literacy of 10 and 11 year old boys in this school?
- How do the levels compare with national averages for this type of school?
- What initiatives does this school have in place improve the literacy levels of boys?

Lambert (2012)



- An investigation into the perceptions about reading and reading abilities of year 6 children in a large urban primary school



Can be written in a different form

Four main aims of this study

- To investigate children's perceptions of reading to see if there is a relationship with their reading ability.
- To evaluate if there is a gender difference in children's perceptions and abilities.
- To investigate what policies the school has in place to encourage reading and develop reading abilities.



- Put your research questions in your introduction.
- Probably return to them at beginning of research methods.



Research methods

- This section should detail what I did; how I did it; why I did it that way.
- It is a description and evaluation of the methods, techniques and procedures used in the investigation.
- Evidence of thorough reading about research methodology must be apparent to the reader.



- It describes the scope and aims of the dissertation in some detail. It is also very important that you justify the methods used.
- You need to start this section by explaining the research problem concisely and state your aims and research questions that will help you reach your conclusions.



- Include information about who your participants were, what research methods you used and more importantly WHY you used them rather than other methods. For example, you may have used questionnaires or observations. You must try to justify the methods you have used, possibly by looking at the advantages and disadvantages of alternative methods compared with your own method.



- Write in the past tense and third person.

Do not say

- 'according to the researcher'
- 'the researcher found that'.
- 'I used this method because...'



- 'The researcher found the results to be interesting because...'
- 'I am going to conduct an interview with the teachers'
- 'The researcher aims to find out if boys enjoy reading'
- 'In this chapter I will focus on the methods of data collection used.'



Participants

- How many?
- How chosen?

Sampling

Probability sampling:

- Random sampling
- Systematic sampling
- Stratified random sampling
- Cluster sampling (Walliman p152)



Ethics

- There also needs to be a detailed section where you discuss ethical issues. The British Educational Research (BERA) website will be useful as a starting point. BERA is an internationally renowned organisation that all education researchers access.



Ethics

In the ethics section you need to show how you have dealt with all of the points below:

- Informing people
- Asking for permission and considering refusal to participate
- Respecting privacy through anonymity
- Obtaining authorisation
- Ensuring fairness



Quantitative data

- Methods focussing on numbers
- Seen as more scientific, objective and rational because it is not supposed to involve personal or subjective judgements.
- Critics argue it tells you the what but not the why.

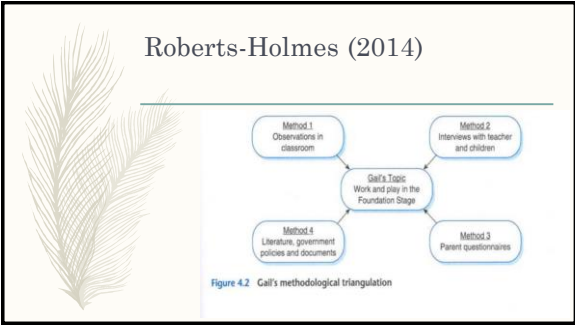


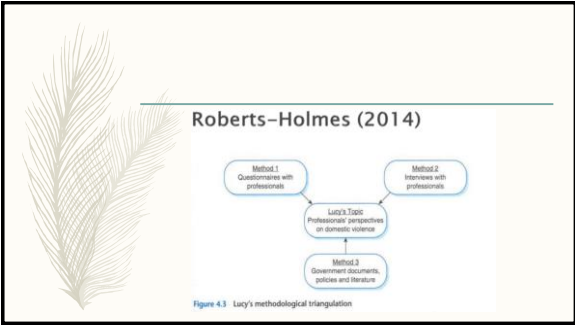
Qualitative Data

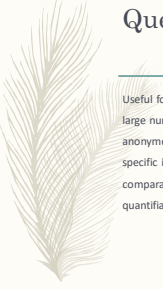
- Interviews
- Focus groups
- Participant/non participant observation
- Generates deeper and richer data.
- Criticised for being non factual, subjective and unreliable.



- Mixing methods increases the validity of the research project.
- Conduct a survey/questionnaire to flag up particular issues.
- Then design an interview for the next stage reflecting on answers from questionnaire.
- Triangulation – using more than one method to reduce ambiguity and increase confidence in your findings.







Questionnaires

Useful for:	But:
large number of people's views	costly/time consuming to design
anonymous views	process and analyse questions can be misinterpreted or left blank
specific information	response rates can be low
comparative data	response rates can be superficial
quantifiable data	questions may not elicit the reason behind a response



Questionnaires

- Structured – closed questions which are easier to analyse.
- Unstructured – open questions so the form of response is determined by the respondent. Harder to analyse particularly with large group.
- Semi structured – a mixture of the above. Good idea for small scale research.



Ranking

- In ranking questions, the respondent is asked to place something in rank order.
- For example, the respondent might be asked to place qualities or characteristics in order.
- Please rank these qualities for a teacher using the numbers 1 to 5.

Use the number 1 for the most important:

Good subject knowledge

Likes children

Patient

Speaks clearly

Believes learning should be fun



Quantity

- The response is a number(exact or approximate), giving the amount of some characteristics

e.g. How many children do you have?



Other possibilities

- Likert scale
- Category
- What about for children?



Questions for quantitative research

- A small number of questions (2-5 simple questions if for children)
- Plan to ask a large number of people (at least 30)



Interviews

- Structured or respondent type – interviewer retains control by asking mainly closed questions. Easier to analyse.
- Unstructured or informant type – interviewee retains control of the agenda by responding mostly to open questions.
- Semi structured – a mixture of open/closed questions. Control is shared. Good idea because you have a mixture of responses.



Conducting the interview

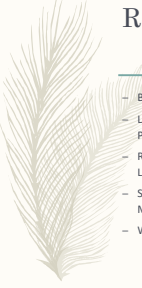
- create a welcoming, relaxed environment
- don't react strongly to the participant's responses
- encourage responses with positive body language
- provide transition between major topics
- don't lose control of the interview
- make any notes or observations



- Consider how many questions you need
- Consider the form and logical sequence these might take in order to probe effectively.
- The language and presentation of questions needs to match the general ability/age/nature of the respondents.
- To make respondents more comfortable ask more complex questions towards the middle of the interview.
- Consider where the interviews will take place.



- It is always a good idea to pilot questionnaires & interviews.
- If you do so, say so in your research methods section.
- Consider where interviews will take place.



Reference list

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