



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

Research Questions

Trawsnewid Addysg; Trawsnewid Bywydau
Transforming Education; Transforming Lives



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It starts with an idea...



Writing an *effective* research question

- Choose a topic that interests you...
 - ...and **read** everything you can find
- Find an interesting aspect of the topic
 - Ask yourself **who/when/where** questions
- Identify a question within that aspect
 - Ask yourself **how/why** questions
- Is your question
 - **focused?**
 - **complex?**
- Evaluate your question
 - Is it **interesting?**
 - Is it **researchable?**
 - What **types of information** will you need to answer the question? Are those types **accessible** to you?

Writing an *achievable* research question

- **Time frame** – can this project be completed within the level and credit value you are pursuing?
- **Workplace support** – is your workplace willing to support this project?
- **Financing** – is there financial outlay involved in pursuing this project and, if so, have you discussed this with your workplace and received a guarantee of support?
- **Rules, laws, and guidelines** – have you confirmed that the project conforms not just to the rules of the workplace and the University, but also to any additional rules, codes of practice, guidelines, etc. governing this area, such as laws of the country, region, or local authority, standards of practice of a profession, etc.
- **Moral considerations** – is the research proposed in keeping with the basic moral codes of conduct and behaviour acceptable in the culture hosting the research, as well as the culture of the University?
- **Data availability** – is the data necessary to complete the project reasonably available/accessible to you?
- **Workplace impact** – will the project have a demonstrable impact on your workplace and/or work practice?



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What are ethics?

- Moral principles that govern a person's behaviour or the conducting of an activity
- The moral correctness of specified conduct
- The branch of knowledge that deals with moral principles

The 9 Key Principles of Research Ethics

- **Beneficence** – the idea that all research should have the well-being of participants as an end goal.
- **Non-maleficance** – the idea that research should “do no harm”.
- **Respect** – the idea that research will pay due regard to the feelings, wishes, and rights of all involved, including the researcher, participants, and the wider community.
- **Justice** – the idea that research will be fair and equal in treatment and outcomes.
- **Participant interests** – the idea that research will be conducted in a way that accounts for the best interests of participants.
- **Participant safety** – the idea that research will be designed for the safety of participants, and not expose them to unnecessary risk or harm.
- **Researcher safety** – the idea that research will be designed for the safety of the research, and not expose him/her to unnecessary risk or harm.
- **Impact on others** – the idea that research will be designed to account for its impact on others, including the wider community or future generations.
- **Informed consent** – the idea that all participatory parties will be given the opportunity to consent to participation, and that they will be given sufficient information to understand what that consent entails, requires, and implies.
- **Debriefing** – the idea that all participants should have the right and opportunity to discuss the research with the researcher, and receive information on what is being researched, why, their personal part in the research, and the findings.
- **Withdrawal** – the idea that all participants should have, and be made aware of, the right to leave research at any point without negative consequences.
- **Confidentiality** – the idea that all data should be protected and that participants have a right to know the degree to which the information they provide throughout the course of the research will be protected.
- **Anonymity** – the idea that research data should not reveal, or make it possible to discover, names or personal identifying information of participants.

Confidentiality

Spoken,
written, or
acted upon in
complete
privacy and
secret

CONFIDENTIAL

What does
confidentiality
mean within the
context of
research?

How do we find
the line between
keeping
confidentiality
and reporting
results?

Anonymity

How does anonymity differ from confidentiality in the context of research?

How can we guarantee anonymity and still work with and analyse data?

The situation in which someone's name is not given or shown



Permission for
something to
happen or
agreement to
do something

Consent

CONSENT



Freely Given
Reversible
Informed
Enthusiastic
Specific

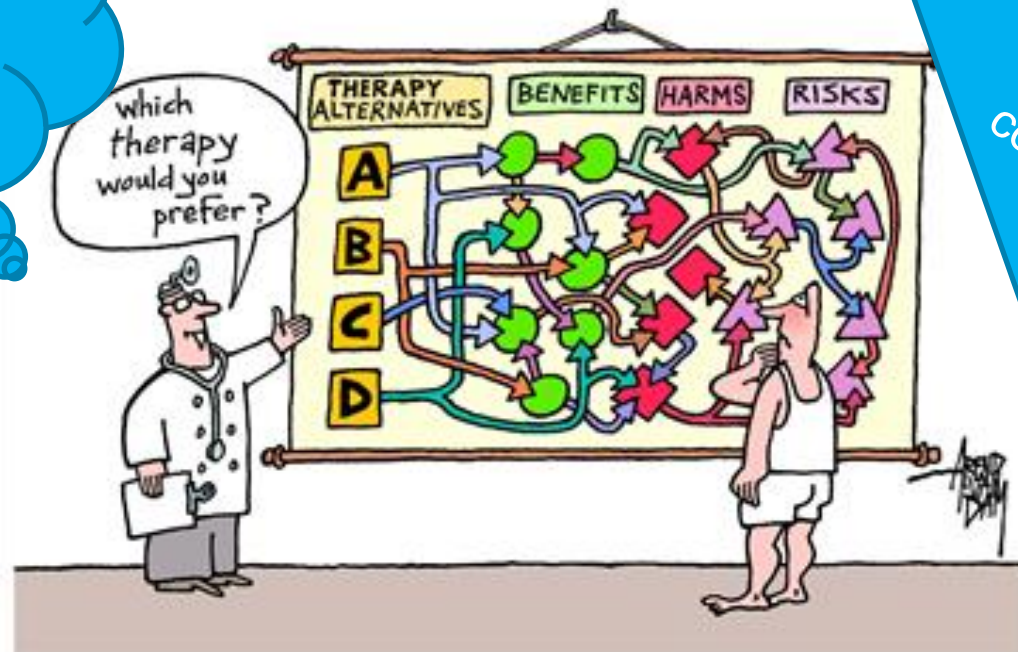
 Planned Parenthood®

Why is consent
so important
within research?

What does it
mean to be an
insider
researcher and
seek 'freely
given' consent?

Informed Consent

Why must consent be informed for research to take place?



informed consent

Cagle.com

Consent is valid only if those giving it understand what they have consented to

Risk to Participants

What can we do to minimise risk for participants?

How do we prepare for risks we might not intend or foresee?



It is the responsibility of the researcher to ensure that no harm comes to participants.

Risk to Researcher

Researchers are also responsible for ensuring no harm comes to themselves or colleagues.



What can we do to minimise the risk to ourselves?

Where do we draw the line between pursuing our professional needs and protecting ourselves?

Power/Authority Relationships

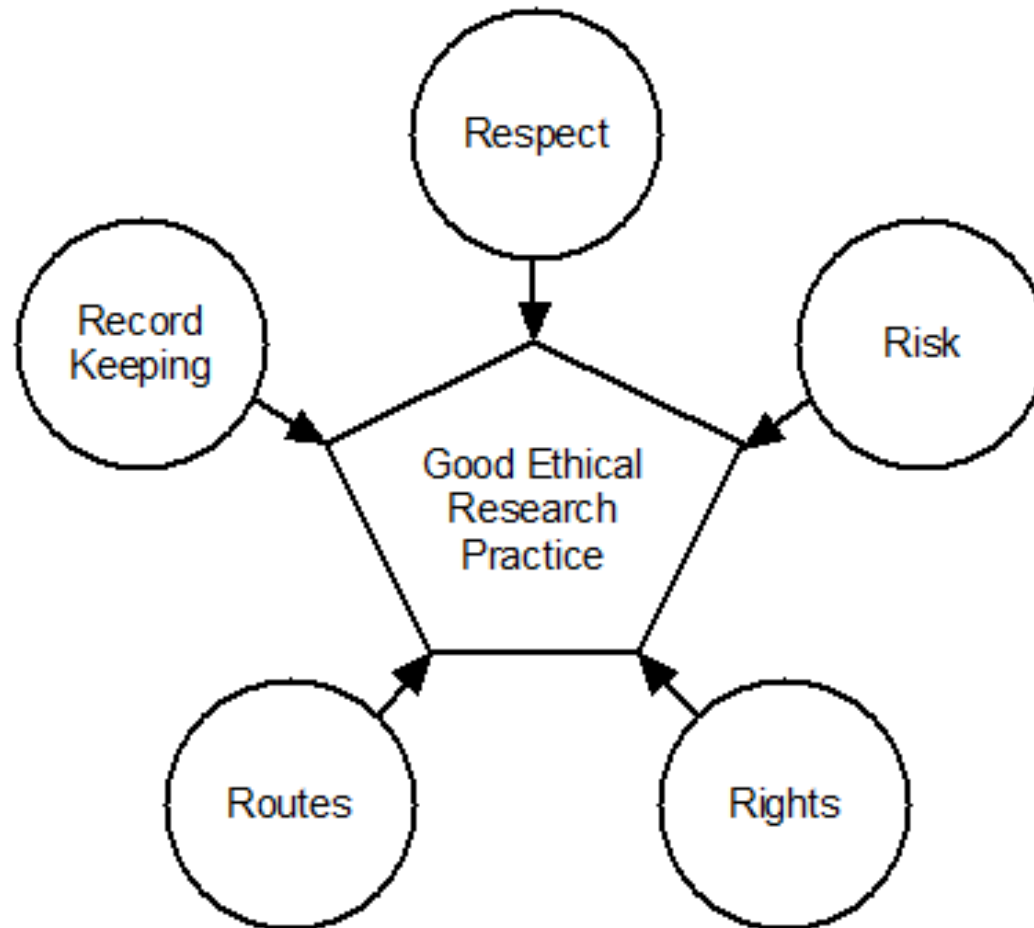
There are ethical implications to our relationships with those we research



What can we do to acknowledge and accommodate power relationships?

Can research ever take place without SOME form of power/authority relationship?

The 'Five Rs' of Research Ethics



Ethical Guidelines

- British Educational Research Association (BERA) Ethical Guidelines
 - <https://www.bera.ac.uk/researchers-resources/resources-for-researchers>
- Economics and Social Research Council (ESRC) Research Ethics Framework
 - <http://www.esrc.ac.uk/funding/guidance-for-applicants/research-ethics/>
- The UWTSD Research Integrity and Ethics
 - <http://www.uwtsd.ac.uk/research/research-ethics/>
- UK Data Archive
 - <http://www.data-archive.ac.uk/create-manage/consent-ethics>
- Your own organisation?
 - Code of Practice?
 - Health and Safety Guidelines?



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Research Design

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We've determined our research paradigm based on the ontological and epistemological positions we favour as well as the appropriate methodology...

We've crafted a research question and considered the ethical implications...

So what the f*#\$ do we do now....?



Most effective methods

Learning to select the best research method(s) takes practice

For new researchers, sometimes it's best just to think through a few options and do 'thought exercises'



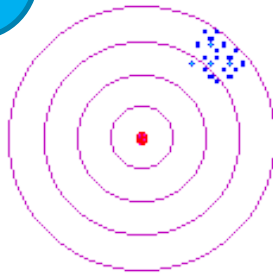
Important things to remember

- Can you justify your methods?
- Do your methods match your methodology?
- Are your methods the most effective for your research question?
- Are your methods suitable for your research context?

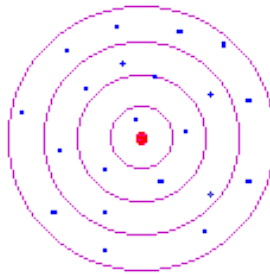
Valid/Accurate vs. Reliable

Data are
'reliable' if they
can be shown
to be
consistent

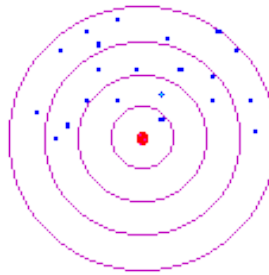
Data are
'valid/accurate'
if they can be
shown to be
correct/true



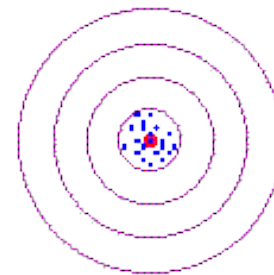
**Reliable
Not Valid**



**Valid
Not Reliable**



**Neither Reliable
Nor Valid**

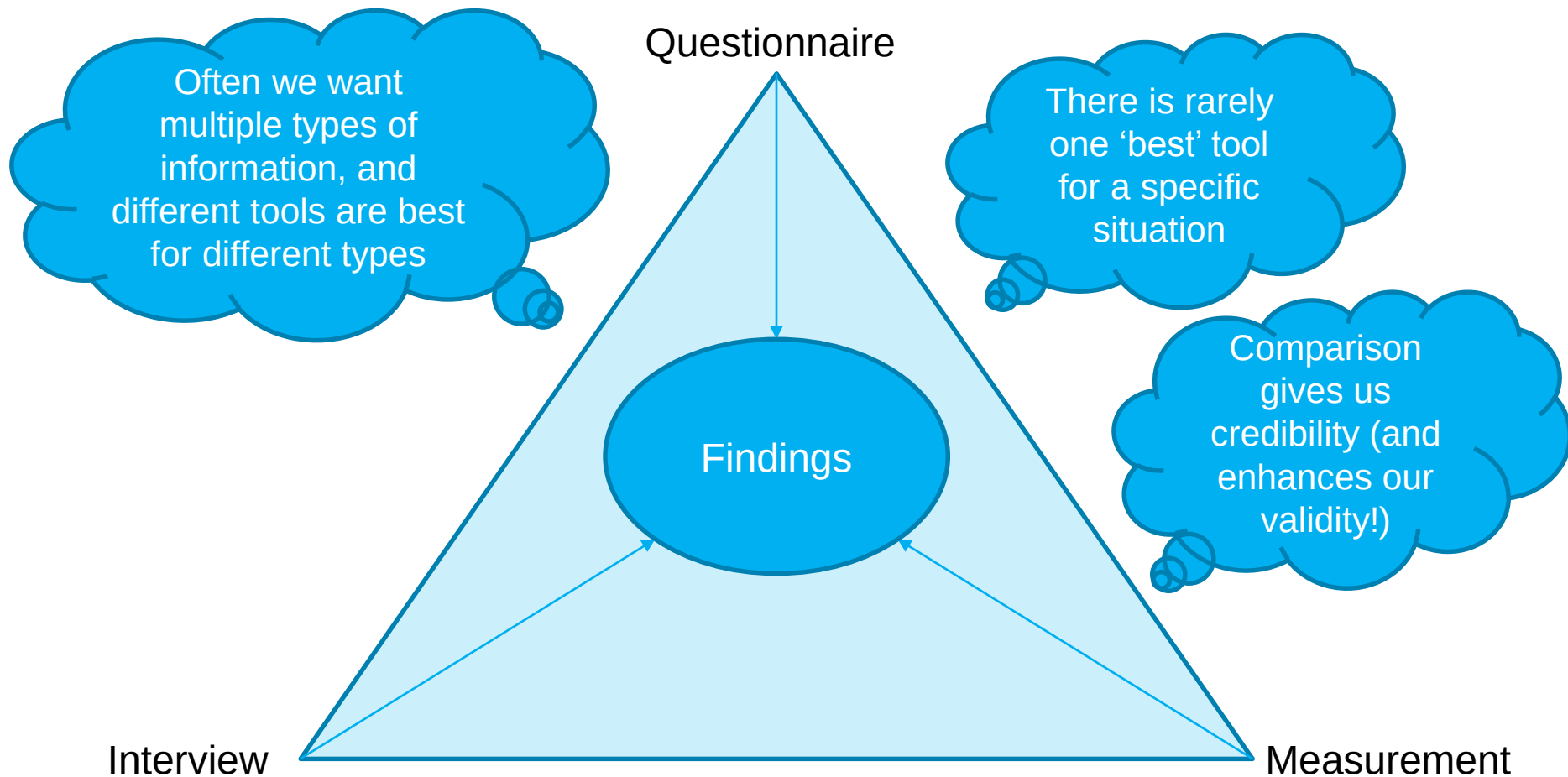


**Both Reliable
And Valid**

How do we design for...

- accuracy?
 - Does the tool you are using have the ability to measure what you want?
 - What's the best tool for measuring temperature? Distance? Reaction time?
- validity?
 - Is your tool the *best* possible tool for measuring what you want?
 - Both a ruler and a hand can be used to measure length, but one is better than the other
- reliability?
 - Can your research be replicated and generate similar results?
 - Have you triangulated your methods?
 - Have you been clear, detailed, and specific in your design?

Triangulation of data





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The E1 Ethics Form

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Section A: About You

- Remember
 - **Faculty/School/Centre:** WIWBL
 - **Campus:** Carmarthen
 - **Programme of Study:** MA in Professional Practice/BA in Professional Practice
 - **Director of Studies/Supervisor:** Individual Project Tutor

Section B: Approval for Research Activity

- Remember
 - **Source of approval:** WIWBL Ethics Board Representative
 - **Date:** Leave this blank until you have secured final ethical approval to begin your research

Section C: External Ethical Guidance Materials

- This section is an opportunity for you to include any additional ethical guidelines to which you adhere as a professional, such as:
 - Workplace codes of ethics/practice
 - Ethical/professional codes for professional bodies of which you are a member

Section D: External Collaborative Research Activity

- In the vast majority of work-based project cases, you will not have any collaborators outside the University
 - Your organisation/employer is your “host”
- In rare cases where other members of your organisation are contributing directly to your project or where your organisation is providing specific funding and/or material support to your project you will need to list them as a collaborator
 - Your Individual Project Tutor can help you to determine whether or not your situation qualifies

Section E: Details of Research Activity

- Make sure your aims and objectives are strong and clear, and include your individual learning outcomes
- Make sure your methods are easy to follow and understand
- It is important that you capture the ENTIRETY of your project and that it is clearly and concisely explained

Section F: Scope of Research Activity

- It is crucial to capture ALL of the research activity here
 - You are not allowed to conduct any research activity that is not expressly listed in this section
 - Should you decide you want to add an activity you must seek new ethical approval
- This needs to link up completely with your proposed methods as outlined in Section E

Section G: Intended Participants

- Make sure you carefully and accurately capture all of your potential participants and everything they will be asked to do
 - Again, you are not allowed to work with any participants that are not listed here, or work with participants in any ways not listed here

Section H: Anticipated Risks

- This is the crux of the E1 Ethics Form. Previous sections have explained your project – what you will do, why, how, with whom, in what ways – but this is the opportunity for you to justify all of your actions and demonstrate that you have considered the risks carefully and put mitigating actions in place as much as possible.

Section I: Feedback, Consent, and Confidentiality

- Remember to be as clear and specific as possible, and give full details of how you will obtain consent and protect participants' confidential information and anonymity

Section J: Data Protection and Storage

- It is crucial that your responses here are in keeping with the UWTSD Data Protection and Storage policies.
- Unless there is a strong reason for it to be kept, your data should be destroyed following the final review of your project at a UWTSD Exam Board.

Section K: Declaration

- Don't forget to sign and date and tick all the boxes.
- The date listed for the Signature of Approval from the WIWBL Ethics Board Representative serves as the formal start date for your project, from which you have a maximum of:
 - 4 months (30 credits)
 - 6 months (45 credits)
 - 8 months (60 credits)