
Activity 3-2

Data Collection Techniques

Consider the Data Collection Techniques that you resonate with.

Using the *Data Collection Techniques Guide* (available from the Module 3 Resources) to guide you, undertake ‘test run’ applications of these techniques with colleagues standing in as research participants (where needed).

Qualitative Techniques

Interview: compile a set of interview questions on a topic of your choosing, secure an audio recorder, and undertake an interview with a colleague. Consider such factors as the planning and scheduling of the interview, the location, the invitation to participate in the interview and consent provided by the interview participant. You might also rehearse your opening introduction; the statement within which you detail your name, role and the purpose of the interview.

Observation: look at your immediate work environment and undertake an observational analysis of it. Who is present? What are these people doing? Are different groups functioning within the larger group? How is the space of this setting configured? How does this space signify the rank of those individuals present in this setting? Give consideration to how you have compiled notes following this observation.

Document Analysis: select a formal policy document or report produced by your local government site. Undertake an analysis of this document looking for: the language and tone used, and the intended audience for this report.

Points to Note...

Module 3 introduces a set of data collection techniques for undertaking social research. Having the skillset to effectively deploy these data collection techniques is a vital aspect of being a practitioner researcher. Use this activity to test and refine your skills in data collection. You may initially feel a little uncomfortable doing this, but be sure to persist and identify your ‘style’ for using these techniques.

The Task

This task requires you to contemplate the data collection techniques presented in Module 3. Take this opportunity to confirm which techniques align most closely to your *Research Persona*, but to also develop strategies for using those you don’t immediately resonate with. Testing your capacities as a practitioner researcher and developing your approach for collecting data is a key aspect of the *Research Persona*.

Social Research Toolkit:

using social research in local government
community engagement

Quantitative Techniques

Survey: Compile a short survey on a topic of your choosing, and approach 3 or 4 colleagues to undertake this survey. Give consideration to the structure of the survey and the measure for recording participant views. You should also consider the nature of the questions, the links between each question, and how the 'flow' of the survey will proceed.

Statistical Count: over the course of a few days (you can specify the exact timeframe) undertake a statistical count of how many people within your immediate work group wear a certain colour top to work. Your objective here is to determine the most popular choice of colour for tops in your work unit across this time period. You might also add complexity to this by refining your analysis to include further characteristics; for example, the most popular colour defined by gender and age groups.