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Developing a Research Design Self Study

1. What is your conceptual framework?
 - Why is this your concept?
2. What are your key questions?
 - Why are these your question?

If you feel confident that you can individually answer all the questions listed in Section 1 then skip to Section 2. If you are still finalising your research plans and/or are inexperienced in field research then complete Section 1 with a partner before attempting section 2.

ONLY progress to section 2 if you are sure that you can answer all of section 1

Section 1

With the person next to you

1. Propose your concept
2. Introduce your key questions

Individually brainstorm

1. How do you plan on answering them?

- i. Questionnaire—why, what do you hope to learn?
- ii. Interview—who, why, where? How many?
- iii. Focus group—what do these add? Who, why, where?
- iv. Participant Observation—where, when, how much time, what activities?
- v. Other...?

Bring your thoughts together, comment & combine (constructive criticism is encouraged😊)

2. Why have you chosen the methods you have discussed? What is the methodological justification?
3. How does the method help you to answer your question? Will you have enough information when you are done?
4. How will you get **access** to your abstract concept? Begin to think about:
 - i. Practicality
 - ii. Can you realistically achieve finding an answer to the conceptual idea you began with?
 - iii. **Ethics—what ethical issues emerge?**
 - iv. What does ‘it’ ‘look’ like? How will you recognise ‘it’ when you ‘see/hear’ it? Where do you expect to find it?
 - a. *Take the example of authority*
 - i. *How would you know when you see it?*
 - ii. *How would you capture what you were observing/experiencing?*
 - iii. *Where do you expect to find ‘authority’?*
5. Combing methods? How could you weave together methods to create **rigour** in your work?
6. Can you quantify your findings? Why or why not? What is gained? What is lost?
7. Consider **validity**.
 - a. How will you know when you have enough?
 - b. When/where is your **end point**?
 - c. How does this answer your question?
 - d. Theoretical saturation

e. Statistical analysis

Section 2

Imagine the situation where you are competing for funding for your own research project.

Take turns to individually propose your research project. Bear the following questions in mind when proposing your research but also ensure that you are able to answer all the questions listed in section one. This is your chance to justify why you believe what you plan on researching is of importance.

1. Why is it worthwhile?
2. How will you go about it?
3. Why is this the appropriate way to carry out the research?
4. What could be the potential restraints on your research?
5. What are the ethical considerations you must keep in mind?

Section 3

Once you are confident with Sections 1 & 2 you can try out some methods. Work with a team of 2-4. Develop a set of interview questions or a questionnaire. If you plan to use visual methods, bring in some images to use. Try interviewing each other using your questions. Get feedback from the group focusing on:

1. The 'flow' of the questions. Did they feel comfortable? Did the respondent want to tell you something but the questions did not give them space to do so?
2. Did they understand the questions?
3. What were the answers like? Did you get one-two line answers or were people encouraged to tell stories?
 - a. Qualitative methods REQUIRE stories, detail, contextualised responses. If your questions do not encourage such elaboration, you need to work on them (and your follow up questions).

- b. Quantitative methods require people to choose one response. If the people in the group found themselves unable to choose, or picked randomly a response, they should tell you. Worse, if they wanted to elaborate to you, then you might consider some qualitative questions to complement your questionnaire.
4. If you are using other kinds of methods, go test them out and see how they work. Ask friends to help you and get feedback on both the results, and the experience of being on the ‘other end’ of the technique.

A note: developing good questions is HARD. Simple and straight forward is the best. Don’t have a long lead in. But do feel free to engage in a ‘conversation’ (especially with qualitative methods). You will find people trust you more if you reveal some things about yourself too.