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Developing innovative approaches to research with children and young people

Susan Elsley and Kay Tisdall

Innovative approaches

Plan for this morning

- 10.00 Introductions
- 10.30 Our learning intentions
- 11.00 Break
- 11.20 Ethics and children's rights
- 11.50 From participant to producer
- 12.30 Lunch

Introductions

Please find someone you do not yet know ...

1. Find out their name
2. Find out where they are from
3. ... and create something together with the lego, on skills and/or experience you bring to the course (from knitting to research skills to work with young people ...).

Be prepared to introduce the other person and to display your lego

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Course aim

To explore the latest methods and debates in childhood and youth research, using participative approaches and drawing on participants' experience.

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By the end of the course, you should:

- Be at the forefront of knowledge of ethical requirements and questions in involving children and young people
- Be able to evaluate critically, and in detail, a range of different approaches to research and ways of involving children and young people
- Have identified a plan for taking forward your own learning and research practice.

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Learning modes

1. Two days of classroom sessions
2. Access to online resources
3. Independent reading and study
4. Each other (here and online)
5. And your 'research imagination'

Learning intentions (1)

Aim of exercise:

- to explore participants' learning intentions for the course
- to record them and share with others
- to identify common themes

Learning intentions (1)

- What project or issue do I want to think about over the 2 days?
- What the key issues that I want to explore over the 2 days?
- Anything else? Personal skills development or understanding?

Ethics

Have a think about your project ...
What are the ethical issues for that project?

Write one issue on one post-it.

Ethics

- Alderson, P. and Morrow, V. (2011) *The Ethics of Research with Children and Young People: A practical handbook*, London: Sage.
- Alderson, P. and Morrow, V. (2004) *Ethics, social research and consulting with children and young people*. Essex: Barnardos.

Alderson and Morrow (2004)

1. Planning the project
2. Assessing harms and benefits
3. Respect for rights: confidentiality and privacy
4. Selection and participation
5. Money matters
6. Review of the research aims and methods
7. Information for participants
8. Consent and access
9. Reporting and dissemination
10. Impact on children

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Ethical guidelines

- Association of Social Anthropologists in the UK and the Commonwealth <http://www.theasa.org/ethics/guidelines.shtml>
- British Educational Research Association <https://www.bera.ac.uk/researchers-resources/publications/bera-ethical-guidelines-for-educational-research-2011>
- British Sociological Association <https://www.britisoc.co.uk/equality-diversity/statement-of-ethical-practice/>
- Economic and Social Research Council (2017) <http://www.esrc.ac.uk/funding/guidance-for-applicants/research-ethics/our-policy-and-guidelines-for-good-research-conduct/>
- National Children's Bureau. Guidelines for Research for research with children and young people (2011) <https://www.nfer.ac.uk/nfer/schools/developing-young-researchers/NCBguidelines.pdf>
- Social Research Association (2003) Code of Safety for Social Researchers http://the-sra.org.uk/sra_resources/safety-code/
- See also Child Exploitation and Online Child Protection Centre (CEOP) <http://www.ceop.gov.uk/>

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From participant to producer: the continuum of involving children and young people

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Children and young people's participation

'...children's right to be heard – should not only be a momentary act, but the starting point for an intense exchange between children and adults...'

UNCRC General Comment No. 12

Is this applicable to research with children?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nB6rDYLPf0A>

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Involving children and young people

- In what ways can children and young people can be involved in research?

A major research funder has put out a call for research projects, on children, migration and racism. You want to involve children in designing your application for this funding.

Discuss how you might go about doing this. What would be the benefits for the application and for the children? What would the challenges be?

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Your application has been funded! You want to involve children as peer researchers.

Discuss how you might go about doing this. What would the benefits be for the research and for the children? What would the challenges be?

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The research has its findings and wants to launch them through the media – from youtube to twitter and a big event. The child peer researchers want to be fully involved as do some of the child participants in the research.

Discuss how you might go about doing this. What would be the benefits for the application and for the children? What would the challenges be?

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Plan for this afternoon

- 1.30 Participative methods
- 3.00 Break
- 4.00 Revisiting our intentions
- 4.30 Finish



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'Participative' Methods?

Kay Tisdall

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Aims and objectives

Aim: To explore the use of 'participative' methods in research with children and young people

Learning objectives:

- To explore various 'participative' methods used in research with children
- To consider critically the claims of these methods
- To consider critically these methods in terms of ethics, data collection and analysis

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What do we mean by 'participative' methods?

E.g. Mosaic Approach

“a strength-based framework for viewing young children as competent, active, meaning makers and explorers of their environment”
(Clark 2005:29)

1. Multi-method: 100 languages of children
2. participative: children as experts and agents in their own lives
3. Reflexive: includes children, parents and practitioners in interpretation
4. Adaptable
5. Focused on children’s lived experiences
6. Embedded into practice

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Methodological pieces of Mosaic Approach (Clark 2005: 33)

Observation	Qualitative observation accounts
Child interviewing	One-on-one, group
Photography and book making	Children's photographs of 'important things'
Tours	Child directed and recorded
Map making	Use children's drawings and photos
Interviews	With practitioners and parents
Magic Carpet	Slide show to open up other possibilities

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Claims for 'participative' methods

1. Epistemological benefits:

participative techniques “access and valorize previously neglected knowledges and provide more nuanced understandings of complex social phenomena.” Kesby (2000, p.423).

Helping to improve decision making and efficiency.

2. Ethical Benefits:

“effective methodology and ethics go hand in hand...the reliability and validity, and the ethical acceptability, of research with children can be augmented by using an approach which gives children control over the research process and methods which are in tune with children’s ways of seeing and relating to their world.” (Thomas and O’Kane 1998, p.336-337)

3. Inclusive:

- a. Multiple methods allow for multiple ways of communicating
- b. Creative or arts-based methods are ‘levellers’, so all can participate

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The 'bag of tools'

Try out the tools with this research aim: "To explore this space, and how it impacts on your experience of learning."

- Divide into teams 4-5 people
- Roles: researcher, participant, and observer
- Collectively note down views
- Think about **your** competencies



<http://www.flickr.com/photos/indiebandswithamission/>

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Claims for 'participative' methods

1. Epistemological – better knowledge
2. Ethical – emancipatory, giving children a 'voice'
3. Inclusive – 100 languages of children

The tyranny of participation?

- **The tyranny of decision-making and control:** Do participative facilitators override existing legitimate decision-making processes?
- **The tyranny of the group:** Do group dynamics lead to participative decisions that reinforce the interests of the already powerful?
- **The tyranny of method:** Have participative methods driven out others which have advantages participation cannot provide? (Cooke and Kothari 2001: 8-9)

Aims and objectives

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Revisiting our intentions (2)

Aim of exercise:

- to reflect on today's content
- to identify if anything emerged that can help with projects/issues
- to identify issues to explore on day 2.

Revisiting our intentions (2)

What has come out of today that can help with my project or issue?

What would I like to explore tomorrow?

Plan for this morning

- 10.00 Case study: Children's Parliament
- 11.20 Break
- 11.40 Reviewing our intentions (3)
- 12.15 Lunch

Reviewing our intentions (3)

Aim of exercise:

- to explore one issue, theme or challenge for each participant in depth individually and in small groups

Reviewing our intentions (3)

- Identify one issue to explore and write down (5 minutes)
- In small group each participant present issue – and with others identify ways forward/ideas (up to 10 minutes per person)
- Sharing learning in large group.

Plan for this afternoon

- 1.15 Involving children and young people in research: Young Edinburgh Action, City of Edinburgh Council
- 2.45 Break
- 3.00 Learning intentions
- 3.45 Summing up and evaluation
- 4.00 Finish

Taking forward our intentions (4)

Aim of exercise:

- bring together learning from course
- identify a plan for how to take forward
- consider what resources and tools needed

Taking forward our intentions (4)

- Are there outstanding issues etc., that I want to explore?
- What are the key things I have learned?
- What resources do I need?
- What will I do next week? In 4 weeks? Longer term?
- Anything else?

Further opportunities

Stay in touch

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MSc in Childhood Studies

<http://www.sps.ed.ac.uk/pgtcs>

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