



Provisional Mark	58
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School of Social and Political Science – PG Feedback Form

Exam number	Student D
Course Instance	March 2014
Course Name	Using Creative Methods in Research with Children and Young People CPD
Component Name	Blog 2

Please note that both the comments and the grade remain provisional until ratified by the external Exam Board in May and will be subject to change, moderation and review by our external examiners. This includes whether or not any penalties imposed are upheld.

Overview

Marking criterion	Comment	Grade A-H (if appropriate)
Critical/conceptual analysis	The blog shows a committed discussion of the standing of creative methods, as largely associated with qualitative research. This could be developed even further, with suitable evidence and considerations of where such methods <i>have</i> been accepted and arguably had impact.	B-C
Strength/cohesion of argument	The argument could be even more tightly made, in terms of structuring paragraphs and linking sentences.	B
Use of sources/evidence	Good use is made of sources, particularly in considering the claims within the selected resource itself.	A
Structure & organisation	The blog might be even more tightly organised, to bring out its argument	B
Breadth and relevance of reading	The blog could only have been improved by further use of sources (but was not required by the assessment).	B
Clarity of expression, presentation and referencing	The blog was well written. Thomas and O'Kane does not seem to be in the reference list.	B
Suggestions for future work	The blog was a strong contribution, in showing deep engagement with the positioning of creative methods within academia and in contrast to quantitative approaches. For development, even tighter argument and more evidence to support points would have developed and deepened the critical consideration.	

Susan Elsley and Kay Tisdall, as course convenors, maintain a file of anonymised assessments with feedbacks for further students to consult. If you would prefer to have your assignment not included within this file, please inform Kay Tisdall k.tisdall@ed.ac.uk.

Name: Student D

Title of Paper: Online Contribution – Count Me In!

Word Count: 520

Resource Title:

Participation: Count me in! Involving children and young people in research

Resource Location:

<http://www.kids.nsw.gov.au/Publications---resources/Participation-resources/Taking-PARTicipation-seriously>

Critical Comment¹:

Participation: Count me in! is a guide on conducting social research with children and young people, developed by the *NSW Commission for Children and Young People (CCYP)*. It contains information about visual and task-oriented methods. These are my observations about this information.

Arts-based methods as core technique

There is an increase in the use of creative methods with children in research but there remain a number of constraints that do not allow these innovative approaches to flourish as readily as traditional ones. The guide predicates information about visual and task-oriented methods with a comprehensive discussion on the wisdom of combining them with traditional approaches. It goes on to explain that that all methods have advantages and disadvantages. It claims three reasons on which to base the choice of method; "Methods should be chosen based on the research question, the type of data required and the characteristics and preferences of the children and young people involved in the research." (p54). Yet in practice, justifying the use of creative methods on the preferences of children and young people (the third reason), is difficult and is not given much weight as the reasons concerned with data collection to ensure the success of the research. This is particularly the case in more formal academic contexts.

Arts-based methods and quantitative research

In part, this may be because of the ongoing 'war' on the superiority of qualitative and quantitative methods (Gwyther and Possami-Ineseday 2009). Undoubtedly this has contributed to the sluggish commitment to creative methods as mainstream research technique. There are examples on how art can produce both meaning and objectivity (see for example, Veale in Chapter 14 of Greene and Hogan 2005). The guide confirms that '*data collected will depend on the activity used but can be qualitative or quantitative.*'(p65) and provides examples on how this has been achieved by using charts, matrices, timelines and maps. Nonetheless, creative methods are still largely seen as qualitative and in turn at times less than scientific. There are other questions too about the potential for incongruence in using methods that encourage meaning-making if they are used to produce numbers and trends. Do children benefit from these findings? How do we relate these findings back to them?

¹ Postgraduate Development Course: Using Creative Methods in Research with Children and Young People Assessment for 2014

Kay 25/9/14 15:10

Comment [1]: Very effective quotation to use.

Kay 25/9/14 15:11

Comment [2]: On what evidence base are these comments made?

Kay 25/9/14 15:12

Comment [3]: Yes, I would concur that creative methods are largely seen as qualitative, because of the links with creativity. Does the power of the data and findings depend on the context, and the aims of the overall project?

However, it seems the real debate continues to be about the status of the child and their role in research. Methods in research are rarely chosen to meet the needs of children and young people. The *process* of research is undervalued in comparison to research output. More than a decade ago Thomas and O’Kane (2000) invited us to think about putting the researcher’s objectives ‘in second place to the child subject’s needs as a person’, and that in doing so we would not be retracting from research but redefining what it was. While the guide provides a comprehensive and clear base for applying creative methods to research with children, like many other resources on creative methods, it struggles to be seen as a valuable contribution to research practice more broadly. This is evidenced by the slow uptake of this approach in the Australian context (Gwyther and Possami-Inesedy (2009) that continues today.

References

Green, S. and Hogan, D. (2005) *Researching Children’s Experience: Approaches and Methods* London, Sage Publications

Gwyther, G. and Possami-Inesedy, A. (2009) ‘Methodologies a la carte: an examination of emerging qualitative methodologies in social research’. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, 12, 2, 99-115.

Kay 25/9/14 15:15

Comment [4]: Should Thomas and O’Kane be referenced as well? If not read for the bog, then can be referenced as a secondary reference more clearly in the text (Thomas and O’Kane, as referenced in **).