



The CDI delivers a **practitioner research** webinar programme for members, supported by a range of resource materials.

The programme is offered in four stages, with resource materials for each

- **formulating research questions**
- **collecting data**
- **exploring and analysing data**
- **writing and dissemination**

The CDI is also the host partner for the annual **National Research Conference for Careers Practitioners**. This set of resources is offered to all those attending the 2023 Conference, as part of the CDI's commitment to support practitioner research across the career development sector.

Resources relating to COLLECTING DATA

These resources are grouped into four topic areas:

1. [Questionnaire and survey design](#)
2. [Research interviews and focus groups](#)
3. [Creative methods and visualisation](#)
4. [Observation](#)

Practitioner Research: How to collect evidence

1. QUESTIONNAIRE AND SURVEY DESIGN

Many universities and research institutions provide informative materials on questionnaire preparation and design, and establishing sampling methods. These are a few useful examples.

Loughborough University: [Questionnaire design](#)

College of Policing: [Constructing questionnaires: tips for designing, piloting and administering surveys and questionnaires](#)

[A quick guide to successful online surveys](#) (Powerpoint by Gabi Binnie of AGCAS at the Practitioner Research conference (CDI, AGCAS & iCeGS, 2021).

JISC offer an [online survey tool](#) designed for academic research, education and public sector organisations. If you are affiliated with an academic institution it is likely that you will have access to this comprehensive material, but if not, individual subscriptions are available.

Surveys and sampling

Recorded lectures from Graham Gibbs at University of Huddersfield giving a step-by-step guide to designing and administering surveys and selecting your sampling methods

Lecture 1 (overview): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M-IEVzKyqhQ>

Lecture 2 (sampling): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=owN9hLq-Eac>

Questionnaire design: theory and best practices

This **two-part slide share** will help you get quality data, by exploring how your survey design can affect the responses you collect. Do you know what's going on in your respondents' heads as they take your survey? Understanding the answers to this question can help you design surveys that collect high quality, dependable insights.

Part 1: <https://www.slideshare.net/Qualtrics/survey-methodology-and-questionnaire-design-theory-part-i>

Part 2: <https://www.slideshare.net/Qualtrics/survey-methodology-and-questionnaire-design-theory-part-ii>

A practical example of how respondents may struggle to understand your questions is given in [Asking survey questions: identifying problems](#). (Collins for NCRM, 2017)

Looking specifically at design of questionnaires to be used in interviews examples include two book chapters from the business research field.

[Questionnaire design](#). Sreejesh, Mohaprata & Anusree (2014; ch.5 from [Business Research Design, Springer](#)).

[An introduction to questionnaire design](#), a book chapter from **B2B International**, who also offer a Questionnaire Design [e-Book](#) for free download.

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2. RESEARCH INTERVIEWS AND FOCUS GROUPS

Career practitioners know about interviewing, so the question for practitioner researchers is how research interviews differ from career interviews. Many of the following materials address the topic of avoiding affecting how your respondents answer. It means restraining your instinct to 'help' and adopting a neutral stance ... maybe easier said than done! What is not in doubt is that your listening skills remain crucial.

The website [Skills You Need](#) offers a useful and comprehensive introduction to interviews for research. This website also includes many other resources of use to practitioner researchers.

[Understanding research interviews](#) (Cassell, 2015) starts from an examination of your philosophical position and then works on into various interview types, including critical incident, narrative, biographical and visual. This free-of-charge item is Ch.2 from [Conducting research interviews for business and management students](#) (Sage).

The College of Policing offers [a How To guide: conducting research interviews](#)

The Open University offers a guide to [Conducting an interview](#) amongst a range of useful Postgraduate study guides.

FOCUS GROUPS

Focus groups are an alternative way of collecting evidence directly from participants.

Qualitative research methods is an animated video series including

- [How focus groups can help your research](#)
- [Preparing for focus groups](#)

[Conducting virtual focus groups](#) is another topical offering, covering the whole focus group process but also looking at online practice

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3. CREATIVE METHODS AND VISUALISATION

Creative research methods: the story so far (Kara, 2016) offers a useful starting point
<https://www.ncrm.ac.uk/news/show.php?article=5465>

Dr Helen Kara of the National Centre for Research methods (NCRM), Southampton University, also offers a 3-part YouTube series on **creative methods**, accompanied by links to the NCRM website which contains a range of supportive materials and resources.

Part 1: Intro and arts-based methods

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YpnexrLZBT4>

Part 2: Technology and mixed methods

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4vhXUJQecVA>

Part 3: Transformative and indigenous methods

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j-Artoll68s>

Creative methods – drawing, writing and photography is a brief introduction from UCL, and includes examples of two projects that encouraged participants' active involvement.

https://www.ucl.ac.uk/culture/sites/culture/files/creative_methods.pdf

Reimagining creative research methods & collaborative relationships in the context of Covid-19. This blog post (Playle, 2021) reflects on the use of a highly participative method, and the subsequent discussion of it at a BERA conference.

<https://www.bera.ac.uk/blog/reimagining-creative-research-methods-collaborative-relationships-in-the-context-of-covid-19>

Visual matrix methods: 'a method for researching shared experience, stimulated by sensory material relevant to a research question'. It is a possible method for eliciting emotional material which might not otherwise be articulated. The link offers an introduction, but web searches will find a range of material using such methods for network research.

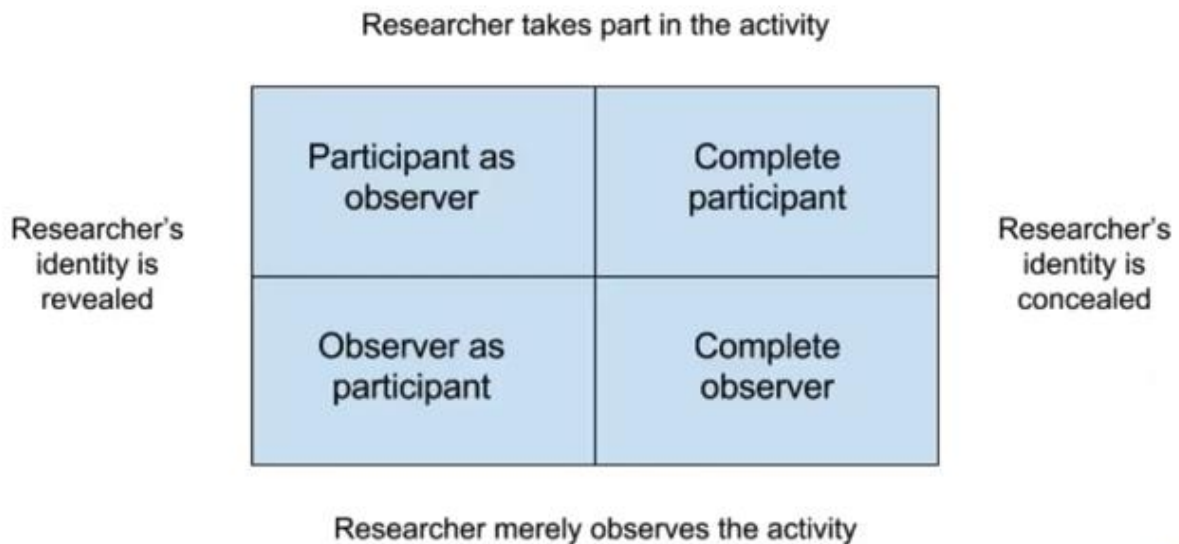
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/281632143_The_Visual_Matrix_Method_Imagery_and_Affect_in_a_Group-Based_Research_Setting

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4. OBSERVATION

Editorial note: it proved very difficult to identify resources for this part of the Practitioner Research materials. Observation occurs in scientific and space research, in ethnographic and field research, as an assessment method in education, and can be quantitative rather than qualitative. None of these relate to a typical careers situation where you might, for example, want to study how students use the careers resource centre, or to explore reported problems in a busy reception area.

As a starting point, it is worth considering possible observer roles:



[Source: YouTube video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UohqMWryxuk>]

The YouTube video [Research methods: Observations](#) is intended for A level Sociology students, but gives a useful run-through of key issues.

Conducting observational research (Bryant, M., Deakin University) is a Powerpoint presentation exploring methodological contexts of observation as well as considering both techniques and ethical issues.

https://www.deakin.edu.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0004/681025/Participant-observation.pdf

Observation is an introduction from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (a philanthropic body in the USA) which provides a useful summary and a number of helpful additional links. <http://www.qualres.org/HomeObse-3594.html>

The paper **Participant and non-participant observation in gambling** (Parke & Griffiths 2008, in Nottingham Trent University's Enquire publication, Issue 1.1) provides useful guidelines for planning and undertaking small-scale observational research

<https://www.nottingham.ac.uk/sociology/documents/enquire/volume-1-issue-1-parke-griffiths.pdf>