

**e809\_1**

**Understanding research with children and young people**

**About this free course**

This free course is an adapted extract from the Open University course E809 Frameworks for critical practice with children and young people<http://www.open.ac.uk/postgraduate/modules/e809>.

This version of the content may include video, images and interactive content that may not be optimised for your device.

You can experience this free course as it was originally designed on OpenLearn, the home of free learning from The Open University – <https://www.open.edu/openlearn/health-sports-psychology/conducting-research-children/content-section-overview>

There you’ll also be able to track your progress via your activity record, which you can use to demonstrate your learning.

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**Session 1: Why do it?**

## Introduction

The first Session will look at this essential element, why it is important to include children and young people in research about their lives. This underpins this course and the OU Our Voices project overall.

Start of Figure



[View description - Uncaptioned Figure](" \l "Unit1_Session1_Description1)

End of Figure

By the end of this session, you should be able to:

* give some reasons why it is important for children and young people to be involved in research that affects their own lives
* summarise key Articles of the UNCRC which relate specifically to children and young people’s rights with regard to research that affects their lives
* identify some challenges that may be encountered when researching with children and young people.

First of all, have a look at this short introductory video.

Start of Activity

**Activity 1**

Allow approximately 15 minutes.

Start of Question

As you watch Video 1, consider what key points are presented in the video. What is the value of engaging with children and young people in research about their lives? Make notes as you watch, then click on the ‘key points’ below to compare your answers.

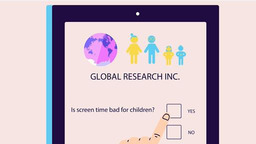
Start of Media Content

Video content is not available in this format.

Video 1

[View transcript - Video 1](" \l "Unit1_Session1_Transcript1)

Start of Figure



End of Figure

End of Media Content

End of Question

[View discussion - Activity 1](" \l "Unit1_Session1_Discussion1)

End of Activity

The Open University would really appreciate a few minutes of your time to tell us about yourself and your expectations for the course before you begin, in our optional [start-of-course survey](https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/e809_start). Participation will be completely confidential and we will not pass on your details to others.

## 1 Children and young people as researchers

While studying this course, you will think about ways to give all children and young people – aged 5-23, and regardless of gender, ethnicity or ability – a space to reflect on and raise their own voices around how they can be involved, as experts in their own right, in a research project. Consulting with them in this way allows them to be core and active participants to that research and ensures that their voices are heard.

Start of Activity

**Activity 2**

Allow approximately 15 minutes.

In this video, you will see young researchers from Lincroft School talking about the research projects they participated in, which were based in their local communities.

You might like to make notes as you watch, and you can pause the video as many times as you wish. Once you have finished viewing, answer the questions that follow. Write your answers in the box on the screen, then click on ‘reveal discussion’ to see if that mirrors your own thoughts, or offers you further ideas.

Start of Question

Start of Media Content

Watch the video at [YouTube.com](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wx4CbfpzFGA&hl=en&fs=1&rel=0).

Video 2

End of Media Content

What did the children gain from carrying out the research?

End of Question

*Provide your answer...*

[View discussion - Part](" \l "Unit1_Session2_Discussion1)

Start of Question

What new insights, if any, have you gained from the range of children’s perspectives and experiences expressed in the video?

End of Question

*Provide your answer...*

End of Activity

## 2 The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

Not only is it likely that better research will result, involving children and young people in research affecting their lives is actually mandated by an even more fundamental factor: their international rights. These rights were articulated in 1989, in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), which states that children and young people have the right to be consulted, to be heard and to participate meaningfully in matters affecting their lives. They also have the right to have their best interests as a primary consideration.

Start of Box

**Box 1: The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (the UNCRC).**

The UNCRC is the most complete statement of children’s rights ever produced and is the most widely-ratified international human rights treaty in history – it’s even been accepted by non-state entities, such as the Sudan People’s Liberation Army (SPLA), a rebel movement in South Sudan. All UN member states except for the United States have ratified the Convention. The Convention came into force in the UK in 1992; in the UK, it is accepted that every child has rights, whatever their ethnicity, gender, religion, language, abilities or any other status.

The Convention must be seen as a whole: all the rights are linked and no one right is more important than another. The right to relax and play (Article 31), for example, and the right to freedom of expression (Article 13) have equal importance as the right to be safe from violence (Article 19) and the right to education (Article 28).

You can read the full Convention, and a summary, if you click [here.](https://www.unicef.org.uk/what-we-do/un-convention-child-rights/)

End of Box

If you are thinking about planning a research project with and by children or young people, three of the articles stand out as particularly relevant in this context:

* **Article 3** In all actions concerning children, whether undertaken by public or private social welfare institutions, courts of law, administrative authorities or legislative bodies, the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration.
* **Article 12** Parties shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views, the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child.
* **Article 13** The child shall have the right to freedom of expression; this right shall include freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, either orally, in writing or in print, in the form of art, or through any other media of the child’s choice

Start of Activity

**Activity 3**

Allow approximately 15 minutes.

Start of Question

What is the key element, in your opinion, that stands out, in terms of children and young people expressing their views, in these three Articles?

Click on the option that you think is the key element, and see how other learners voted.

Start of Media Content

Interactive content is not available in this format.

End of Media Content

Start of Media Content

Interactive content is not available in this format.

End of Media Content

End of Question

*Provide your answer...*

[View discussion - Activity 3](" \l "Unit1_Session3_Discussion1)

End of Activity

## 3 The UNICEF U-report

The United Nations Children's Fund, (UNICEF), is a United Nations agency responsible for providing humanitarian and developmental aid to children worldwide. The UNCRC, that you have just been learning about, is at the basis of all of UNICEF’s work. You can see how UNICEF promotes and supports the key tenets of the UNCRC in a practical way as you work through this next activity.

You are now going to look at a case-study from UNICEF Uganda, which offers an example of children being consulted so that they can participate meaningfully in matters affecting their lives. Click on the link [here](https://www.centreforpublicimpact.org/case-study/unicef-ureport/?gclid=EAIaIQobChMIwdnJ7IDG4wIVy7TtCh1HHAz7EAAYASAAEgKGuvD_BwE) to find out as much as you can about the project, then try the activities that follow. Remember to open the link in a new tab or window, so you can easily refer back to the course.

Start of Activity

**Activity 4**

Allow approximately 25 minutes.

Start of Question

1. Complete the sentences by dragging the appropriate ending to match with the beginnings.

The objectives of the U-Report were:

End of Question

To amplify the voices and views

To provide a central platform

To disseminate information gained

To compile reports

To send the reports

of young people in developing countries.

for the gathering of information from various sources.

through SMS text messaging.

based on the information gained.

to decision-makers in positions of power.

[View answer - Part](" \l "Unit1_Session4_Interaction1)

Start of Question

2. This project was successful for a variety of reasons, some of which you will see listed below.

Which was the most important reason out of this list, do you think? Remember there is not necessarily a right or wrong answer here.

Start of Media Content

Interactive content is not available in this format.

End of Media Content

End of Question

End of Activity

## 4 Listening to the very young: the Mosaic approach.

So far in this session, you have heard the views of secondary-aged school children who conducted research themselves, and you have just been considering the fundamental rights of all children to be heard and to participate. In this section, you are going to look at very young children whose views can easily be overlooked when they are deemed not to have anything of value to contribute.

The Mosaic approach, developed by Alison Clark and Peter Moss for use with young children in early years settings, brings together a wide range of methods and tools, which can be used in combination to gain an understanding of children’s views and experiences of their environments. It recognises that some tools will be more suitable to use with individual children than others but assumes that all children’s views and experiences are valuable. Examples of tools used within this approach include observation, interviews and child-led tours of their environment. Taking pictures and creating maps often involve children in a lot of talking and these activities are as much about a ‘vehicle for listening’ as they are about an end result. Children are in charge of the tours and are also in charge of reviewing the images they capture, deciding which ones to display and share with others. The advantages of this approach include building children’s skills and confidence, as well as giving adults insight into children’s perspectives, while the challenges include interpreting and representing the varied data gathered.

Start of Figure



[View description - Uncaptioned Figure](" \l "Unit1_Session5_Description1)

End of Figure

In the next video you are going to see a Headteacher talking about her own experience of research with very young children through a project she has called the Listening Project. Teachers in this project took a novel approach to ‘tuning in’ really effectively to nursery school children so that what they had to say was carefully listened to and heard.

The project was based at the Robert Owen Centre at the Rachel McMillan nursery school in London, where a whole Inset (staff training) day introduced the idea of children’s participation and looked at the work of Alison Clark and Peter Moss. This video clip highlights the need to develop specific skills to listen to very young children. The Rachel McMillan nursery went on to build on the principles of the project and to develop the importance of not just listening to children but of attuning to them. You will look further at the concept of ‘attuning’ in Session 2.

Start of Activity

**Activity 5**

Allow approximately 15 minutes.

Start of Question

For now, look at this short extract, but before you watch the clip, take a few minutes to consider how we listen to each other. The Headteacher refers to ‘the many ways that people can communicate that aren’t necessarily speaking;’ what do you think she means by this? Note down your thoughts now, then watch the video and try the activities which follow it.

End of Question

*Provide your answer...*

Start of Question

Start of Media Content

Video content is not available in this format.

Video 3

[View transcript - Video 3](" \l "Unit1_Session5_Transcript1)

Start of Figure



End of Figure

End of Media Content

How is listening described?

End of Question

[View discussion - Part](" \l "Unit1_Session5_Discussion1)

Start of Question

What effect did this project have on the ‘working atmosphere’ in the school?

End of Question

*Provide your answer...*

[View discussion - Part](" \l "Unit1_Session5_Discussion2)

Start of Question

Can you think of any barriers to listening to children and young people, and very young children in particular?

End of Question

*Provide your answer...*

End of Activity

## 5 Getting the adults involved

In the ‘Listening Project’ you have just been looking at, the focus was on finding ways for adults to listen effectively to children, in this case very young children. Creating good conditions for children and young people to take part in research involves creating an environment where people of all ages recognise their interdependence and diversity, and feel comfortable expressing their views alongside each other. Empowering children and young people as participants in research has the potential to redress some of the balance in terms of the way in which adults dominate the world of research. It means that children and young people have an opportunity to present their own understandings and interpretations in ways that they choose, rather than adults directing their participation in the research and interpreting ideas on their behalf.

It is important that adults think carefully about their own influence and how it impacts on the research if the research is to reflect children and young people’s perspectives.

In the final sections of this Session, you are going to think about adults’ involvement in research with children and young people. You may start to consider your own research project, what that might be and what role you might play in it, while keeping in mind the rights of the children and young people to be fully involved.

In this next clip, you are going to hear an interview in which a researcher, Alison, talks about a research project she carried out. There are some activities to follow, which you may like to look at first, so you can keep the questions in mind as you listen.

Start of Media Content

Audio content is not available in this format.

Audio 1

[View transcript - Audio 1](" \l "Unit1_Session6_Transcript1)

End of Media Content

Start of Activity

**Activity 6**

Allow approximately 15 minutes.

Start of Question

What was the purpose of Alison’s research?

End of Question

*Provide your answer...*

Start of Question

How and why did she involve children and young people?

End of Question

*Provide your answer...*

Start of Question

What was the result of her research?

End of Question

*Provide your answer...*

Start of Question

End of Question

[View discussion - Part](" \l "Unit1_Session6_Discussion1)

This research involved the voices of the children and young people but it had been initiated by an adult.

Start of Question

What do you think were the challenges Alison faced in conducting this research?

If you were carrying out a similar project, how would you ensure that the children and young people were active participants?

End of Question

*Provide your answer...*

End of Activity

## 6 Undertaking research with children and young people.

In the recording you just heard, Alison referred to ‘ethicality’; you will be looking in more depth at the ethical aspect of research later in this course. For now, you are going to think about issues that may arise for you, as a researcher, and how your own feelings and experiences may impact on your research. Throughout this Session you have been considering the importance of children’s and young people’s participation in research that affects their lives. Whether you are an adult or a young person conducting the research, you need to bear in mind that children and young people are not a homogeneous group; they bring their diverse views and backgrounds to research, and the same will be true for the adults working alongside them.

Sometimes, some groups of children and young people will have more in common with some adults with whom they share particular experiences than they will with their peers. For example, some children, young people and adults will all have experiences of being diabetic or growing up in poverty. At the same time, experiences of children and young people in these situations will, potentially, differ from those of adults, and for researchers these differences are worth investigating. You might like to look at the [Our Voices website here](https://ourvoicesou.co.uk/), for more detail on this aspect of sharing experiences; there will be links to this website throughout this course and in particular in Session 4.

Start of Activity

**Activity 7**

Allow approximately 15 minutes.

In this last recording for this Session, you will hear three adult researchers talking about the personal and emotional impact their research had. Before you start to listen, look at the questions below, and keep those in mind as you listen. Record your answers in the box as you listen to the recording, then click on ‘reveal discussion’ to see a summary of the key points raised.

Start of Question

Start of Media Content

Audio content is not available in this format.

Audio 2

[View transcript - Audio 2](" \l "Unit1_Session7_Transcript1)

End of Media Content

As an adult, can you think of any issues raised in this audio that you have had to face personally in your work with children and young people, or in your daily life?

End of Question

*Provide your answer...*

Start of Question

As a young person, are there any issues raised by these researchers that you have had to face when working with an adult, or in your daily life?

End of Question

*Provide your answer...*

Start of Question

End of Question

[View discussion - Part](" \l "Unit1_Session7_Discussion1)

End of Activity

## 7 Summary of Session 1

Throughout this Session, you have been making notes and completing various activities. Anything you have written into the online boxes will be saved, so you can return to these at any time. You may prefer to keep a separate notebook, either digital or paper; take some time, now, to check that all your notes are up-to-date and organised, and to decide which is your preferred way of note-taking. Have another look back at any sections that you would like to re-visit or to work further on.

Finally, reflect on your own background and motivation to research, and put your ideas in the boxes below:

Start of Activity

**Activity 8**

Allow approximately 15 minutes.

Start of Question

Why is it important to include Children and Young People in research about their lives?

End of Question

*Provide your answer...*

Start of Question

What age group will you be conducting research with?

Before you work through Session 2, make a note of any particular challenges and opportunities you think you will encounter in your chosen age-group.

End of Question

*Provide your answer...*

End of Activity

Now get started with [Session 2](https://www.open.edu/openlearn/ocw/mod/oucontent/view.php?id=105445).

**Session 2: What is research with children and young people?**

## Introduction

So far in your learning you have considered why research with and by children and young people is important. You have considered the importance, and value, of involving them in research that concerns them, their lives and issues directly affecting them. In this Session you will be looking at what it means to carry out research with children and young people. You will reflect on your own interests in this type of research and consider some of the different ways to design child- and young person-focused research. You will be thinking of the challenges and opportunities that may arise when undertaking research with and by children and young people. What do you need to consider as you start to plan your research?

By the end of this session, you should be able to:

* identify, broadly speaking, a way to design a research project that is appropriate to the age-group with which you plan to work
* describe some of the potential challenges you may face in your planned research
* list 2 or 3 steps you could take to overcome any challenges.

Watch this short video which offers some key tips for anyone who may be planning research with children and young people. As you watch, make notes, and consider what you need to take into account. What should successful research involve?

Start of Media Content

Video content is not available in this format.

[View transcript - Uncaptioned interactive content](" \l "Unit2_Session1_Transcript1)

Start of Figure



End of Figure

End of Media Content

Start of Activity

**Activity 1**

Allow approximately 15 minutes.

Start of Question

Here are some sentences that summarise the video you have just been watching, but they have been split up. Can you match the phrases so that they make complete sentences?

End of Question

Successful research

Select methods

Involve the children and young people in the design

Let the children and young people

Take care that

is a partnership between adults and children or young people.

that are appropriate to the age-range.

because their methods are more likely to be meaningful.

carry out their own research.

the children’s or young people’s perspective is reflected more than the adults’.

[View answer - Activity 1](" \l "Unit2_Session1_Interaction1)

End of Activity

Later in this Session, you will learn of some of the benefits children and young people can gain from projects they have undertaken themselves, and what research means to them personally. But, as you saw in the video, careful planning is essential, so first you will be considering what you need to do in order to get the most out of your project. You may be presented with particular challenges and opportunities, and you may need to develop specific skills.

In Session 1 you learned of the right for children and young people’s voices to be heard. Their opinions, and what they have to say, need to be understood. Therefore, they need to be listened to. This may sound simple, but in the next section you will be investigating how to listen effectively, so that voices are fully heard.

## 1 How do we listen?

We all think we listen, but if we are to listen effectively to children and young people, we may need to adapt or hone our skills in particular ways.

Start of Figure



[View description - Uncaptioned Figure](" \l "Unit2_Session2_Description1)

End of Figure

In Session 1, you watched the video clip of the Headteacher talking about the Listening Project at her nursery school. The teachers involved said that as a result of the project they found they had an even deeper understanding of how to listen than they had before. They talked not only of listening, but of ‘attuning’ to the children. What does this mean? How can we adapt our listening skills to maximise our understanding of what is being conveyed?

In this section of the film, you will see the Headteacher, a school governor and teachers talking about their experiences with the Listening Project. As you watch, consider the challenges they faced and how they ‘attuned’ to the voices of the children. Then try the activities that follow which will show you that the listening skills described here are not restricted to communicating with very young children; no matter the age of the child or young person, ‘attuning’ is an essential skill.

Start of Media Content

Video content is not available in this format.

Video 1

[View transcript - Video 1](" \l "Unit2_Session2_Transcript1)

Start of Figure



End of Figure

End of Media Content

Start of Activity

**Activity 2**

Allow approximately 15 minutes.

Start of Question

Here is a summary of what you have just been watching about the Listening Project and ‘attunement.’ Some of the words have been missed out: can you select the missing word, and drag it to the appropriate space?

Start of Media Content

Interactive content is not available in this format.

End of Media Content

End of Question

[View discussion - Part](" \l "Unit2_Session2_Discussion1)

Start of Question

The research project you are planning may not involve such young children, but you can still be a skilful listener. What are the key elements of ‘attuning’ that you can employ with children or young people of any age?

End of Question

*Provide your answer...*

[View discussion - Part](" \l "Unit2_Session2_Discussion2)

End of Activity

## 2 Understanding children’s views

One researcher who has specialised in carrying out research with very young children is Alison Clark. Together with Peter Moss, she developed the ‘Mosaic approach.’ The principles of this approach are to use a variety of methods in order to build up an understanding of young children’s views, not just to rely solely on questionnaires and interviews. As you remember from the video you watched at the start of this Session, it is essential to find methods appropriate to the age-range of the children and young people with whom you are carrying out your research. So, in the case of very young children, this could include a range of visual methods; photographs and drawings, for example, are a good way to encourage such young children to participate in discussions about things that affect their lives. Here, you can see how a simple outline picture was used for a young child to share their experience of pain.

Start of Figure



[View description - Uncaptioned Figure](" \l "Unit2_Session3_Description1)

End of Figure

From Carter et al: Engaging with children in designing pain research: how to do it and is it worth the effort?

There are so many different media that researchers can use nowadays; play, art, pictures, photos: the key is to select the method that is appropriate. You may not be planning to carry out research with such young children. However, this approach is so focussed on listening to and attuning with the children, that when used with any age-range it can lead to successful results. Remember that the children and young people are experts in their own lives. Therefore, it is essential to find the best way of giving them the opportunity to express that expertise.

Click on the link below to find a document which gives an example of how the Mosaic approach was applied for one project. There is an activity to follow, so as you read, consider the key elements of the Mosaic approach, and how this approach is not limited to carrying out research with young children. Remember to open the link in a new tab or window so you can refer back to the activity when reading.

[What is the Mosaic approach?](https://www.open.edu/openlearn/ocw/mod/oucontent/view.php?id=105445&section=_appendix.1)

Start of Activity

**Activity 3**

Allow approximately 15 minutes.

Start of Question

In these summary statements, which are true and which are false? Click on the statements which are true:

End of Question

The Mosaic approach means just watching the children carefully and then interviewing them.

The Mosaic approach employs a variety of different methods, including photos and film.

The first study using this approach showed that the children’s eating facilities were important to them.

The Mosaic approach showed that professional assumptions were sometimes wrong.

Architects had thought that only primary colours were appropriate for a nursery.

[View answer - Activity 3](" \l "Unit2_Session3_Interaction1)

End of Activity

## 3 Communicating children’s and young people’s views

As you carry out your research project, you may find you are listening to a range of voices from a range of backgrounds and age-groups. In this next recording, you will hear Alison Clark, Senior Lecturer in Childhood Studies at The Open University, talking about one of her participatory research projects with the under-fives, focusing on communicating children’s views in her work.

Start of Activity

**Activity 4**

Allow approximately 15 minutes.

As you listen, note what challenges she encountered, and put your thoughts in the boxes below.

Start of Question

Start of Media Content

Audio content is not available in this format.

Audio 1

[View transcript - Audio 1](" \l "Unit2_Session4_Transcript1)

End of Media Content

What challenges did Alison face? How do you think she could deal with these while doing her research?

End of Question

*Provide your answer...*

Start of Question

Start of Media Content

Audio content is not available in this format.

Audio 2

[View transcript - Audio 2](" \l "Unit2_Session4_Transcript2)

End of Media Content

What similarities did she find between how architects work and how children express themselves?

End of Question

*Provide your answer...*

Start of Question

Start of Media Content

Audio content is not available in this format.

Audio 3

[View transcript - Audio 3](" \l "Unit2_Session4_Transcript3)

End of Media Content

What methods did Alison use to make sure that the practitioners’ views could be fully expressed and understood?

End of Question

*Provide your answer...*

End of Activity

Having looked at young children, we need to understand that as they grow and develop, our approach to working with them needs to adapt and change in order to respect what they have to offer. Their ability to make choices becomes more complex as does their ability to engage with and determine different aspects of a research project. Look, now, at another researcher, Meera, who is working in a school context with older children. In this short video, you will see her talking about how she sought to hear, understand, and value the views of her students.

Start of Activity

**Activity 5**

Allow approximately 15 minutes.

Bearing in mind what you have been considering in terms of effective listening skills, and the importance of the young people being able to participate fully, watch the video and then try the activity that follows.

Start of Question

Start of Media Content

Video content is not available in this format.

[View transcript - Uncaptioned interactive content](" \l "Unit2_Session4_Transcript4)

Start of Figure



End of Figure

End of Media Content

These five statements summarise the key points Meera was making about how she set up her project, but some of the words are missing. Can you write in the missing word?

End of Question

Pupils were given \_\_\_\_\_ to express their views.

There were boundaries, but these were set by \_\_\_\_\_ with the class.

A vital element was \_\_\_\_\_ for one another.

Every \_\_\_\_\_ was valued.

Body language was important; \_\_\_\_\_ that you are listening.

space

agreement

respect

voice

show

[View answer - Part](" \l "Unit2_Session4_Interaction4)

[View discussion - Part](" \l "Unit2_Session4_Discussion1)

Start of Question

Rather like Alison, whose work you have been learning about, Meera found she developed some new skills, new approaches as she was working with her pupils. Think about the answers you have just given, and the concept of ‘attunement’ and effective listening.

In her classroom, what simple things do you think Meera might have done to ensure that her pupils were able to participate fully and be listened to? Note down one or two ideas first, then watch the video to see what she has to say. See if you can identify at least three simple steps she takes, and write them in the box.

Start of Media Content

Video content is not available in this format.

[View transcript - Uncaptioned interactive content](" \l "Unit2_Session4_Transcript5)

Start of Figure



End of Figure

End of Media Content

What does Meera do to ensure the pupils’ voices are heard?

End of Question

*1.  
2.  
3.*

[View discussion - Part](" \l "Unit2_Session4_Discussion2)

End of Activity

In this section, you have learned that researching with children and young people means listening effectively. To ensure full participation, all voices must be heard, so it is important to find the most appropriate way for children and young people to communicate.

In the next section you will look a little closer at what motivates children and young people to participate in research, and what research means to them.

## 4 What is child-led research?

Research led by children and young people is the process of enquiry into an issue of relevance to their lives. Doing social research means finding out about people and society in order to solve problems, or to design services or products that cater for various needs of people.

Start of Activity

**Activity 6**

Allow approximately 40 minutes.

Start of Question

There are many reasons that children and young people might decide to have a go at doing their own social research; here are three:

1: Wanting to change something.

Start of Figure



[View description - Uncaptioned Figure](" \l "Unit2_Session5_Description1)

End of Figure

End of Question

[View discussion - Part](" \l "Unit2_Session5_Discussion1)

Start of Question

2: Wanting to find out more about a topic.

Start of Figure



[View description - Uncaptioned Figure](" \l "Unit2_Session5_Description2)

End of Figure

End of Question

[View discussion - Part](" \l "Unit2_Session5_Discussion2)

Start of Question

3: Wanting to learn what it is like to do social research.

Start of Figure



[View description - Uncaptioned Figure](" \l "Unit2_Session5_Description3)

End of Figure

End of Question

[View discussion - Part](" \l "Unit2_Session5_Discussion3)

Start of Question

In the next video you are going to see how some children at a special school carried out their own research. As you watch the video make notes on the following: What were the reasons for their research? Did they want to change something, or find out more about something? Then, once you have watched the video, try the activity that follows.

Start of Media Content

Video content is not available in this format.

[View transcript - Uncaptioned interactive content](" \l "Unit2_Session5_Transcript1)

Start of Figure



End of Figure

End of Media Content

Drag the words and phrases into the appropriate box:

End of Question

What they wanted to change.

What they wanted to find out about.

What they gained from doing their research.

The seating, the meals, the sports facilities.

The possibility of inter-school sports competitions.

Communication skills and confidence

[View answer - Part](" \l "Unit2_Session5_Interaction1)

[View discussion - Part](" \l "Unit2_Session5_Discussion4)

Start of Question

The next example is a powerpoint presentation by Shannon Davidson who is 10 years old. You will see how she went about conducting her research, and her findings are presented in some detail.

Look through her presentation and consider her motivations for doing her research. Did she want to change something? Did she want to find out more? Did she want to solve a problem?

Open the link below in a new tab or browser so you can refer to the document while considering the questions below.

[What children think about having a thyroid disorder: a small scale study. By Shannon Davidson](http://wels.open.ac.uk/sites/wels.open.ac.uk/files/files/What%20children%20think%20about%20having%20a%20thyroid%20disorder%20by%20Shannon%20Davidson%20age%2010.pdf)

What was Shannon’s motivation for carrying out her research?

End of Question

*Provide your answer...*

Start of Question

What did she find out?

End of Question

*Provide your answer...*

Start of Question

What insights have you gained from reading Shannon’s research project?

End of Question

*Provide your answer...*

Now think about children or young people you know who would benefit from carrying out a project similar to Shannon’s. How would you answer the next two questions? (You will be looking at these aspects of planning and preparing in more detail in Session 3).

Start of Question

What support could you offer them?

End of Question

*Provide your answer...*

Start of Question

Who could you approach for help and guidance?

End of Question

*Provide your answer...*

End of Activity

## 5 From research to action: not always easy

The examples you have seen in this session have shown children and young people expressing a need for change, for things to be done differently, for more information. But what happens when adults impose their views and restrictions on how children’s contributions are shared? It is not always easy to implement change; challenges or obstacles imposed by adults or authorities may intervene.

Kanwal Mand offers an interesting case-study which highlights this issue: read the brief summary of her study in the box below, then answer the questions which follow.

Start of Box

**Box 1: Mand’s research**

Mand (2012) reports on a participatory arts-based project conducted with 9- and 10-year-old children of Bangladeshi origin attending two London schools. Part of a wider research study which sought to discover how children from South Asian families experience mobility across places, and, importantly, to develop innovative methods in migration research, the project involved the children in producing sketches of images they related to home and, separately, to being away. These were then used as raw material for the production of graffiti boards by a local ‘spiritual’ artist whose background was similar to those of the children. Although this participatory approach was intended by Mand to include children’s voices within the research, she reports her unhappiness when discovering that the children would take a passive role in the production of the graffiti. Due in part to the artist’s expressed need for consistency across the different panels this was also, and more significantly, because the artist ruled out some of the images the children had produced. These were, he considered, controversial.

Mand describes how this selection process, carried out by an artist whom she had chosen because of his apparent understanding of the project, ‘stifled’ some of the children’s voices and ‘felt like the antithesis of participatory practices’: children’s perspectives were ‘moulded to fit a particular version of Islam based on an "adult" perspective’. As part of the planned research output, the graffiti boards, along with banners produced using the children’s pictures, were displayed by a well-known museum. These, however, were hung according to strict display rules which stipulated that they were to be placed out of children’s reach. Their detail was thus rendered difficult to decipher. Other images were rejected by the museum as lacking visual impact. Moreover, it was a requirement of the museum that the text accompanying the exhibition be written by the researcher following strict museum-imposed criteria, a process, Mand states, of ‘re-inserting the authority of the researcher’. In spite of Mand’s participatory approach, children’s voices were subdued ‘at the point of representation in the public space of the museum’.

End of Box

Start of Activity

**Activity 7**

Allow approximately 15 minutes.

Start of Question

How were the children’s perspectives captured?

End of Question

*Provide your answer...*

[View discussion - Part](" \l "Unit2_Session6_Discussion1)

Start of Question

How were the children’s perspectives represented through the research project?

End of Question

*Provide your answer...*

[View discussion - Part](" \l "Unit2_Session6_Discussion2)

Start of Question

In what ways did the artist’s representation ‘stifle’ the children’s voices?

End of Question

*Provide your answer...*

[View discussion - Part](" \l "Unit2_Session6_Discussion3)

Start of Question

What other constraints were imposed on this project, and by whom?

End of Question

*Provide your answer...*

[View discussion - Part](" \l "Unit2_Session6_Discussion4)

Start of Question

How else do you think this study might have been approached, so that the researcher’s intention of having the children’s voices heard was met? Can you think of two or three things that you would do, if you were the researcher here?

End of Question

[View discussion - Part](" \l "Unit2_Session6_Discussion5)

End of Activity

## 6 Attuning in practice: establishing a successful research platform

In this last section you will look at a case-study which was successful in ensuring that everything was set up as well as possible for the voices of the children and young people to be heard. Throughout this Session you have seen that research with and by children and young people involves their full participation but there are also many other participants and issues to be taken into consideration. Communication is key; the WeCan2 project shows one way of ensuring that the adults were attuned to the young people. Click on the link below to read the article, then try the activities which follow. Remember to open the link in a new tab or window so you can refer back to the activity.

[Case study: WeCan2](https://www.open.edu/openlearn/ocw/mod/oucontent/view.php?id=105445&section=_appendix.2)

The WeCan2 project involved working with young with learning difficulties, yet the findings are applicable in any situation. As you work through this next activity, consider how important all of the advice is to anyone who wishes to work with others.

Start of Activity

**Activity 8**

Allow approximately 15 minutes.

Start of Question

Imagine you are giving advice to a friend or colleague who wishes to have a meeting, or conduct some research with a child or young person, or a group of children or young people. Using the six bullet-points from the summary of the WeCan2 project, write 6 sentences that advise them what is the best way of going about this.

End of Question

*Provide your answer...*

[View discussion - Activity 8](" \l "Unit2_Session7_Discussion1)

End of Activity

## 7 Summary of Session 2

You have now come to the end of Session 2, which has focussed on examples of children and young people participating in research, and the potential difference their involvement can make. In the next Session, you will be looking at some essential considerations which underpin any research conducted with and by children and young people. Before you move on, take some time to check that your notes are in order, and go back over any activities you have done in this Session that, you feel, would merit further work or another look.

Finally, think about your own situation. The examples and case-studies you have looked at in this Session have identified key issues relevant to most research projects, regardless of the age of the children, young people, adults and authorities you will be working with.

What obstacles will you face, personally, and how will you need to consider these obstacles as you plan your research? Put your thoughts in the box below:

Start of Activity

**Activity 9**

Allow approximately 15 minutes.

Start of Question

What obstacles or challenges may I face when undertaking research with or by children?

End of Question

*Provide your answer...*

Start of Question

Whose support or buy-in do I need to be able to overcome any potential obstacles?

End of Question

*Provide your answer...*

Start of Question

How will I go about getting that support?

End of Question

*Provide your answer...*

End of Activity

You are now halfway through the course. The Open University would really appreciate your feedback and suggestions for future improvement in our optional [end-of-course survey](https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/e809_end), which you will also have an opportunity to complete at the end of Session 4. Participation will be completely confidential and we will not pass on your details to others.

Now get started with [Session 3](https://www.open.edu/openlearn/ocw/mod/oucontent/view.php?id=105446).

**Session 3: The TRREEE principles**

## Introduction

So far, you have gained insight into the fundamental rights of children and young people contained in the UNCRC, and considered the importance of involving them in research that concerns them or affects their lives. In this Session you will be provided with a framework which can underpin all research with and by children, to help you start to formulate your own research project ideas and consider how you will go about carrying them out.

By the end of this session, you should be able to:

* explain what is meant by the TRREEE principles underpinning research with children and young people
* list three practical things you would do in preparation for starting your project
* demonstrate how you have understood ethical considerations in the practical preparations you have in mind.

Watch this short video which illustrates how this framework can be summarised in six key principles, the ‘TRREEE’ principles. Make notes as you watch, if you need to, then try the activity which follows.

Start of Media Content

Video content is not available in this format.

Video 1

[View transcript - Video 1](" \l "Unit3_Session1_Transcript1)

Start of Figure



End of Figure

End of Media Content

Start of Activity

**Activity 1**

Allow approximately 15 minutes.

Start of Question

In the list below, which were the words summarised as the TRREEE principles? Tick the ones that you met as you watched the video:

End of Question

Trust

Theory

Reliability

Respect

Rights

Research

Responsibility

Ethics

Expertise

Education

Experience

[View answer - Activity 1](" \l "Unit3_Session1_Answer1)

End of Activity

Later in this session you will see some specific examples of research with and by children and young people, and you will see how the TRREEE principles run through those research examples. Before you do that, think about what it will be like to carry out your own research. How will you get started? In the box below, see if you can note the first three steps you will need to take to get your project started.

Start of Activity

**Activity 2**

Allow approximately 15 minutes.

Start of Question

1. What age group of children/young people will you be working with?

End of Question

*Provide your answer...*

Start of Question

2. Have you identified the focus of your enquiry?

End of Question

*Provide your answer...*

Start of Question

3. Whose help or support will you need to seek? Will you need to gain permission?

End of Question

*Provide your answer...*

End of Activity

## 1 Framing my own research

Once you have an idea of what it is you want to find out about, and with whom, what happens next? Bearing in mind the principles you have just watched in the video, here are some key issues for you to consider as you start to plan.

**First:** What is the purpose of my research?

* What is my research for?
* Will it add to what is already known?
* What contributions will be made by the children or young people?
* What might be the potential costs and benefits to them?

Start of Activity

**Activity 3**

Allow approximately 15 minutes.

Start of Question

What do you think are the ‘costs’ and ‘benefits’ referred to above? Write your thoughts in the box below, then click on the discussion to see how the comments support your answers.

What are the potential costs to the children or young people?

End of Question

*Provide your answer...*

[View discussion - Part](" \l "Unit3_Session2_Discussion1)

Start of Question

What are the potential benefits to the children or young people?

End of Question

*Provide your answer...*

[View discussion - Part](" \l "Unit3_Session2_Discussion2)

End of Activity

**Then:** Be ethical. Pay careful attention to the impact your research may have on the children or young people, and their environment. Consider the potential to cause distress or disappointment, if the project is unsuccessful, for example, or the expectations of the children or young people are not met.

This session focuses on the TRREEE principles which you saw outlined in the video. The first **E** stands for **E**thics, but in planning your project you need to approach each of the TRREEE principles from an ethical point of view. You **T**rust the children and young people and **R**espect their **R**ight to participate, but consider that they might share a confidence with you which raises safeguarding concerns. Who will you report this to? You recognise them all as **E**xperts in their own lives, so how will you select the children and young people you will work with? Are the findings intended to be representative or typical of a certain group?

If so, have the children in the study been carefully selected? And importantly, can they refuse or withdraw from participating at any stage? And finally, your project has the potential to be a rewarding **E**xperience all round, for all participants, young and adult. So you need to plan how to feedback and disseminate your findings in a way that is appropriate to all.

With this in mind, as well as the responses you gave to Activity 3 on costs and benefits, read through the key questions in the box below and give your own answers in note form in the activity which follows.

Start of Box

**Box 1**

How will you select the children or young people?

How will you ensure inclusivity?

How will you obtain consent, where necessary?

How will you manage issues of privacy or anonymity?

How will you store confidential data?

Have you considered the possible impact of your research on the children or young people?

How will the children or young people receive feedback from the research?

End of Box

Start of Activity

**Activity 4**

Allow approximately 15 minutes.

Start of Question

How will you deal with the following:

End of Question

Start of Question

1. Selecting the children or young people, being inclusive, getting consent.

End of Question

*Provide your answer...*

Start of Question

2. Issues of privacy and confidentiality.

End of Question

*Provide your answer...*

Start of Question

3. Feeding back and disseminating.

End of Question

*Provide your answer...*

End of Activity

Now for some practical pointers. How will you support the children or young people to do their own research? In the box below, you will see four important preparatory steps:

Start of Box

**Box 2**

1. Read around the topic you wish to investigate. Find out who else has done studies on your subject. What have they found? How will this inform your project?
2. Consult the children or young people about how they would like to participate. What methods, techniques and materials will you offer that are appropriate?
3. Think about the children or young people who will participate. Will they need any particular training?
4. Do a small-scale project or ‘taster’ first. Piloting your project will help to make a better study, as it will allow you to refine the project and increase the likelihood of success.

End of Box

The [Our Voices website](https://ourvoicesou.co.uk/) offers you some useful links to research planning which elaborate on the pointers offered above. The link to the website is also in Session 4, along with other sources of help and support for planning your research.

Here again is Meera, whom you met in Session 2. In this video, she is talking a bit more about the project she carried out in school during her teacher training. Think about the preparatory steps you have just been looking at in Box 2 above, as you watch, and consider how Meera might have tackled them as she prepared her research project. When you have finished watching, try the activity which follows.

Start of Media Content

Video content is not available in this format.

[View transcript - Uncaptioned interactive content](" \l "Unit3_Session2_Transcript1)

Start of Figure



End of Figure

End of Media Content

Start of Activity

**Activity 5**

Allow approximately 15 minutes.

Start of Question

Which of these statements below is an accurate summary of the research Meera was doing? Select as many as you think are correct.

End of Question

Meera was conducting some research in collaboration with a University.

Meera was researching as an individual.

Only four students had given consent to participate in her project.

The purpose of her research was to build students’ confidence.

The purpose of her research was to seek the students’ opinions on some software.

The students were able to contribute their ideas on how they would prefer to learn.

[View answer - Part](" \l "Unit3_Session2_Answer1)

Start of Question

This project may have been initiated by adults (in other words, it was not ‘child-led’), but apparently the Year 7 (Y7) students gained much from it. How does Meera ensure this? Note down your answers to the question in the box below.

What does Meera say that indicates that she was putting the voices of the students first? How did she listen effectively?

End of Question

*Provide your answer...*

[View discussion - Part](" \l "Unit3_Session2_Discussion3)

End of Activity

## 2 Getting started on my own research

You have now learned about the principles that should underpin good research with and by children, and thought about how to plan a project you would like to undertake. Now you are going to focus on how to get started.

When you want to embark on a research project, it is important, first, to carry out a literature review: this means reading around to find out whether any projects similar to yours have already been carried out, and what they revealed. Did they investigate exactly what you plan to investigate? Are there any ‘gaps’ that your project will address, or perhaps you think you could do it better? Reading around also means looking at existing theories in your area. These theories are often referred to in research projects, so it is important for you to be aware of them and to become familiar with them, but you must also be critical and ready to identify the possible faults as well as the merits in these theories. The box below sums up the steps you take when conducting a literature review:

Start of Box

**Box 3: Literature Review: 5 steps**

1. Choose the topic you want to investigate.
2. Talk to colleagues about it.
3. Read 5 articles related to your topic.
4. Make notes and comments on the articles.
5. Ask yourself: Is my topic still relevant? Do I still wish to pursue it?

End of Box

Start of Figure



[View description - Uncaptioned Figure](" \l "Unit3_Session3_Description1)

End of Figure

Do you know where you might start to look for relevant material, in order to do your Literature Review? The [Our Voices website](https://ourvoicesou.co.uk/) has links to useful resources, or one of the links below could be relevant for you:

* <https://www.scie.org.uk/> Social Care Institute for Excellence
* <https://www.scout.org/> World Scouts organisation
* <https://www.nice.org.uk/> National Institute for Health and Care Excellence
* <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-education> Department for Education

Carrying out a literature review is a necessary task for anyone embarking on research, but it is also a fascinating and rewarding experience. You have access to so much material on the Internet, and you can also subscribe to relevant journals, publications and libraries. It is an essential way of establishing what findings are already in existence, and of justifying your reasons for carrying out your project.

## 3 Shier: A model for participation.

One researcher whom you may well meet as you do your Literature Review is Shier, well-known for his (2001) frame of reference for participation.

Start of Figure



[View description - Uncaptioned Figure](" \l "Unit3_Session4_Description1)

End of Figure

He drew this up to offer a means of ensuring an integrated approach to children and young people’s participation in research that affects their lives. From the lowest level – ‘children are listened to’ – to the highest – ‘children share power and responsibility for decision making’ – Shier frames questions for adults to consider when planning or evaluating projects with, about and by children and young people.

Read carefully Shier’s framework in the box below, then use the activity which follows to evaluate and reflect on what you have read.

Start of Box

**Box 4**

**Level 1: children are listened to**

Are you ready to listen to children?

Do you work in a way that enables you to listen to children?

Is it a policy requirement that children must be listened to?

**Level 2: children are supported in expressing their views**

Are you ready to support children expressing their views?

Do you have a range of ideas and activities to help children express their views?

Is it a policy requirement that children must be supported in expressing their views?

**Level 3: children’s views are taken into account**

Are you ready to take children’s views into account?

Does your decision-making process enable you to take children’s views into account?

Is it a policy requirement that children’s views must be given due weight in decision making?

**Level 4: children are involved in decision-making processes**

Are you ready to let children join in your decision-making processes?

Is there a procedure that enables children to join in your decision-making processes?

Is it a policy requirement that children must be involved in your decision-making processes?

**Level 5: children share power and responsibility for decision making**

Are you ready to share some of your adult power with children?

Is there a procedure that enables children and adults to share power and responsibility for decisions?

Is it a policy requirement that children and adults must share power and responsibility for decisions?

End of Box

Start of Activity

**Activity 6**

Allow approximately 15 minutes.

Start of Question

How reliable do you think Shier’s framework is as a way of ensuring that children and young people will be able to engage fully with the research? Explain your thinking.

End of Question

*Provide your answer...*

Start of Question

What would you change, if anything?

End of Question

*Provide your answer...*

[View discussion - Part](" \l "Unit3_Session4_Discussion1)

Start of Question

Have a look at [Hart’s earlier (1997) model, the Ladder of Participation](https://minorityinclusion.files.wordpress.com/2016/02/roger-hart_s-ladder-of-young-people_s-participation.pdf). Compare it with Shier’s framework.

Which do you prefer? Can you give two or three reasons for your preference?

End of Question

*Provide your answer...*

End of Activity

If these activities have sparked your interest particularly, try carrying out your own search by typing key words such as ‘participation’ and ‘children’ into your search engine.

## 4 The value of children’s and young people’s participation

Remembering the TRREEE principles you learned in the opening video, so far you have been looking at how you need to **Trust** the children and young people and **Respect** their ability to share in your research. You know that they have the **Right** to be fully included in issues that affect their lives, but you also need to be aware of the need to address any **Ethical** issues as you plan and carry out your research.

Now you are going to concentrate on those last two Es, namely children’s and young people’s **Expertise** and **Experience**. Their research can produce findings that surprise adults, and the results can mean that adults have better understandings of children and young people’s experiences and their environments.

Here are two more video clips of the interview with Meera, who is researching with Year 7 (Y7) students. Take notes as you watch and answer the following questions: What methods does she use to record the students’ views? How did these methods demonstrate the students’ expertise? Were they effective? Why/why not? Note your thoughts in the box below.

Start of Media Content

Video content is not available in this format.

[View transcript - Uncaptioned interactive content](" \l "Unit3_Session5_Transcript1)

Start of Figure



End of Figure

End of Media Content

Start of Activity

**Activity 7**

Allow approximately 15 minutes.

Start of Question

What methods does Meera use to record the students’ views?

End of Question

*Provide your answer...*

Start of Question

How did they demonstrate the students’ expertise?

End of Question

*Provide your answer...*

Start of Question

Were they effective? Why/why not?

End of Question

*Provide your answer...*

End of Activity

Start of Figure



[View description - Uncaptioned Figure](" \l "Unit3_Session5_Description1)

End of Figure

By handing the ‘safe space’ to the students to express their own views, Meera is putting herself in a position to have her own views or preconceptions challenged. If you are an adult planning to carry out some research with children or young people, how do you feel about that? Are you ready to have an open mind? Meera found that her own students were empowered to express their views about communication in the classroom, and this led her to feel that she had gained a great deal, professionally, from her research.

Start of Activity

**Activity 8**

Allow approximately 15 minutes.

Watch Meera now as she talks about what she gained from the research she was carrying out with the Y7s. Think about the last two **E**s in the TRREEE principles: how are the students demonstrating their expertise? What are they sharing of their own experience?

Start of Question

Start of Media Content

Video content is not available in this format.

[View transcript - Uncaptioned interactive content](" \l "Unit3_Session5_Transcript2)

Start of Figure



End of Figure

End of Media Content

Expertise:

End of Question

*Provide your answer...*

[View discussion - Part](" \l "Unit3_Session5_Discussion1)

Start of Question

Experience:

End of Question

*Provide your answer...*

[View discussion - Part](" \l "Unit3_Session5_Discussion2)

End of Activity

## 5 Some examples of research presentations

Another way that children and young people can demonstrate their expertise is in the quality of the presentations they prepare to illustrate their research projects. Sometimes adults can be sceptical of their abilities to contribute to, or to carry out research successfully. However, they have their own experience of the issues under question and this reinforces their ability, their competence, to present findings that are valuable and valued. Children and young people’s competence can be seen as different from that of adults: it is not necessarily lesser, and in some areas it may be greater. Remember the Art project you read about in Session 2, where the adult perspective was an obstacle to the children’s expression, and the overall result was frustrating and unsuccessful.

In Session 1 you watched a video of some children talking about their own research projects. Here you are going to have a look at a sample of their powerpoint presentations. As you look through them, consider how the TRREEE (Trust, Respect, Rights, Ethics, Expertise, Experience) principles underpin the children’s projects. Note in what way the young researchers have planned and prepared their research, and how they show understanding of ethical issues and a high level of sensitivity towards research participants.

* [Opinions about Football](http://wels.open.ac.uk/sites/wels.open.ac.uk/files/files/opinions_football.pdf)
* [Care in the Community](http://wels.open.ac.uk/sites/wels.open.ac.uk/files/files/care_in_the_community.pdf)
* [Boys’ and their Mothers’ opinions about street dogs](http://wels.open.ac.uk/sites/wels.open.ac.uk/files/files/street_dogs.pdf)
* [Year 4 children’s opinions on ipads and their learning](http://wels.open.ac.uk/sites/wels.open.ac.uk/files/files/iPads%20and%20learning.pdf)

Research carried out by children and young people can bring about changes to their lives and offer ideas as to how things could be done better in future. There are challenges in achieving such changes, but examples can be found of projects that have influenced organisations, policies and systems. One such example is a youth-led participatory action research project focussing on increasing governmental support for indigenous adolescents in Guatemala, which led to all mayoral candidates signing an agreement that they would implement the adolescents’ policy proposal to fund their Office of Childhood and Adolescence. You can find a fuller description of this, and similar projects, [here](https://www.open.edu/openlearn/ocw/pluginfile.php/2535667/mod_resource/content/2/IRB_2017_07_Adol05.pdf):

And finally: it is important to recognise that children and young people have a right to express a view, but that sometimes they might choose not to, and this should be respected. Not all children will want to express a view or to undertake their own research. If the right to participate is to be upheld, however, all children should be given the opportunity; it is not acceptable to limit the opportunity to some children and exclude others.

You are nearly at the end of this Session, which has focussed on the TRREEE principles which should underpin your research. Can you remember what they are? What have you learned from all the materials in this Session that will guide you as you start to plan your research project?

Start of Figure



Figure 4

[View description - Figure 4](" \l "Unit3_Session6_Description1)

End of Figure

Start of Activity

**Activity 9**

Allow approximately 15 minutes.

Start of Question

Note three key things you have learned from what you have read and seen so far in this session:

End of Question

*1.  
2.  
3.*

Start of Question

Based on what you are planning to do, how you will use this new knowledge to influence your project?

End of Question

*Provide your answer...*

End of Activity

## 6 Summary of Session 3

In the next Session, you will be starting to work on what you need to do to embark on your own research. Before you move on, take some time to check that your notes are in order, and go back over any activities you have done in this Session that, you feel, would merit further work or another look.

Finally, take some time to reflect on the principles you have been looking at in this Session and make notes on how you will be able to ensure that you adhere to them as you carry out your research:

Start of Activity

**Activity 10**

Allow approximately 15 minutes.

Start of Question

What are the underpinning principles as outlined by TRREEE?

End of Question

*Provide your answer...*

Start of Question

How can I ensure that the children or young people are fully involved in the research project I have in mind?

End of Question

*Provide your answer...*

End of Activity

Now get started with [Session 4](https://www.open.edu/openlearn/ocw/mod/oucontent/view.php?id=105447).

**Session 4: Time to get started**

## Introduction

You have reached the final session in this course, but really this can be the beginning for you, where you start to organise your own research project. All the work you have been doing so far will have shown you that ‘research’ is not just something abstract and academic - it can be the inspiration for action that can result in change. Research involving children and young people is an important vehicle for adults to gain better insight into the everyday lives of those children and young people, and how they understand the world. It is a way of helping them to be heard; conceptualising them as researchers in their own right creates the conditions for them to participate in research in ways they choose. They can lead research themselves, shaping all aspects of a project from choosing their topic through to sharing their findings. They can also participate in shared research projects as informed participants, advisors and co-researchers, contributing to a spectrum of different research approaches.

Adults are often surprised to find how much insight children and young people have, and that even very young children can contribute meaningfully to research. Adults should, therefore, actively seek out opportunities for children and young people to express their views in ways which feel safe and supportive. You remember, from Session 1, how children and young people have the right to have a say, but it is more than that. In Session 2 you examined various ways of ensuring that children’s and young people’s voices are heard. For them to participate fully, and to put their UNCRC rights into practice, requires:

* Space: They must be given the opportunity to express a view
* Voice: They must be facilitated to express their views
* Audience: The view must be listened to
* Influence: The view must be acted upon as appropriate

Always remember that children and young people are experts in their own lives. Their participation leads to better research and offers them the chance to express their views with the confidence that they will be heard.

If you are in any doubt, have a look at Joshua Bingwa’s presentation about ‘what makes us different’ and imagine how the engagement and enthusiasm of a young person like him will inspire you as you conduct your research. The clip lasts a little over six minutes so you may not watch it in its entirety; nevertheless, as you do watch, think about how Joshua’s enthusiasm for his research has led him to develop his skills and knowledge, and to convey his message with such confidence and sophistication.

Start of Media Content

Watch the video at [YouTube.com](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3WKlaMJaE0g&hl=en&fs=1&rel=0).

Video 1 Joshua Bingwa: What Makes us Different

End of Media Content

As you work through this session, you will be starting to shape your own ideas for a research project and looking at practical and personal considerations, but as you do this, keep in mind the bullet points above, and the TRREEE principles you studied in Session 3, which should be the foundation of your research.

By the end of this session, you should be able to:

* list the four key elements which summarise how children and young people can effectively participate in research that affects their lives
* summarise your research plan in a draft document
* link the outline of your plan with the TRREEE principles.

## 1 Taking that first step

Where do you start? As with any first step, it is wise to see if you can find some support, or someone with experience that you can turn to as you shape your ideas and get your project off the ground.

Start of Figure



[View description - Uncaptioned Figure](" \l "Unit4_Session2_Description1)

End of Figure

You have already met Meera, who was researching in a school with Year 7 students. Watch her now as she talks about getting started with a project. What sources of support does she mention? Does she give the impression that doing a research project can be a lonely business?

Start of Media Content

Video content is not available in this format.

[View transcript - Uncaptioned interactive content](" \l "Unit4_Session2_Transcript1)

Start of Figure



End of Figure

End of Media Content

Start of Activity

**Activity 1**

Allow approximately 15 minutes.

Start of Question

What does Meera say about her experience in the school where she was working? Tick any of the statements below that are correct.

End of Question

You have to make an application to do a research project.

It is possible to do a research project on your own.

The Research Journal is a good source of support for teachers carrying out research in Education.

Teachers have found it difficult to get support from colleagues in school.

Doing research has proved a good way of disseminating findings and sharing good practice in the school.

Teachers can contribute the findings from their projects to the Journal.

[View answer - Activity 1](" \l "Unit4_Session2_Interaction1)

End of Activity

Knowing where you can find the sort of support Meera is talking about will be a tremendous help to you, particularly as you get started. If you are not working in a school environment, take some time, now, to think about what support is available to you. Is there a Research Journal in your area of expertise? Might you join with a colleague to do your project? Do you know a friend or colleague who has already carried out some research in your area and might be willing to advise or guide you?

## 2 What are the foundations necessary?

As well as the support you might have access to, think about the ways you can prepare yourself for the tasks you envisage. Remember the TRREEE principles you learned about in Session 3, and consider how you will ensure that the children or young people’s voices are heard, and that they are able to express themselves with confidence.

Start of Activity

**Activity 2**

Allow approximately 15 minutes.

Start of Question

Watch Meera now as she talks about what she considers to be important foundations for successful research with her Y7 students. In the activity which follows, see if you can select the appropriate words to complete the summary of what she has to say, and at the same time consider your own area of expertise. If you are not working in a school environment, how might you tackle the issues she identifies?

Start of Media Content

Video content is not available in this format.

[View transcript - Uncaptioned interactive content](" \l "Unit4_Session3_Transcript1)

Start of Figure



End of Figure

End of Media Content

Start of Media Content

Interactive content is not available in this format.

End of Media Content

End of Question

It is interesting to note how Meera observes that the ‘community’ feeling she establishes with her students extends beyond the classroom. The students are already part of the school ‘community,’ but it seems that the rapport Meera has built with them, and the shared trust she mentions, have contributed to a sense of sharing and community built on the research project they are all engaged in which goes beyond the school environment itself. Think about the value of this sense of community; how might this be established in your own situation, how you might go about achieving such an environment of sharing and trust? Put your thoughts in the box below.

Start of Question

How will you build a rapport between the adults and the children or young people?

End of Question

*Provide your answer...*

End of Activity

## 3 Am I prepared to change?

Looking at things differently and being able to adopt different viewpoints are essential skills for anyone wishing to carry out research. You need to have an open mind when you set out on your enquiry, so that you are receptive to the ideas and opinions of the children, young people or adults you are working with. You may already have started to think about your own situation differently, as you worked through the activities in this course. You will probably find that you continue to adapt your point of view as you carry out the research itself. This can be a very positive experience.

Start of Activity

**Activity 3**

Allow approximately 15 minutes.

Start of Question

Meera gives us a good example of this change of perception. How has her perspective of her role changed, or developed? Watch the short video clip, then try the activity which follows.

Start of Media Content

Video content is not available in this format.

[View transcript - Uncaptioned interactive content](" \l "Unit4_Session4_Transcript1)

Start of Figure



End of Figure

End of Media Content

End of Question

She views her practice

She is able to step back

She can think more deeply

Seeing things from the students’ perspective

in a different light.

from the routine tasks of her job.

about the impact she is having.

is really enlightening.

[View answer - Activity 3](" \l "Unit4_Session4_Interaction1)

End of Activity

In this video, you heard Meera using two key terms; she said it was important to be ‘reflective’ and ‘reflexive.’ What do these terms mean?

Start of Figure



[View description - Uncaptioned Figure](" \l "Unit4_Session4_Description1)

End of Figure

You might already have a clear picture of what it is to ‘reflect’ on something. This means that you look back at what you have been doing and think about it; how well did it go? The ability to reflect is vital when you are conducting a research project, so that you can evaluate how effective you are being, and learn as you progress.

Being reflexive means that you relate your reflection to what you are doing as a researcher, and evaluate how successful it has been. Would you change anything next time? Could you have done anything differently? It means continuously adopting a critical approach to your research. What is your own impact on your research? This, too, is a vital part of researching and it is an approach that can be adopted by adults and the children or young people with whom they are working.

Whether you will be working in a school environment or not, take a few moments now to consider how your own role may change or develop as you carry out your research.

Start of Activity

**Activity 4**

Allow approximately 15 minutes.

Start of Question

How might my role change as I listen to, and adopt, the views of children and young people?

End of Question

*Provide your answer...*

End of Activity

## 4 What obstacles may I face?

It is very important that your enthusiasm, and interest in the topic you wish to investigate, drive you and support you through your project. However, it is equally valuable to consider, right from the start, the potential obstacles that may arise. Of course, sometimes these are unexpected, but as you have been working through this course you will probably have already identified things that might come up which could hinder you as you start on your research project

Start of Figure



[View description - Uncaptioned Figure](" \l "Unit4_Session5_Description1)

End of Figure

The major issue, perhaps, will be time. Time to prepare, time to carry out the research, time to put together your findings. If you are aware that this is an issue, you should be able to factor it in to your project planning and execution. Here is Meera again, sharing her practical experience. The major ‘obstacle’ she refers to is time.

Start of Activity

**Activity 5**

Allow approximately 15 minutes.

Start of Question

As you watch, listen out for the details of what takes the time. She is working in a school environment, so if your area of expertise is different, consider how you will set aside time to cover the issues she refers to. Then, try the activities which follow.

Start of Media Content

Video content is not available in this format.

[View transcript - Uncaptioned interactive content](" \l "Unit4_Session5_Transcript1)

Start of Figure



End of Figure

End of Media Content

The seven statements below summarise what Meera says in the video when she talks about the time she devoted to her Y7 project in her school. They are in the wrong order; can you rearrange them so that they appear in the order in which she offered them in the video?

End of Question

Being aware of, and catering for those who do not wish to participate.

Getting the students’ consent.

Being open and candid, and justifying the research with the students.

Making sure parents are informed.

Making sure the literature is fed through the project and her practice.

Fitting the research around the existing demands of her job.

Getting all forms in and ready before starting to collect data.

6

2

7

3

5

1

4

[View answer - Part](" \l "Unit4_Session5_Answer1)

Start of Question

Now think about your own situation. What steps are you going to have to take, to prepare? Make notes for yourself against the key issues listed in the box below. In what order will you need to approach each step? Add any further practical details that you will need to prepare for, so that they do not become ‘obstacles’ to your progress.

End of Question

*1.Fitting the research around my normal role.  
2.Organising the paperwork.  
3.Catering for those who do not wish to participate.  
4.Anything else?*

End of Activity

## 5 Checklist for planning

In order to help you get your ideas and thoughts organised, click on the link below which will take you to a proforma with some key questions to help you in your planning. Write your own answers in the appropriate spaces (some ideas have been inserted for you, as guidance), then save it for future reference. You will find that you will be adding to it and amending it as you go along, but you might like to print this early version as inspiration as you start to plan your project.

[Proforma: checklist for planning](https://www.open.edu/openlearn/ocw/mod/oucontent/view.php?id=105447&section=_appendix)

## 6 End of course quiz

You are nearly at the end of your course! You have just worked hard to formulate your ideas into a plan of action, well done. This will prove a very useful starting point for you. Before you finally leave this course, you will be offered some further sources of information and support, but first, here is one more challenge for you: the end of course quiz. You might like to take some time to look back over the previous three sessions before you have a go, just to refresh your memory and revisit the work and activities you have been doing. Good luck!

[End of course quiz](https://www.open.edu/openlearn/ocw/mod/quiz/view.php?id=105529)

Open the quiz in a new window or tab then come back here when you’ve finished.

## 7 Summary of the course

Congratulations, you have now reached the end of the course!

Start of Figure



[View description - Uncaptioned Figure](" \l "Unit4_Session8_Description1)

End of Figure

You have seen how involving children and young people in research that affects their lives:

1. creates better research
2. fulfils children’s and young people’s rights
3. brings benefits for children and young people
4. empowers them to lead their own research and participate effectively in research with others.

You have looked at carrying out research from a practical as well as a theoretical point of view and we hope the examples and ideas you have been studying have been useful and inspiring. This course has demonstrated how you, as an adult practitioner or a young person yourself, could approach research with the children and young people you are already working with. We have highlighted the key issues and benefits of making that research as participatory as possible, and you have used all that you have been studying to help you formulate your own action plan. We hope that you now feel fully confident to embark on your own project and we wish you every success with it.

Throughout the course, you have encountered occasional references to the Our Voices website, which is designed to accompany and complement this course. There, you will find ‘Research Planning Tools’ for anyone who has an immediate research project in mind. Children or young people who are thinking of taking part in research will find ‘Taking Part in Research’ a particularly useful resource on this website. The Our Voices website takes a broader view of research with children and young people and the principles underpinning a spectrum of different research approaches with and by children and young people. This may give you further ideas about possibly developing and maintaining your own service which offers a response to future research requests from or on behalf of children and young people.

[Our Voices website](https://ourvoicesou.co.uk/)

Another valuable link is below; MyShout! was developed by Dr Cindy Kerawalla for the Children’s Research Centre at the Open University to support young people (aged 12+) who want to carry out their own social science research. Through completion of online activities, it supports young people’s understanding of the research process including the research question, methods, ethics, data collection, data analysis, and dissemination of findings.

[Supporting young researchers with ‘MyShout!’](https://www.open.edu/openlearn/education-development/learning/supporting-young-researchers-myshout?in_menu=859000)

## Where next?

If you’ve enjoyed this course you can find more free resources and courses on [OpenLearn](http://www.open.edu/openlearn/). You might be specifically interested in courses on [education and development](https://www.open.edu/openlearn/education).

New to University study? You may be interested in our courses on [education](http://www.open.ac.uk/courses/education). You might be particularly interested in our [Postgraduate Diploma in Childhood and Youth Studies](http://www.open.ac.uk/postgraduate/qualifications/e93), or [MA in Childhood and Youth](http://www.open.ac.uk/postgraduate/qualifications/f55).

Making the decision to study can be a big step and The Open University has over 40 years of experience supporting its students through their chosen learning paths. You can find out more about studying with us by [visiting our online prospectus](http://www.open.ac.uk/courses).

## Tell us what you think

Now you’ve come to the end of the course, we would appreciate a few minutes of your time to complete this short [end-of-course survey](https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/e809_end) (you may have already completed this survey at the end of Session 2).

## Glossary

CPD

Continuous Professional Development (usually specific days set aside for teaching staff to undergo training and development).

## References

Carter, B., Satchwell, C., Simons, J., Bray L. (2015) ‘Consulting With Children Prior To Designing Research: Is It Really Worth The Effort?’. Archives of Disease in Childhood O-136, 99 (Suppl 2), A76-A7.

## Acknowledgements

This free course was written by Kate Fairbairn and Joan Simons.

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### Case studies

**Session 2**

Case Study: WeCan2, Kellett, M.

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## Appendix 1

## What is the Mosaic approach?

The Mosaic approach uses a range of participatory visual methods, alongside observation and interviewing, to build up new understandings of young children’s views and experiences of early childhood environments. Children under 5 are invited to take a researcher on ‘tours’ of their nursery, taking photographs and providing a ‘running commentary’ on their routine activities. They are asked to indicate who they typically meet and where they meet them, which rooms they have access to or not, and so on.

The children are placed in charge of the tour and how it is recorded: by photograph, audio recording or drawings. Combining the results from this and the other research tools in the Mosaic approach can lead to a process of discovery at an individual, institutional and professional level. There can be tangible and immediate benefits for individual children involved, in terms of understandings gained about children’s interests and concerns within a particular space.

At an institutional level, the first study using this approach discovered the importance of the children’s private spaces within the nursery, as well as the need to involve the children in planning the use of external play areas. In a subsequent study that focused on the design and review of learning environments (Clark 2010), the Mosaic approach revealed data that challenged professional assumptions about young children’s capabilities and perceptions. One example arose over the understanding that primary colours were appropriate for a nursery, and related to assumptions about young children’s limited awareness of subtleties of tone. Children’s comments about the differences in tone between the colour of a piece of furniture shown in a photograph they had taken and the actual object challenged this assumption which had long been held by architects.

Sandy Fraser, Rosie Flewitt and Martyn Hammersley.

## Case study: WeCan2

This case study will focus on participation by young people with learning disabilities. Between 2005 and 2008, young people in Blackpool and Devon, assisted and funded by Mencap, researched some of the difficulties they faced when seeking meaningful participation – difficulties in translating theory into practice and rhetoric into reality. For this project, called WeCan2, Allan Aoslin, Ross Baines, Alice Clancy, Lizzie Jewiss-Hayden, Ryan Singh and Josh Strudgwick looked at some of the barriers and problems faced by themselves and other young people when trying to participate, wrote a report on what they had found and suggested solutions to some of the difficulties they encountered.

Before they started their research, these young people undertook training in research methods, shaping their proposal and deciding on the best methods to carry out this research. They then went on to examine the barriers they faced when trying to participate. Although they, and other young people like them, were very keen to participate, they found that it was not always easy. They found that difficulties occurred when:

* people spoke too fast;
* minutes of meetings were not sent out in advance and had to be read during the meeting;
* minutes and agenda papers were produced with small print and no pictures and were hard to read;
* people used too many ‘big words’: for example, in one youth council meeting one of the researchers drew attention to the example of the phrase ‘ethnically diverse’;
* meetings were often scheduled straight after school and the young people were hungry and tired, which affected how well they could participate;
* meeting places frequently did not have good disabled access.

Having carried out this research the young people then designed a toolkit giving the adult organisers of youth group meetings simple practical solutions to some of these problems, such as big writing and pictures on the papers, breaks for food and drinks and a set of traffic­light cards for young people with a disability to use in meetings to let people know when there was a problem. If people spoke too fast or if a young person did not understand something, they could hold up a red card. If a young person needed to ask a question, they could hold up a card with a question mark on it. The red, green and yellow cards could also be used as voting cards for no, yes and unsure.

The WeCan2 group then went on to evaluate these measures and found increased levels of understanding, participation and a sense of being listened to. They found that, in general, people were taking the time to explain things more clearly, were giving out simplified information and were taking their views on board. Young people were sometimes asked to co-chair meetings, were consulted about the recruitment of adult workers and when they suggested changes to leaflets or web pages, they were made (Aoslin et al, 2008).

Kellett, M.

## Appendix 2

Start of Table

Proforma: checklist for planning.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Question** | **My answer** | **Timing** | **Additional notes and tips** |
| What am I going to investigate? |  |  |  |
| What is the key question I want to answer with my project? |  |  |  |
| What age are the children/young people (CYP) I will be working with? |  |  |  |
| What methods will I use? |  | When do I set these up? | e.g. Questionnaires? Discussions? Interviews with groups or individuals? |
| Whose support might I need? |  | When do I approach them? |  |
| Whose permission will I need? |  | How long will this take to achieve? | e.g. Formal approval from an ethics committee?  Consent from the CYP |
| Where will I find out what has already been done? |  |  | Literature review: sources? |
| Who will I share my findings with? |  | When will I be doing this?  For how long will my project run? |  |
| What format shall I use to present my findings? |  |  | e.g. A written report, a powerpoint presentation. |
| Will I need help from others? |  | When do I seek that? How long will this take to set up? | e.g. for analysing the findings and presenting the data. |
| Will I need specific (additional) skills? |  | When can I gain these skills? | e.g. taking images of my participants, video-ing. |

End of Table

## Solutions

## Activity 1

#### Discussion

Key points:

* Research questions are frequently aimed at, and answered by, adults.
* Children and young people have the right to express themselves.
* Children and young people are often more articulate than adults think they are going to be.
* They see things adults do not, they are experts in their own lives.
* Adults should be partners with the children and young people; this will lead to better research.

[Back to - Activity 1](" \l "Unit1_Session1_Activity1)

## Activity 2

### Part

#### Discussion

Confidence, how to compose a questionnaire, understanding of ethical issues, communication skills (as well as answers to their own research questions).

[Back to - Part](" \l "Unit1_Session2_Part1)

## Activity 3

#### Discussion

You may have noted:

* best interests
* freely
* due weight
* freedom of expression
* child’s choice
* ideas of all kinds

[Back to - Activity 3](" \l "Unit1_Session3_Activity1)

## Activity 4

### Part

#### Answer

**The correct matches are:**

To amplify the voices and views

of young people in developing countries.

To provide a central platform

for the gathering of information from various sources.

To disseminate information gained

through SMS text messaging.

To compile reports

based on the information gained.

To send the reports

to decision-makers in positions of power.

[Back to - Part](" \l "Unit1_Session4_Part1)

## Activity 5

### Part

#### Discussion

Rachel Hogarth-Smith refers to ‘everything you notice about another person,’ rather than just directly hearing what they’re saying.

[Back to - Part](" \l "Unit1_Session5_Part2)

### Part

#### Discussion

The staff reflected on their own practice, how they responded to what they saw the children doing. Their own action plans focussed on the project.

[Back to - Part](" \l "Unit1_Session5_Part3)

## Activity 6

### Part

#### Discussion

She wanted to examine the role of social media in schools and professional practice.

She realised that the voices of the children and young people were actually more important and that they should be ‘brought to the table’ along with the voices of the teachers and professionals.

They created a social media charter.

[Back to - Part](" \l "Unit1_Session6_Part4)

## Activity 7

### Part

#### Discussion

It can be difficult not to get emotionally involved in the lives of the people you are researching with.

People may share personal information. It’s important to have a ‘safe space’ for people to talk.

Some issues raised during a research project may be contentious or cause conflict.

Adults may find their personal experiences impact on the way they research the experiences of children and young people.

[Back to - Part](" \l "Unit1_Session7_Part3)

## Activity 1

#### Answer

**The correct matches are:**

Successful research

is a partnership between adults and children or young people.

Select methods

that are appropriate to the age-range.

Involve the children and young people in the design

because their methods are more likely to be meaningful.

Let the children and young people

carry out their own research.

Take care that

the children’s or young people’s perspective is reflected more than the adults’.

[Back to - Activity 1](" \l "Unit2_Session1_Activity1)

## Activity 2

### Part

#### Discussion

The concept of ‘attunement’ developed while the teachers were involved in the Listening Project. It means more than just listening; it means being aware of **[body language]**, and stepping back rather than taking a lead. It’s a way of showing **[empathy]** for the child you are talking to, and giving them the **[opportunity]** to express themselves. You **[tune in]** to their interests and passions and give them an **[environment]** that makes them feel comfortable. Attunement is a **[vital]** element in building a relationship and it extends beyond talking with young children; you can **[practise**] the same **[empathetic]** approach with the parents and carers too.

[Back to - Part](" \l "Unit2_Session2_Part1)

### Part

#### Discussion

watch body language; empathise; get onto their wavelength; support them in a way that makes sense to them; use language they understand; open body language; look beyond the confident ones.

[Back to - Part](" \l "Unit2_Session2_Part2)

## Activity 3

#### Answer

**Right:**

The Mosaic approach employs a variety of different methods, including photos and film.

The Mosaic approach showed that professional assumptions were sometimes wrong.

Architects had thought that only primary colours were appropriate for a nursery.

**Wrong:**

The Mosaic approach means just watching the children carefully and then interviewing them.

The first study using this approach showed that the children’s eating facilities were important to them.

[Back to - Activity 3](" \l "Unit2_Session3_Activity1)

## Activity 5

### Part

#### Answer

**The correct matches are:**

Pupils were given \_\_\_\_\_ to express their views.

space

There were boundaries, but these were set by \_\_\_\_\_ with the class.

agreement

A vital element was \_\_\_\_\_ for one another.

respect

Every \_\_\_\_\_ was valued.

voice

Body language was important; \_\_\_\_\_ that you are listening.

show

[Back to - Part](" \l "Unit2_Session4_Part4)

#### Discussion

* Pupils were given **space** to express their views.
* There were boundaries, but these were set by **agreement** with the class.
* A vital element was **respect** for one another.
* Body language was important; **show** that you are listening.
* Every **voice** was valued.

[Back to - Part](#Unit2_Session4_Part4)

### Part

#### Discussion

She moves around the classroom. This breaks the ‘physical barrier’ she perceives between teacher and pupil.

She sits with the pupils, she crouches down.

She is attentive to what they say, establishes eye contact. She encourages other pupils to do the same.

She sees her role as mediator or facilitator in order to value the pupils’ contributions.

[Back to - Part](" \l "Unit2_Session4_Part5)

## Activity 6

### Part

#### Discussion

It could be, for example, that children want more say about local policy and decide to do some research which involves asking their peers for their opinions in order to create a strong argument that they can then take to policy-makers. Remember that the UNCRC, which you studied in Session 1, acknowledges the right for children and young people to be heard and to participate in society. Adults have an adult perspective; children and young people are experts on their own lives, so it is important that they are supported to make their own opinions and viewpoints heard.

[Back to - Part](" \l "Unit2_Session5_Part1)

### Part

#### Discussion

Few people would deny that curiosity and inquisitiveness are good characteristics to encourage in children and young people of all ages. Asking questions and finding out new things are important for learning and for understanding the world. Finding out what other children in your school think about maths lessons, or what other young people understand about money, for example, can be fascinating.

[Back to - Part](" \l "Unit2_Session5_Part2)

### Part

#### Discussion

Most children and young people have experience of project work at school (i.e. they find out about things that are already known) but few of them will have had an opportunity to find out what it is like to be a social researcher. Doing social research means finding out about people and society in order to solve problems, or to design services or products that cater for various needs of people. The experience of doing social research and being a social researcher can be enlightening and can help children and young people to understand what research is and what researchers do. The insights they gain might help them make career decisions, or they might be able to apply what they learn to their school lessons, for example.

[Back to - Part](" \l "Unit2_Session5_Part3)

### Part

#### Answer

**The correct matches are:**

What they wanted to change.

The seating, the meals, the sports facilities.

What they wanted to find out about.

The possibility of inter-school sports competitions.

What they gained from doing their research.

Communication skills and confidence

[Back to - Part](" \l "Unit2_Session5_Part4)

#### Discussion

As you watched the video, you will have noticed that the adults interviewed commented that the issues raised by the pupils were not issues they had considered themselves. Yet the benefits of the research are clear: by improving the school meals the young people are likely to eat better; by changing the chairs to more comfortable ones their concentration is likely to improve; by developing better social skills they are likely to communicate with each other and with the teachers better. Each of these aspects has the potential to enrich these young people’s school experience, but as was remarked in the video, the focus came from them. The issues were not identified by teachers, simply because the teachers do not have the same perspective. This highlights the importance of children and young peoples’ participation, as experts in their own lives, in research that affects their lives.

[Back to - Part](#Unit2_Session5_Part4)

## Activity 7

### Part

#### Discussion

They produced sketches of ‘home’ and ‘away.’

[Back to - Part](" \l "Unit2_Session6_Part1)

### Part

#### Discussion

They were to be used as raw material for a ‘graffiti board’ produced by a spiritual artist.

[Back to - Part](" \l "Unit2_Session6_Part2)

### Part

#### Discussion

He selected the images and rejected some because he said they were controversial. He imposed his need for consistency across the different panels.

[Back to - Part](" \l "Unit2_Session6_Part3)

### Part

#### Discussion

The museum: the pictures were hung inappropriately; the accompanying texts were written by the researcher according to strict museum guidelines.

[Back to - Part](" \l "Unit2_Session6_Part4)

### Part

#### Discussion

This example shows how as a researcher, you cannot assume that everyone you work with has the same understanding of children’s and young people’s ‘participation.’ Just as Alison Clark found a way to communicate with the architects in her project, in this case it would be necessary to work with the adults involved, so that the end result reflected the children’s views, that their voices were heard clearly and were not secondary to those set out by the artist and museum. You would need to find a way to communicate clearly the aims and purposes of your project, and to tackle any obstacles presented in a practical way. You might even find that you need to find a different venue for presenting the project, if you encounter too much intransigence.

[Back to - Part](" \l "Unit2_Session6_Part5)

## Activity 8

#### Discussion

You should have come up with something like this:

Speak more slowly.

Send minutes in advance of the meeting.

Check the size of print and the quality of pictures.

Don’t use complex language or unnecessarily long words.

Schedule your meeting at a time when people are alert and awake.

Check access to all venues selected for meetings.

[Back to - Activity 8](" \l "Unit2_Session7_Activity1)

## Activity 1

#### Answer

**Right:**

Trust

Respect

Rights

Ethics

Expertise

Experience

**Wrong:**

Theory

Reliability

Research

Responsibility

Education

Start of Table

Answers to Activity 1: words summarised as the TRREEE principles.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Correct** | **Incorrect** |
| Trust | Theory |
| Respect | Reliability |
| Rights | Research |
| Ethics | Responsibility |
| Expertise | Education |
| Experience |  |

End of Table

[Back to - Activity 1](" \l "Unit3_Session1_Activity1)

## Activity 3

### Part

#### Discussion

Time. Your project may have an impact on their time at school, or take them away from time with friends and family.

Intrusion of privacy. Bear in mind that you may be asking questions that can touch very personal issues.

Fear of possible repercussions. A child or young person may feel that their participation in your project could lead to them being judged or criticised.

[Back to - Part](" \l "Unit3_Session2_Part1)

### Part

#### Discussion

Satisfaction. The project may result in a change which affects their lives in a positive way. Children and young people will gain satisfaction from being involved in decision-making, or in achieving an end result.

Learning new skills or development of knowledge. Skills gained from working on a project can be transferrable to their everyday life.

[Back to - Part](" \l "Unit3_Session2_Part2)

## Activity 5

### Part

#### Answer

**Right:**

Meera was conducting some research in collaboration with a University.

The purpose of her research was to seek the students’ opinions on some software.

The students were able to contribute their ideas on how they would prefer to learn.

**Wrong:**

Meera was researching as an individual.

Only four students had given consent to participate in her project.

The purpose of her research was to build students’ confidence.

Start of Table

Answers to Activity 5: accurate statements of the research Meera was doing.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Correct** | **Incorrect** |
| Meera was conducting some research in collaboration with a University. | Meera was researching as an individual. |
| The purpose of her research was to seek the students’ opinions on some software. | Only four students had given consent to participate in her project. |
| The students were able to contribute their ideas on how they would prefer to learn. | The purpose of her research was to build students’ confidence. |

End of Table

[Back to - Part](" \l "Unit3_Session2_Part7)

### Part

#### Discussion

She explains how they talked of a range of ways they would prefer to learn, and that these were ways she had not considered. She ‘opened up a space’ for them to communicate. This indicates that she was attuning to them.

[Back to - Part](" \l "Unit3_Session2_Part8)

## Activity 6

### Part

#### Discussion

One criticism of this framework is that it is presented as a linear process, when in reality things don’t quite work that way.

Another key criticism is that the questions are aimed at the adults, not the children or young people. Your work through this course so far will have shown you that this will not necessarily lead to a good quality research project.

[Back to - Part](" \l "Unit3_Session4_Part2)

## Activity 8

### Part

#### Discussion

Meera was able to see the students’ own perspectives on their learning. They were empowered to express a range of ways they would like to learn. They demonstrated their own expertise; they showed how they were experts in their own lives.

[Back to - Part](" \l "Unit3_Session5_Part4)

### Part

#### Discussion

They began to feel valued in the teaching and learning process. They shared their own experiences and gained experience in researching, too.

[Back to - Part](" \l "Unit3_Session5_Part5)

## Activity 1

#### Answer

**Right:**

It is possible to do a research project on your own.

The Research Journal is a good source of support for teachers carrying out research in Education.

Doing research has proved a good way of disseminating findings and sharing good practice in the school.

Teachers can contribute the findings from their projects to the Journal.

**Wrong:**

You have to make an application to do a research project.

Teachers have found it difficult to get support from colleagues in school.

[Back to - Activity 1](" \l "Unit4_Session2_Activity1)

## Activity 3

#### Answer

**The correct matches are:**

She views her practice

in a different light.

She is able to step back

from the routine tasks of her job.

She can think more deeply

about the impact she is having.

Seeing things from the students’ perspective

is really enlightening.

[Back to - Activity 3](" \l "Unit4_Session4_Activity1)

## Activity 5

### Part

#### Answer

**The correct matches are:**

Being aware of, and catering for those who do not wish to participate.

6

Getting the students’ consent.

2

Being open and candid, and justifying the research with the students.

7

Making sure parents are informed.

3

Making sure the literature is fed through the project and her practice.

5

Fitting the research around the existing demands of her job.

1

Getting all forms in and ready before starting to collect data.

4

1. Fitting the research around the existing demands of her job.
2. Getting the students’ consent.
3. Making sure parents are informed.
4. Getting all forms in and ready before starting to collect data.
5. Making sure the literature is fed through the project and her practice.
6. Being aware of, and catering for those who do not wish to participate.
7. Being open and candid, and justifying the research with the students.

[Back to - Part](" \l "Unit4_Session5_Part1)

# Uncaptioned Figure

## Description

Greta Thunberg, a young environmental activist, talking to a crowd of people.

[Back to - Uncaptioned Figure](" \l "Unit1_Session1_Figure1)

# Uncaptioned Figure

## Description

An image of a child holding up a camera.

[Back to - Uncaptioned Figure](" \l "Unit1_Session5_Figure1)

# Uncaptioned Figure

## Description

Photograph of a boy, on the left, shouting through a megaphone at another boy, on the right, who is covering his ears with his hands.

[Back to - Uncaptioned Figure](" \l "Unit2_Session2_Figure1)

# Uncaptioned Figure

## Description

Body outline by a child mapping six pain experiences (A3 sized body outline)

[Back to - Uncaptioned Figure](" \l "Unit2_Session3_Figure1)

# Uncaptioned Figure

## Description

Photograph of yellow gates closing off a park with red tape over it and a sign stating that ‘due to recent vandalism the playground is closed for health and safety reasons. We hope to reopen the area as soon as possible.’

[Back to - Uncaptioned Figure](" \l "Unit2_Session5_Figure1)

# Uncaptioned Figure

## Description

Photograph of four children side by side looking down at the grass through a magnifying glass.

[Back to - Uncaptioned Figure](" \l "Unit2_Session5_Figure2)

# Uncaptioned Figure

## Description

A group of young students in a classroom setting. One student is presenting the the others, which the teacher watching on.

[Back to - Uncaptioned Figure](" \l "Unit2_Session5_Figure3)

# Uncaptioned Figure

## Description

A photograph of a young person studying at a table looking at a laptop and making notes in a notebook.

[Back to - Uncaptioned Figure](" \l "Unit3_Session3_Figure1)

# Uncaptioned Figure

## Description

Image of a computer screen on a web browser with ‘research’ typed into the search bar. There is a cursor that is a hand icon pointing to the search button.

[Back to - Uncaptioned Figure](" \l "Unit3_Session4_Figure1)

# Uncaptioned Figure

## Description

Young person taking a selfie with a smartphone.

[Back to - Uncaptioned Figure](" \l "Unit3_Session5_Figure2)

# Figure 4

## Description

A graphic of a tree with six signs on it. From top to bottom, the signs read: TRUST, RESPECT, RIGHTS, ETHICS, EXPERTISE, EXPERIENCE.

[Back to - Figure 4](" \l "Unit3_Session6_Figure1)

# Uncaptioned Figure

## Description

Photograph of a baby’s feet walking in the sand.

[Back to - Uncaptioned Figure](" \l "Unit4_Session2_Figure1)

# Uncaptioned Figure

## Description

A black and white line drawing of a person sitting on a step, head in their hands, with a thought bubble above their head.

[Back to - Uncaptioned Figure](" \l "Unit4_Session4_Figure2)

# Uncaptioned Figure

## Description

A cartoon image of an alarm clock ringing the alarm.

[Back to - Uncaptioned Figure](" \l "Unit4_Session5_Figure1)

# Uncaptioned Figure

## Description

A cartoon image of multiple hands giving the thumbs up, and clapping, with stars all around them.

[Back to - Uncaptioned Figure](" \l "Unit4_Session8_Figure1)

# Video 1

## Transcript

Narrator

Researching what goes on in the world focuses on adults, but what about involving children and young people? Especially when it comes to finding out about children and young people's lives, basic research questions are designed and often even answered by adults, yet children and young people have a right to be heard. A United Nations convention has conferred upon children the right to express their views freely in all matters affecting them and to have their best interests as a primary consideration.

Adults are often surprised to discover that children and young people articulate valuable insights into their lives, and often see things that adults haven't noticed. At the Open University, we believe that children and young people are the experts in their own lives, and that adults need to work in partnership with them to create better research so that it can lead to good decisions. The Our Voices website is for everyone interested in research from children and young people themselves to teachers, health care professionals, academic researchers, and policymakers who are looking for why and how to do better research into our world working in partnership with children and young people.

[Back to - Video 1](" \l "Unit1_Session1_MediaContent1)

# Video 3

## Transcript

Rachel Hogarth Smith

The Listening Project – that was the start point for a lot of the practitioners’ development, because there was a focus on the very many ways human beings can communicate with one another that aren’t just about speaking. We took the definition of listening to be actually everything you notice about another person, and rather than just directly hearing what they’re saying.

Man

Oh, look at that paper in the sky.

Rachel Hogarth Smith

It created a working atmosphere where practitioners were really reflecting on what they saw the children doing, but reflecting on how they responded to that, as well. And that’s what the staff used as their own action plans for the work that they were focusing on that year. And we have taken that model for all of our school development plans ever since.

Looking back, we’ve got a much deeper understanding than we had when we were sort of first started with the Listening Project. And I would have said that we had a deep understanding then. But actually, that’s just grown. And we’ve unpicked it further and to try to sort of take it to a deeper level to understand what it is we’re doing with children when they’re here.

[Back to - Video 3](" \l "Unit1_Session5_MediaContent1)

# Audio 1

## Transcript

Victoria

So the representation of children – is that something that has interested you in your career, Alison?

Alison

Absolutely. And I too was a practitioner myself but I had moved into researching the professional learning of teachers and educators. And I had moved into sort of looking at social media, and how social media had come into our lives, and how that might be harnessed for professional learning, and how it’s being used with children and young people in schools. As I started to explore the attitudes and use of the teachers and educators, I realised that actually we really needed to explore the world of the children and young people, and to bring that voice to the table. And talk about personal motivations, I mean, was part of my own curiosity of how to engage with this social media in a safe but really useful way, to have to harness it whilst also dealing with the ethicality of it. And so I did bring teachers and children from a wide range of ages together with educators through the Festival of Social Science into creating a social media charter. And, through that, we then used the social media charter with work with the charity and looking at widening participation with disadvantaged children, and working with them to explore how digital literacy could be developed, and to hear that children’s voice strongly and let the teachers and educators working with them to hear that voice.

[Back to - Audio 1](" \l "Unit1_Session6_MediaContent1)

# Audio 2

## Transcript

Victoria

You all talk very passionately about your work with children and young people. Liz, can you say something about the emotional impact the research has had upon you?

Liz

Yeah sure. It’s an interesting question and one that I’ve been reflecting on, and I was trying to think about whether pride was an emotion. And in working with children in a kind of very close way with them as writers, both at home and at school, I found myself becoming very proud of the work that they did, and how they talked about it. So they would show me pieces of writing that they had done at home and at school. So that was definitely a feeling that I had.

And then I found myself then, when I was listening to teachers talk about the children, quite challenged in lots of ways. I knew what the children said about themselves as writers at home and how they kind of felt that they were seen at school, and then what the teacher was doing was talking about the children and framing them as non-writers or daydreamers. But of course I knew the other side of that, so I knew what the children had told me about why they were presenting as a daydreamer in some kind of way.

So I was probably quite conflicted about whether I should say anything to the teacher about that, but I was definitely – I found myself probably feeling quite defensive of the children but knowing that wasn’t the place to share that with the teachers. And one of the children that I worked with showed me a piece of writing which he termed ‘viewpoint writing’, which was actually a piece of writing taken from his perspective sitting in the back of a car and he was looking out of a windscreen. So, it is a very technical drawing, so when I looked at the writing I imagined that he would say one thing about it. But actually what he said about it was that it was a piece of writing that he had chosen to do on the way to the hospital to visit a grandfather who was very ill. And so that obviously had an emotional impact on me, but it was definitely not the place for me to be sharing that emotion back, so it was his time and his space – so that idea that sometimes you have to keep your emotions in check when you are hearing some of the stories that children are sharing with you.

Victoria

So a mixture of pride and challenge. Alison, is that something that you similarly experienced?

Alison

Mm, absolutely. And I was thinking about the work I was doing when we were creating the social charter with the mixed-age range of children, straight through from eleven to their educators. And yes, feeling the pride of having created the safe space that children who were able to say things to their teachers, or teachers around them, that they hadn’t been able to say in other spaces because they were telling about the power of peer groups that they were using for support, but worried that their teachers, if they had spoken about them otherwise, would think that they had been cheating, but also the responsibility that you have as a researcher to make sure that that safe space is actually safe. Some of the things that Liz has been picking up on perhaps. And I think also what came with that, was sort of really paying attention to the conversations all the time that they were going on, to decide whether to intervene or how to manage those.

And this particularly fed into the work with the disadvantaged children, which we were working on a much larger scale, and feeling very frustrated when I wasn’t able to create those sort of same safe spaces with working with ninety children of the same age group but coming from different schools. There was some anger in the room. There was all sorts of issues being raised, and I sort of was really conflicted because the teacher in me, the educator in me, wanted to know those children, wanted to know how I should have been handling them, that perhaps this wasn’t the right thing to be talking about and researching just now, and looking to their tutors and mentors as to how to manage that. And working with them over time, that sort of eased as I managed to be able to get to know the tutors and mentors. But it was that conflict between teacher and researcher.

Victoria

So a conflict of identities – is that something that resonates with your work, Martin?

Martin

It certainly does. I mean, a lot of my research has been around quite sensitive issues around identity, care and relationships. And I think if you are researching those issues with anybody, your own experiences inevitably come into play, your own emotional experiences. But if you are interviewing young people, then it inevitably calls up memories of your own childhood and youth, and can trigger quite powerful emotions. At the same time, as Alison was saying, I think there are particular issues if you are researching socially disadvantaged or emotionally damaged children and young people, I think I found it difficult at times not to be overwhelmed by sadness in the interview situation by some of the experiences that they are sharing in interviews.

But I am also interested in this issue as a man researching other men. I think men are still quite conditioned to suppress their emotions in professional settings, including research settings, or maybe to squeeze the emotional element out of the work and put it to one side. And I think I have to work quite hard to acknowledge what’s going on for me emotionally. I think you can’t escape emotion when you are researching children and young people. The question is what you do with it. And I think it is really important to have a support structure so that you can reflect on those experiences with your fellow researchers, and to be part of a team. And I think that’s what makes good research with children and young people.

[Back to - Audio 2](" \l "Unit1_Session7_MediaContent1)

# Uncaptioned interactive content

## Transcript

[MUSIC PLAYING]

Narrator

If you're thinking of researching a topic affecting children and young people's lives, we recommend careful planning and involving them in the earliest stages possible. Even with the best intentions, adult perspectives are likely to be reflected in your results more than young people's.

When choosing the methods for your research, think carefully about what is appropriate for the age range. Using online surveys may be useful, but getting the right tone can be a challenge. Involving children and young people in the design process means the questions and methods are more likely to be meaningful for them.

It's also great to remember that young people are well able to carry out their own research when supported in the process. Successful research becomes a partnership between adults and children. And adults are frequently impressed by the creative input of young people.

The Our Voices website is designed not only for children and young people but also for adults such as teachers and health care professionals, as well as academic researchers and policy makers. The site shares tips, lots of how-to's of research, and success stories of inspiring and productive partnerships.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

[Back to - Uncaptioned interactive content](" \l "Unit2_Session1_MediaContent1)

# Video 1

## Transcript

[INTERPOSING VOICES]

Fiona Kemp

At Robert Owen, that’s where my work was in terms of the Listening Project initially – we were a small nursery school that became a much bigger setting. One of the things that’s so important, if you’re trying to work with others, is to listen to them and how you could be with them and take them with you and learn together.

So it was started at the school, at Robert Owen, with a whole Inset day, introducing the ideas of children’s participation, looking at the work of Alison Clark and the National Children’s Bureau, and was supported with the local authority, looking at equal opportunities so that providing everybody and the children with an equal opportunity through listening to everybody and sometimes, of course, making adaptations to the way you can listen.

And I have to say, it wasn’t just a matter of standing up and saying, this is a brilliant idea. It took time for everybody to buy into the idea of listening. And that includes thinking about, what does listening mean?

I know here at Rachel McMillan they talk a lot about attunement. And it’s a similar way of sort of being with the children and with the adults and up close with the parents or people that come into your school.

Theresa Lane

We got the word ‘attunement’ while we were doing the Listening Project in 2008. The Listening Project wasn’t about just listening. It was about watching body language, just stepping back a bit and trying to understand what was really going on.

Rachel Hogarth Smith

We were doing a lot of work about attachment and talking about the importance of attachment and relationship-building when you’re settling children into nursery. And attunement was a very strong part of that. So that just seemed to kind of marry up the attachment and relationship-building is about attunement.

At the time we were doing the Listening Project, there was a listening network in Greenwich, which a number of settings were sort of meeting and sharing practice in. And that definition of listening was first introduced in one of those sessions and saying that if you use listening, it can be misunderstood.

Theresa Lane

We looked at attunement as being a much broader thing than just listening. And after the year that we did, where we were trying to improve the way we were listening to the children, we decided we needed to broaden it out. So the next year, our research question was, how can we improve the way we listen to the parents? It was a really significant piece of CPD for our staff, actually, and changed a lot of how we worked.

The second year, when we looked at how can we listen better to the parents, has been about things, for example, when the parents were all coming in in the shelter in the morning, when it’s all very crowded, don’t just look at the people that are right up against you. Look over their shoulders to the people that might be hovering in the doorway, because they might be the ones that really need you but it’s too difficult for them to come forward.

So that’s about attunement, because it’s about looking at body language and understanding how people feel. It’s empathy, I suppose.

Amor Pagaduan

Can I use this? What shall I do with this?

Boy

Bang.

Amor Pagaduan

I have to bang?

Boy

Like this.

Amor Pagaduan

Here?

[BANGING]

We use quite a lot of listening as attunement in the setting. And we use a lot of body language to show that child that we’re listening to them – very open body language and, again, going back to copying their movements and incorporating language into that, so the child knows that we’re listening to them. And we repeat what they’re saying.

Teacher

What happened now? What happened?

Boy

This one broke it.

Fiona Kemp

It’s that tuning in to somebody else – in particular, if you’re working with young children – so that you’ll be able to be with them on their wavelength and support them in a way that made sense to them and not just making sense to you. You tune in to them. You listen to them.

You interact with them. You have an environment that enables them to follow their passions. It is an interesting thought about the difference that could be between attunement and listening. What I would say is, they’re extremely similar, because if you tune in to somebody – and in particular, a young child – you are giving them your attention. You are listening.

Teacher

What are you doing? Do you want to help? So tell Luca.

Boy

Frankie there –

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# Audio 1

## Transcript

Interviewer

This was your third study with children under five using the Mosaic approach. What questions did you face in adapting the methods to fit this study?

Alison Clark

Well, firstly I was working with children under five, as I had been doing in my two previous studies involving the Mosaic approach, but one of the main differences here was that I was working with children in a school context and so there were different demands on the research, and also different demands because a real building project was ongoing and so I wasn’t in control of the timing and the deadlines of the building, I needed to carry out the research within that process. I think another challenge was working with architects, so it was a new disciplinary group, professional group to be working with, and so I had to learn what were the professional languages and what was the culture like that architects work with on a day-to-day basis in order to work out how to best involve the views and experiences of young children in the design process.

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# Audio 2

## Transcript

Interviewer

And you mentioned that you were working with architects. Can you give some examples of adapting your methods to do that?

Alison Clark

It became very obvious when I had my first introduction to one of the architects’ practices that using visual methods, using photographs and plans and models, was very much part of the everyday practice in the architects’ office. So it seemed to be a natural way to help the communication between the young children and the architects to work with images that the young children had made, and in the main that was children’s own photographs. So when I first met one of the architects, John Jenner, he showed me a storyboard of images of some of the building projects he’d been involved in, and that seemed a very natural way of me helping the architects to understand more fully the young children’s perspectives by making the equivalent of storyboards or large visual maps of the children’s own photographs, to have a more in-depth conversation about what the young children thought about their existing environment and from that basis to then think about what could be possible features of the new environment.

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# Audio 3

## Transcript

Interviewer

What about adapting your methods to work with practitioners in the school and children’s centre case studies?

Alison Clark

I think one of the first things that needed to be taken into account were how busy the practitioners, the teachers and teachers’ assistants were within the two case studies. One of the adaptations I made was to present the practitioners with a summary of the individual children’s involvement in the study, so to demonstrate their interests and priorities, what they had been telling me about their existing environment, and these became the catalyst for more conversations with the practitioners about their own views on the new building. There was another way in which I adapted the methods when I was working with the practitioners: when it came to the review of the completed school with the new nursery, I experimented with the practitioners making their own maps, using their own photographs to document what they thought about the new space, so it was a way of trying out the Mosaic approach tools with the adults as well as with the young children.

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# Uncaptioned interactive content

## Transcript

Meera

When we came down to this piece of research, it was really important that we had a space for students to express their views really clearly. So we did that through using some really clear boundaries. And developing those boundaries in the classroom initially help to do that. Also trying to value their voice and their opinions, it was done through having some clear class rules about whose voice should be heard, and how those voices should be heard.

And we came to a agreement within the classroom that everybody’s voice should be heard through given a set of particular rules, such as respecting each other, trying to show that you were listening, when you are talking to be able to face the class. So a lots of discussions are held at that point to really come to an understanding of what those classroom rules were, but we did that together.

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# Uncaptioned interactive content

## Transcript

Interviewer

Now could you tell me in your view, what specific skills you think are required when listening to children and young people?

Meera

I think there are a couple of skills that are needed something that I have been really conscious of in my teaching practice is where I stand in the classroom. And by this I mean, a lot of the time, I was sitting at the front of the classroom. And throughout this process, and even in previous kind of research projects, I’ve always tried to move around the classroom, sit with students to position yourself differently in the classroom really helps to move away from them seeing us this voice authoritative voice of being the one reaffirming their voices.

Whereas having students come up to the front teaching from the front at times, and moving around the classroom kind of breaks that physical barrier. I think that’s really lovely. And also when you are having groups tables being able to sit down with students, crouch down also to be able to be attentive. Have that eye contact. Make sure that you are asking questions that are directly relevant to what they are saying. I think that makes them feel incredibly valued.

So I’m encouraging others to kind of inquire. So once you said something, you can open that. Yes, I really value that. But what do you think? And seeing yourself as a mediator and a facilitator as opposed to seeing yourself as a teacher as somebody who’s the one confirming a student’s response, or saying that’s the correct response. I think that’s very difficult as a teacher, because you’re kind of trained to do that. However, it’s kind of unlearning those processes before you relearned some other ones.

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# Uncaptioned interactive content

## Transcript

[MUSIC PLAYING]

KIERON SHEEHY

This is part of a research project that we’ve got going, where we’re trying to push the boundaries of children’s research. So the groups of children we’ve are starting to work now are children who typically wouldn’t be trained in research skills, and wouldn’t certainly take on independent projects based on their own interests.

ILDA OURIQUE

Our main aim I think, is to get them to become more independent in their learning, their communication skills.

KIERON SHEEHY

That’s the approach we doing, it hasn’t been done before. And it’s new for children’s research center.

ILDA OURIQUE

The children did need facilitation, they weren’t able to do independently. But I think the fact that they got together, they were able to communicate with each other, decide on questions, decide on topics. So even if that’s all they learned from the project, that is good.

KIERON SHEEHY

So it’s based on giving children research skills, which has benefits in giving children I suppose a voice. And so empowering them to influence decisions in their schools, and in local communities. We know that’s happened for children in primary and secondary schools, but it’s not happened for children with special education needs.

ILDA OURIQUE

They enjoyed communicating, they enjoyed the sessions. And they were very, very communicative and responsive. It’s something that can be done very easily. Obviously, the level of facilitation and guidance will differ depending on the needs of the children.

KIERON SHEEHY

The way in which children interact with one another, how we speak to one another in groups, has a profound effect on their social and cognitive development. And that research again, is only really been done with children in primary schools or secondary schools, no one’s taken that to this group of children. Because their assumption is that they’re not up to it.

ILDA OURIQUE

For this project they’re doing interviews and questionnaires. They worked out the questions beforehand and hopefully getting what they want today. One group are very dissatisfied with the school meals.

SPEAKER 1

I’ve being researching about different kinds of food to like people want.

SPEAKER 2

Maybe chicken tikka.

SPEAKER 1

But we just put loads of questionnaires out.

SPEAKER 2

Loads of yeses and a couple of noes. It’s very interesting.

SPEAKER 1

Like to see more people enjoy meals more.

SPEAKER 2

Gave it to the dinner hall, and then the dinner lady can decide what the children want for dinner.

ILDA OURIQUE

Another group felt that the reason why some students lose concentration and don’t work so hard in class is because the chairs are very uncomfortable. So they would like more comfortable chairs. So they having their research and they’re finding out whether other people feel the same.

KIERON SHEEHY

Children spend most of their school lives here, sat on a particular type of chair.

SPEAKER 3

They’re uncomfortable.

ILDA OURIQUE

What’s the question that your asking people?

SPEAKER 3

Would you like a different chair to sit on?

KIERON SHEEHY

It’s something that we take for granted, but the children want to look at it. So I can feel that’s quite interesting.

ILDA OURIQUE

I think one group, the group that’s actually doing the interviews, they-- although we do have quite a lot of sport in our school, I think being a special needs school there’s not much scope for them to play against other schools.

KIERON SHEEHY

They’re actually researching that to see if there’s a will amongst the rest of the pupils and the staff too, to engage more with other schools in the area to play sport. Which is kind of a very interesting thing, which I don’t think would have come from just asking adults and parents what they wanted from the schools. It’s a research question that’s come from a children’s own interests.

SPEAKER 4

We’re doing a interview with the head teacher.

SPEAKER 5

Ask the teachers and kids.

SPEAKER 6

Do you like sports or not?

SPEAKER 7

We’ve been doing about football, dodge ball, tennis, and golf.

SPEAKER 4

To do school sports with other schools. And then you get to make new friends, meet new people, meet new teachers.

ILDA OURIQUE

So lots of discussion, and working together, and listen to people’s opinions, not shutting anybody down. All those skills were things that we took a practice a lot.

KIERON SHEEHY

The next step really is to get some detail feedback on the approaches we’ve running. We’ve also got a researcher Chae Young, working in the classrooms recording and noting particular aspects of what’s going on. We’re going to use that to develop the project, that we may have to tweak some of the sessions, some of the content. It’s my belief that we can certainly get the children to work in different ways. They can do things that currently they’re not really getting access to, and they’re almost denied access to the sort of skills, which I think are important skill for them to have.

ILDA OURIQUE

They seem to be enjoying the program. So Yeah, they’re quite happy to come to class. So hopefully that’s good feedback. It was really worthwhile. Just the communication, the working together, the social skills, I think that it’s just that if that’s all they get out of this project, it’s good enough. It’s really great.

SPEAKER 7

It’s fun.

SPEAKER 5

Good.

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# Video 1

## Transcript

[MUSIC PLAYING]

SPEAKER 1

The TRREEE principles guide all our research with children and young people. It’s important to capture their views and also to support them to carry out research or contribute meaningfully to it. It’s essential to start from a position of trust in children and young people.

And respect for their views and insights, not just listening, but also hearing what they say and being prepared to act on what they have said. Central to this are the children’s rights under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, to be consulted on matters that affect them and to express their views freely from the way schools are run to the discussions around climate change.

All research must follow ethical principles such as obtaining children and young people’s valid consent to take part. Children and young people are the experts in their lives. Adults need their insights of what it’s like for them in today’s world.

This approach to research can be a rewarding experience for all. Adults learn more about the reality of children’s lives. And young people gain a sense of achievement, some transferable skills, and can have fun and enjoy the experience.

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# Uncaptioned interactive content

## Transcript

Meera

I have worked with the Open University we've collaborated to work on a piece of research on a bit of software called Talk Factory. And this piece of software is something I trialed in my teaching practice, with the year seven class. So they're aged between 12 and 13 years old. As a part of that class, we were looking at their views as to how well they thought this piece of software was being used in the classroom to help them form their or construct their talk in the classroom.

So the reasons that I've been involved in is with the Open University. It's been a collaboration on a piece of software called Talk Factory, and we were looking at children's views on this piece of software in the classroom. As a part of that research, we had four focal students who were a part of that process and gathering data and presenting their findings. Likewise, all of the students in that room had given consent were a part of that research process too.

Interviewer

That's great. Can you explain to me the focal students?

Meera

OK. So the focal students we had two boys and two girls, these were students who I felt had started the year somewhat shy a bit more less confident in the year. So it was a way for me to try and develop their confidence throughout the year.

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# Uncaptioned interactive content

## Transcript

Interviewer

Can you tell me what difference it made to the children, the young people, to actually have their views listened to?

Meera

So as a part of the process, a lot of the times, I worked with a professor at The Open University, who was teaching alongside of me. And so a lot of the time, with consent, a lot of our lessons were filmed or they were recorded in some way. Students were able to record their ideas in some form, whether in their books or at home. And valuing their voices in different mediums really meant that they felt they were being valued and they were being listened to.

But also when we were creating a space in which they were talking and having those rules and boundaries really being adhered to, they felt they were being listened to there. And I think it’s really important to mention, at that point, before we had these discussions, we were very clear around the classroom rules around talk. And that provided a really safe space for students to bring their own views into the classroom.

Interviewer

And would you do it again?

Meera

Yes. So I’m currently trialling it in a different setup with another class, and I’m looking other ways in which I can encourage children to be researchers in different formats throughout the journal that I’m editor of.

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# Uncaptioned interactive content

## Transcript

Meera

I learned, from the project, how they viewed certain aspects of my teaching, and how they were learning, and the environments they preferred when it came to learning. And it was really interesting about hearing the range of ways in which they would like to learn and the ways that I hadn’t really considered. So as a teacher, it’s really nice for me to open up a space where students can start to explore those ideas around teaching and learning, given there’s so much emphasis on teaching and learning. But really, you want this perspectives from children, and here we were doing that.

I think it’s really lovely when we have a moment or we have a term within the class where you are dedicating it to how students are learning and asking those questions about their learning. And I think they feel very empowered when they are able to talk about, actually, do you know what? I think this scenario or this environment works when we learn, and learn in this way, or, I think, actually, when we do this, I really learn better in this way. And having those discussions and opening up those questions allows them to feel valued in this teaching and learning process.

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# Uncaptioned interactive content

## Transcript

Meera

I think teachers who maybe apply for research projects, there is that kind of structured support. If you’re a teacher in a school that would like to set up a research project, I think it’s a little bit more difficult, just because, sometimes, that structure isn’t there. There isn’t the guidance there. However, saying that, we’ve had many teachers who have gone to undertake their own research.

Likewise, a management of a research journal for teachers. And that is something that does provide a little platform for teachers to take that first step into inquiring into their own teaching practice.

In this school, absolutely. So we’ve had instances where teachers have gone to do research projects in pairs. And they’ve gotten to have a look at verbal feedback strategies. And they’ve come back and they fed back those ideas, homeschool.

Likewise, we’ve had teachers who have grouped together across the school, both on primary sites and secondary sites, having a look at different ways of giving feedback to students. And in that process, they work to disseminate them throughout the school and through the journal.

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# Uncaptioned interactive content

## Transcript

Meera

Well, I really feel that, as a teacher, we take on so many roles, and we see students every single day. And as a part of that, it’s really important that we get to build those strong rapport, strong relationships with students, where they’re able to feel at ease. And they come into the classroom that they can be themselves and they can express their opinions really clearly, not having that judgment.

And when that judgment is given or articulate in that judgment, and not seeing as a natural negative that’s going to be detrimental to somebody’s opinion or to who they are. But actually say, OK, we’re allowed to disagree with somebody, and making those allowances, and are using those elements of disagreement as a point of building trust with each other.

I think that’s really important. So you’re building a real community in the classroom, and not seeing them, OK, you’re in the classroom and then leaving. I think that, as anything, that’s an environment that’s particularly conducive for learning to really seeing as an environment, a community of learning.

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# Uncaptioned interactive content

## Transcript

Meera

I think it’s really interesting when you do take on that role, and I think it is necessary. I think it’s really nice as a teacher to be able to step back and have a view of your practice in a different light. I think it’s very easy as a teacher to consistently be planning and marking and go through the routines of being a teacher, but actually to be able to step back, to be reflective, to be reflexive, to understand that actually what you’re doing is having an impact. Because of course we know it’s having an impact every day. However, to see in a different light from a student’s perspective, I think it’s really lovely. I think it’s really enlightening.

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# Uncaptioned interactive content

## Transcript

Meera

Obstacles. I think teachers are very time-poor. And I think sometimes the issue with conducting your own research is having the time to dedicate and do all of the other little bits of jobs prior to actually doing the research, for example, gaining students' consent, making sure parents are informed, getting all forms in and ready, so that they're done before you begin actually gathering your data. And fully understanding that when you're in that process, everything you've read prior to that moment so your literature is being fed throughout your teaching practice. And I think there has to be a marrying of those. So when you are conducting that piece of research in the classroom with students, you're going in there fully informed. So I think there is a pressure of time there, which currently in our current climate is actually very tricky.

At times it can be problematic. Some students who, so for example, in our project there are some students who didn't want to be filmed, who didn't want to be part of the project, which is absolutely fine. So you have to arrange your seating plan accordingly. And that's the consideration for taking place. Well, I've noticed that if you're very kind to the students and say, OK, this is what we do when we do research, and you guide them through the process whilst being in the research, but also stepping back and saying, actually, what is the process of research. And having that level of justification, I think, provides children with a lot of security in going on this research process with you.

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