

What Is Research?

Lapidus Research Day, 31 July 2015

RESEARCH IS...

‘The systematic investigation into and study of materials and sources in order to establish facts and reach new conclusions.’

-Oxford Dictionary

Research impact:

‘Academic impact

The demonstrable contribution that excellent research makes to academic advances, across and within disciplines, including significant advances in understanding, methods, theory and application.

‘Economic and societal impacts

The demonstrable contribution that excellent research makes to society and the economy.’

-Research Councils UK

Practice-based research:

‘Practice-based research is an original investigation undertaken in order to gain new knowledge partly by means of practice and the outcomes of that practice. Claims of originality and contribution to knowledge may be demonstrated through creative outcomes which may include artefacts such as images, music, designs, models, digital media or other outcomes such as performances and exhibitions. Whilst the significance and context of the claims are described in words, a full understanding can only be obtained with direct reference to those outcomes.’

-Creativity and Cognition Studios

Practice-led research:

‘Practice-led research is concerned with the nature of practice and leads to new knowledge that has operational significance for that practice. The main focus of the research is to advance knowledge about practice, or to advance knowledge within practice.’

-Creativity and Cognition Studios

Randomised controlled trial (RCT):

‘This is a study where people are randomly allocated to receive (or not receive) a particular intervention (this could be two different treatments or one treatment and a placebo). This is the best type of study design to determine whether a treatment is effective.’

-NHS

‘RCTs are quantitative, comparative, controlled experiments in which investigators study two or more interventions in a series of individuals who receive them in random order.’

-MedicineNet

The ‘gold standard’ ?

The Scientific Method:

‘A method of procedure that has characterized natural science since the 17th century, consisting in systematic observation, measurement, and experiment, and the formulation, testing, and modification of hypotheses’

-Oxford Dictionary

Qualitative research:

‘Research dealing with phenomena that are difficult or impossible to quantify mathematically, such as beliefs, meanings, attributes, and symbols; it may involve content analysis.’

-Medical Dictionary



A word cloud of qualitative research methods. The words are arranged in a roughly triangular shape, with 'Independent-phenomenological-analysis' being the largest and most central. Other prominent words include 'Narrative-inquiry', 'Ethnography', 'Action-research', 'Autoethnography', 'Grounded-theory', 'Discourse-analysis', and 'Heuristics'. The colors of the words vary, including shades of green, brown, and yellow.

Action-research Narrative-inquiry
Autoethnography Independent-phenomenological-analysis
Heuristics Grounded-theory Ethnography
Discourse-analysis

...and others!

Quantitative research:

'Research involving formal, objective information about the world, with mathematical quantification; it can be used to describe test relationships and to examine cause and effect relationships.'

-Medical Dictionary

Longitudinal-study
Randomised-experiment
Quasi-experiment Surveys Social-network-analysis
Natural-experiment
Archival-and-meta-analysis
Cross-sectional-study

...and others!

Food for thought...

- **Research: what are we trying to achieve?** Anyone who has benefited from writing will be aware there are powerful forces at work. Can research really encourage more people to experience these forces for themselves?

Food for thought...

- **What makes valid research?** Some people respond to statistics while others respond to personal stories. Are both approaches equally valid? Who decides?