



# Student Pages

## How to do a student-led survey in four sessions

With the loss of coursework at A Level Sociology, some teachers may be feeling that students are missing out on the opportunity to carry out their own research investigation. This sheet explains how students can do a mini-project in four sessions.

### Session 1: The Design

- Teacher describes the method to be used: a two sided (A4) self completion questionnaire, using the students of the school/college as a sample. The project needs to focus on measuring the attitudes of a sample of students to a particular topic.
- TASK: students to list potential topics that they would be interested in doing
- Plenary: which one topic shall we focus on? (the project my students wanted to do, focused on the issues to do with ethnic segregation in the social areas of the college e.g. the canteen, the smoking areas outside).
- Design questions: it's easiest to design Likert scale questions (a statement representing a view/opinion, then asking the sample to tick a box: Strongly agree, Agree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree). Give students the task to design such questions on paper, then the teacher types the best ones out into a WORD document, so that there are about 10 good questions to work with. For a template of the questionnaire we used, please e-mail [prs@cadcol.ac.uk](mailto:prs@cadcol.ac.uk).
- Teacher point: in doing the question design, students should be learning about how operationalising concepts actually works.
- Debating point: do you allow the sample a box to tick "Neither agree or disagree" or "Don't know"?
- If there's time, you could ask the students if they think we should have a testable hypothesis as an aim for the project (links to Positivist theory here).
- Teacher preparation for session 2: finish the "type-up" of the finished questionnaire and photocopy for as many times needed for the sample size needed.

### Session 2: The Data collection

- Teacher distributes the questionnaires (photocopied as many times as needed for the sample you want).
- The students are given a number of questionnaires (say 6 -10 each) that they have to get filled in with a student from the college.
- If you are comparing the attitudes of different groups in the college, you

need to allocate quotas that reflect the numbers you want. Note: only focus on one characteristic, i.e. measure how attitudes vary according to one factor: either class or ethnicity or gender or age. It gets too time consuming in the analysis stage to measure how attitudes vary according to more than one characteristic.

- Student Homework: students have to attend session 3 with their allocated questionnaires filled in.

### Session 3: The analysis

- Divide the questionnaires into groups that can be counted easily: if different groups are being compared, these are your obvious groups. (In the project we did, we were interested in measuring the views of different ethnic groups so we divided the questionnaires into ethnic groups).
- Each group is given a blank questionnaire and they use this to record how many respondents said "Strongly Agree", "Agree" etc. These numbers are then collated by the teacher as a central, overall count.
- If there's time, students summarise the qualitative data from the questionnaires. They can look for overall themes shared by the quotations written by the sample. Point out to students that this is known as "coding".
- Teacher preparation: record the overall results as a percentage on a final "Results" sheet.

### Session 4: The write up.

- Distribute the overall "Results sheet" to the class.
- TASK: students have to analyse the sheet to come to the overall conclusions of the study.
- TASK 2: Students list the strengths and weaknesses of the study: validity, reliability, representativeness, ethics??
- Homework: students to write up the results and evaluation of the study for homework as a Powerpoint presentation.

