

RESEARCH METHODS AND TOOLS

Session 11

90 minutes

OBJECTIVE:

Youth will identify methods to use in collecting data for their research topic.

MATERIALS AND PREPARATION:

- Butcher paper, tape, and markers.
- Paper, pens, and clipboards.
- Copy the *Planning Your Research Worksheet* (Master Copy 3.11) before the session: one copy for each participant.

I. OPENING: ATTENDANCE, SNACKS, ANNOUNCEMENTS, AGENDA OVERVIEW (10 MINUTES)

Opening Circle (Around the World): Name something that surprised you today...

Explain that today youth will select the research methods they will use to collect their data.

II. ICE BREAKER: IN THIS CORNER (15 MINUTES)

Number the corners of the room 1 to 4, writing each number on a large piece of paper and posting it so that it is visible. Start by using an example: Ask youth to go to #1 if they are an only child, #2 if they have one sibling, #3 if they have two, and #4 if they have three or more siblings. Once the group is divided, ask youth to each share (in their small group) their favorite movie and why it is their favorite. Repeat this process several times using different categories (e.g., types of pets, neighborhoods, where they were born) and different discussion questions (either general "get to know you" questions or questions specifically related to the project).



Facilitation Tip: Choosing Methods

Youth may opt to use several methods or focus on just one. If they choose to use several – and you have enough staff or volunteer support – you can divide the group into teams, each with a focus on a particular method.

Choose Your Research Methods



III. CHOOSE METHODS (45 MINUTES)

Step 1: Review the *Research Methods Pros and Cons Worksheet* and the research methods brainstorm the students experienced in the research Round Robin (Session 10). Ask the students the following questions and write their answers on the board or butcher paper.

- Which method did you like best? Why?
- Which method did you like least? Why?
- What are some advantages to using one of these methods over another?

Step 2: Ask youth to consider the type of information they will need to answer their research question(s). Discuss what kind of information would help meet their project goals.

For example, if their issue is homelessness, you could ask the following questions:

- Would personal stories work? Interviews?
- Do they need to know the opinions of a lot of people?
- What about mapping?

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Step 3: Choose Your Research Methods

- Divide youth into three or four small groups.
- Hand out the *Planning Your Research* worksheet.
- Give youth 5-10 minutes to work on the questions.
- Have youth share their answers with the full group and record what they say on the board or butcher paper.
- Have them discuss until they reach agreement on the methods best suited to their project (usually two or three methods), and the goals for data collection. Use sticky-dot voting if there is disagreement

IV. DETERMINE DATA COLLECTION STRUCTURE (10 MINUTES)

Group Brainstorm: How can we structure our group to best collect all of our data?

Examples of Methods of Data Collection:

- Pick one method. For example, survey the entire student body.
- Divide into teams on each method. While everyone will learn the methods together, particular teams can be responsible for the key administration of protocols and analysis.
- Divide into teams around several topics. For example, you could have one team researching youth violence and another researching after-school programs – each group using the methods they choose.
- Discuss the benefits and limitations of each strategy to come to an agreement.

V. CLOSING (10 MINUTES)

Closing Circle Statement (Around the World): Have youth name their favorite ice cream flavor.



Facilitation Tip:

This is a good time to refer back to group agreements, and your group's model of youth-adult partnership (see Unit 1, Sessions 5-6).

Planning Your Research

Research topic: _____

1. **List your methods:** What kind of research methods are you going to use? After each method, write down why you chose this method. Include how many you want to conduct (e.g., 20 interviews, 100 surveys, two focus groups).

2. **List your subjects:** List the categories of people from whom you will collect information. Who knows about your topic or has experienced the problem you are researching (e.g., students, teachers, parents, the elderly, homeless people)?

3. **List your recruitment strategies:** What will you do to get these people or groups to participate in your research?

4. **List your needs and budget items:** What equipment or materials (e.g., tape recorders, food for a focus group) do you need in order to carry out your research? Where and how are you going to get these materials?

5. **List your necessary allies:** Whose permission do you need? Who or what group can best support your efforts? How will you get these people or groups to help you?

6. **List your products:** How do you plan to share your findings and recommendations (e.g., public presentation, event, forum, newsletter, report, video, public art installation)? Be specific.