

Session 10

RESEARCH METHODS AND TOOLS

60/90 minutes

OBJECTIVES:

Youth will learn basic social science research methods and understand the pros and cons of using each method.

MATERIALS AND PREPARATION:

- Butcher paper, tape, and markers.
- Paper, pens, and clipboards.
- Index cards.
- Butcher paper or a blackboard with heading "What are some ways to do research?"
- Copies of the main research questions that youth came up with in Session 8.
- Review *Research Methods: Pros and Cons Example* (Master Copy 3.10a)
- Copy the *Research Methods: Pros and Cons* worksheet (Master Copy 3.10b) before the session: one copy for each participant.
- Set up stations in separate areas of the room – one station for each of the research methods (three to five). See the *Research Round Robin Stations* (Master Copy 3.10c) for details.
- Each station needs a facilitator or leader (or detailed written instructions).
- The focus group station will need index cards and pencils.
- The survey station will need pencils, copies of the *Survey Station* handout (Master Copy 3.10d), the *Sample Survey Introduction Letter* (Master Copy 3.10e): one for each for each participant.
- The interview station will need copies of the *Interview Station Questions* (Master Copy 3.10f) and *Interview Consent Form* (Master Copy 3.10g): one copy of each for each participant.

 Research Round Robin


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

Explain that today youth will learn some of the most common ways to do social science research. Opening Circle Statement (Around the World): If you had to be a scientist, what kind of scientist would you be?

II. WARM UP: PAIR SHARE (10 MINUTES)

In pairs, have youth discuss their reactions to "research."

- What do they think about it?
- Have they had positive or negative experiences?

After youth have each had time to speak, have them share out themes from their conversations. This will help to gauge the experience and attitudes of the group.

**Facilitation Tip:**

This session can be modified, depending on the number of research stations you want to use with the group (two optional stations are described for this session).

During this session refer to the definition for research that youth came up with in Session 1 of this Unit.

RESEARCH METHODS AND TOOLS**Session 10****60/90 minutes****III. BRAINSTORM RESEARCH METHODS (5 MINUTES)**

Ask the students to brainstorm different research methods:

- How can you get information about an issue?
- How can you find out what other people think and experience?
- How do politicians or major companies find out about people's opinions or interests?

Record answers on butcher paper or the board.

IV. RESEARCH METHODS ROUND ROBIN (30/60 MINUTES)

Explain that youth will now experiment with some of the most common ways to do research or collect data. Youth will rotate from station to station, spending 10 minutes at each station (modify as necessary) trying out the research method and then thinking about the pros and cons of that method.

- Give each student a *Research Methods: Pros and Cons* worksheet to fill out at each station.
- Divide youth into three to five groups and send each group to a station.

V. DEBRIEF/CLOSING (5 MINUTES)

After all students have gone to all three (or more) stations, bring the group back together and ask "What research methods did you like best and why?"



 Research Methods Pros and Cons Worksheet - Examples from YELL Participants

Your Research Topic: Emotional and Physical Safety at School and in the Community			
WAYS TO GATHER DATA	TYPE OF INFORMATION YOU GET WITH THIS METHOD?	PROS? (What is good about this tool compared to others?)	CONS? (What are the drawbacks of using this tool compared to others?)
SURVEYS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statistics: The percent of people who think x or y. • Comparisons: This group thinks x, and this group thinks y. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can give to a lot of people. • Gives general idea of how different groups of people think about certain things. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Answers might depend on the person's mood that day. • Question might be understood differently from the way you planned. • Some people might not do it or might not take it seriously.
FOCUS GROUPS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contrasts and similarities: What people say in interviews and surveys, and what they say in a group, whether people agree or not. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Get a lot of opinions and information at one time. • People might feel more comfortable talking as a group. • Gives people a chance to talk about and clarify any disagreements. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People can change their opinions and agree with others even if they don't really think that way. • Some people are too shy to participate. • Finding a time that everyone can make it.
INTERVIEWS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Depth: Room for follow-up questions and individual focus. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can get opinions and personal thoughts. • Hear emotions in voice. • You can ask specific questions. • You can explain your questions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Might be influenced by the interviewer. • Might say what they think you want them to say. • Might be too shy. • Can't record their expressions.
PHOTOS OR MAPPING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visual: "Proof" you can see. • Change: Can show before and after; changes over time. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some people are visual learners – seeing helps them understand the issue. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to equipment can be challenging. • Privacy concerns – can't be anonymous.
FORUM OR TOWN HALL MEETING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public opinion: What is the trend in thinking, allows for new information to come up, and can reveal some of the power dynamics around the issue or topic. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can do as a school assembly. • Get a lot of opinions and information at one time. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some people are too shy to participate. • Getting people to show up.

Research Methods Pros and Cons Worksheet

Your Research Topic: Emotional and Physical Safety at School and in the Community			
WAYS TO GATHER DATA	TYPE OF INFORMATION YOU GET WITH THIS METHOD?	PROS? (What is good about this tool compared to others?)	CONS? (What are the drawbacks of using this tool compared to others?)
SURVEYS			
FOCUS GROUPS			
INTERVIEWS			
PHOTOS OR MAPPING			
FORUM OR TOWN HALL MEETING			



 Research Round Robin Stations - Facilitator Instructions

STATION ONE: FOCUS GROUPS

Materials: Index cards and pencils.

Task: Youth will participate in a brief group interview, or focus group, and think about the pros and cons of using focus groups for data collection.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR STATION FACILITATOR:

Step 1: Explain that a focus group is like a group interview about a specific topic or issue. If this were a real focus group, the discussion would be tape recorded or video recorded, and then researchers would watch or listen to it afterwards and take a lot of notes. Typically, researchers would type everything said and create a transcript of the conversation. From there, they would try to identify themes or ideas that a lot of people agreed on.

Step 2: Hand each member of the group an index card and pencil, and have them write one question that they think would be interesting to get everyone's ideas or opinions about. Give some examples: "Where in your neighborhood do you hang out on weekends? Why?" Once they have each written a question, collect all of the cards and pick a question at random. Continue to ask follow-up questions and keep getting participants' input for a few minutes.

Step 3: At the end of the focus group, ask youth the following questions and then give them time to fill out their worksheet.

- What do you like about focus groups?
 - What do you think would be difficult about doing this kind of data collection?
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STATION TWO: SURVEYS

Materials: Copy the *Survey Station Handout*; *Sample Survey Introduction Letter*. One copy for each participant.

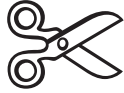
Task: Youth will take a survey, practice creating survey questions by adding questions in the blanks, and think about the pros and cons of using surveys for data collection.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR STATION FACILITATOR:

Step 1: Have all youth take the survey and ask them to complete the blank sections with questions that they make up.

Step 2: Discuss pros and cons of using a survey and then give students time to fill out their pros and cons worksheet:

- Did you like taking the survey? What did you like? Not like?
- What kinds of questions are good for surveys?
- What are the benefits of using a survey to collect information? What are the weaknesses?



 Research Round Robin Stations - Facilitator Instructions

STATION THREE: INTERVIEWS

Task: Youth will take turns interviewing each other and will think about the pros and cons of using interviews for data collection.

Materials: Copy and cut out the *Interview Station Questions* and the *Interview Consent Form*.

TIPS FOR STATION FACILITATOR:

Step 1: Explain that if this was a real interview, it would be tape recorded (or lots of notes would be taken), and reviewed later to pull out the main ideas and themes. Have youth review the consent forms, and explain the importance of written permission.

Step 2: Split youth into pairs. Give each person one card with questions and instruct them to use these questions to conduct an interview. After two minutes, ask them to switch roles, with the other person asking the questions.

Step 3: Discuss the following questions and then give students time to fill out their worksheet:

- What kinds of questions got you to talk more?
- What do you think is good about collecting information from people this way?
- Can you envision any challenges in using interviews for your project?

STATION FOUR: MAPPING (OPTIONAL)

Task: Youth will use a map of their school or community as a data collection tool and identify pros and cons of mapping for this purpose.

Materials: Copies of a map of your school or community; several sets of pens with four colors available.

TIPS FOR STATION FACILITATOR:

Step 1: Provide each student with a copied map of their school or community.

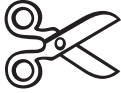
Step 2: Ask them to identify the places where youth spend the most time (yellow) and the least time (blue). Then ask them to highlight the safest areas in the community for youth (green) and the least safe areas (red).

Step 3: Discuss the following questions and then give students time to fill out their pros and cons worksheet:

- What did you notice about your map and the maps of other people in your group?
- What do you think is good about collecting information from people this way?
- Can you envision any challenges in using maps for data collection?


Example from Practice:

YELL youth used a map of the community to identify patterns of graffiti, and youth program locations. They also spent time observing and photographing neighborhood features, including public park conditions, and videotaped traffic patterns at crossings frequented by youth.



 Research Round Robin Stations - Facilitator Instructions

STATION FIVE: FORUMS AND TOWN HALL MEETINGS (OPTIONAL)

A forum is a public meeting which frequently includes a presentation, panel of experts (or speaker) on the topic, and audience participation. A forum is a great way to get qualitative insight into preliminary results from other tools.

Task: Learn about the role of a forum as an information gathering and sharing tool, and evaluate the pros and cons of a forum.

Materials: Pens and paper.

TIPS FOR STATION FACILITATOR:

Step 1: Ask youth for examples of a forum or town hall meeting. Have they ever participated in a forum? Have they heard about a forum or town hall meeting in their community? What was the purpose?

Step 2: Ask the group to quickly agree on a topic that they think a lot of people in their community really care about (e.g., immigration, housing, education). Together, have participants brainstorm what a forum on this topic might look like, and ask them the following questions:

Purpose: What is the purpose of the forum? What will be the outcomes? How will you use the information from the forum?

Logistics: Where would you have the forum? When? Would you serve food? Who would you invite? Who would lead the event? What expert or experts could you bring in to talk? What type of input or information do you want from the audience?

Follow up: How will you follow up after the forum? How will you let people know that their participation made a difference? Will you offer other opportunities for people to participate?

Step 3: Have youth fill in the pros and cons of a forum or town hall meeting on their worksheet.

Survey Station

SCHOOL SAFETY

Instructions: Fill out this survey with your own answers to the questions asked. Where there is a blank, you should make up a question that would help answer the research question.

CIRCLE A NUMBER THAT DESCRIBES HOW TRUE EACH STATEMENT IS FOR YOU, USING THE SCALE:

1. There is someone at school that I feel comfortable talking to when I have a problem.	1 Not true	2 Somewhat	3 Somewhat	4 Very true
2. I feel physically safe at school.	1 Not true	2 Somewhat	3 Somewhat	4 Very true
3. (Write your own question here)	1 Not true	2 Somewhat	3 Somewhat	4 Very true

FOR EACH QUESTION BELOW, CIRCLE YES, NO, OR MAYBE:

4. I think our school is safe for all students. Yes No Maybe
5. (Write your own question) _____ Yes No Maybe

FOR THE QUESTIONS BELOW, CIRCLE THE OPTION THAT BEST REPRESENTS YOUR OPINION:

6. What can we do to improve safety at school?
- a) Smaller class sizes
 - b) Increased monitoring of hallways
 - c) Have more activities for students to get involved with
 - d) Time for teachers and students to get to know each other
 - e) Have strict consequences for students
 - f) Other _____
7. Write your own question: _____?
- a) _____
 - b) _____
 - c) _____
 - d) _____
8. Your Age: _____ 9. Your Grade: _____ 10. Your Zip Code: _____
11. Race/Ethnicity: _____ 12. Female Male (Circle One)

Survey Introduction Letter - Example

Dear Student:

Please take a few moments to fill in this survey. We have designed this survey to find out what you and other youth think and experience about safety in our school. Findings from this survey will show adult community leaders your perspectives on this important issue.

Your survey will remain anonymous. Please do NOT put your name on the survey. The information, like grade level, gender, and ethnicity, will help us know if there are similarities or differences in what people in these groups think and experience. (For example: Do females feel less safe than males?)

We will present our results to you in May. If you have any questions, please talk to us Monday or Wednesday after school in Room 108.

Thank you!

César Chávez High School Youth Researchers

Dear Teacher:

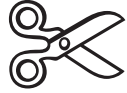
Please have your first period students fill in the attached surveys. The survey, designed by the César Chávez Youth Researchers, will help us learn more about youth perspectives on safety in our school. We will share our findings with school staff, students, and community leaders. Our goal is to use our findings to create plans that help increase school safety.

Please return the completed surveys to Mr. Baker's box no later than Thursday, March 8.

We will share our findings with you in May. If you have any questions or concerns about the survey, or would like to learn more about our research, please visit us during one of our sessions, which take place after school on Mondays and Wednesdays in Room 108.

Thank you for your help and support!

César Chávez High School Youth Researchers



Interview Station Questions “Getting to Know You”

QUESTIONS: SUCCESS

- Name one person you know who you consider successful.
 - How do you define success?
 - What is one thing in which you would like to be successful?
 - What do you think you need to do or learn in order to be successful?
 - What will help you to get there?
-

QUESTIONS: FAMILY

- Number of brothers? Number of sisters?
 - Where were you born?
 - Where is your family from originally?
 - Tell me something you like about your family.
 - What does your family like to do together?
 - What’s a happy memory you have with your family?
-

QUESTIONS: PERSONAL INTERESTS

- What kinds of things do you like to do in your free time?
- Tell me about one of your talents.
- What do you hope to do in the future?
- What’s most important to you?
- If you could meet one person from the present or past, who would it be and why? What would you talk about?
- What current events are of interest to you and why?