

Research Lexicon



In-Depth

This toolkit works on the basis of having an in-depth structured conversation.

Ideally this toolkit would be completed in one session of around 1.5 hours, although you could arrange multiple sessions to ensure you discuss terms that are particularly important for your project. It could also be useful throughout the project, as new information and approaches are introduced.

About this toolkit

The Research Lexicon is a card-based toolkit that explores different definitions and meanings of words that you might each bring to the project.

What problem does it solve?

This toolkit can help everyone come to a common understanding of the language that is being used to talk about the project. This might be useful when there are differences of opinion or different responses to language within a team consisting of people from diverse backgrounds.

This toolkit might be helpful when:

It emerges that the team have different understandings of commonly used research terms in the project. It is also useful as a check-in to make sure you have all understood these terms or might want to create different or multiple definitions which will help when the project is discussed or written about.

Credits and License Information

This toolkit was designed and illustrated by Ceri Maltby

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Instructions

What you will need

- A pen each
- A pair of scissors
- A printed copy of the Research Lexicon, **with the squares on p5 onwards cut out**
- Some writing paper for taking notes
- A table or surface that the team can gather around
- A timer (a smartphone timer works fine)

Printing Instructions

Print out this toolkit on A4 paper, preferably in colour, single-sided.

How to Use

Warm up (5-10 minutes)

1. Take the word cards with purple corners labelled 'warm up' and place these in a pile, with the word facing down, on the table in the middle of you.
2. Put a timer on for 5 or 10 minutes depending on how large your group is.
3. One person should turn over a card and show the group the word on the card.
4. Going around the group in a quick round, everyone should answer the question "***What does this word mean to me?***"
5. Once everyone has answered, go around in turn again and, in a quick round, answer the question "***Why does this word mean that to me?***".
6. Once everyone has answered and heard others answers for that particular word, put the card down, and pick up another 'warm up' card word.
7. Continue working through words on the 'warm up' cards (steps 3-6) until the timer goes off.
8. Have a short discussion about the exercise. Did you all come up with similar meanings for the words? Did some words mean different things for each of you?
9. You can now put away the 'warm up' cards.

Main Activity (55 mins - 1h 15 mins)

Stage 1: Talking about research (40-60 minutes)

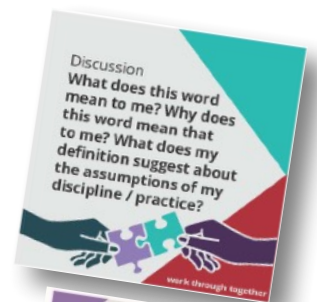
This stage is simply about listening to each other's understandings and etymologies of the terms in question. You do not need to seek an agreement on the meaning of the words.

1. Take the word cards with the green corners labelled 'Research Lexicon'. Spread these out on the table with the word side facing up so that you can all see them.
2. Have an individual within your group choose one card that contains a term that is important to them or feels close to their expertise and work.
3. The individual who selected this card should answer the following questions about the term to the group:

- a. **What** does this word mean to me?
- b. **Why** does this word mean that to me?
- c. **What** does my definition suggest about the assumptions of my discipline / practice?

Square cards with "word" and "definition" are provided for those who would like some time to contemplate on the meaning they have for that word and write notes before presenting it to the group.

4. Everyone within the group should then also respond to the three questions above, about the word that has been selected
5. Once everyone has had a chance to speak about the word chosen, repeat steps 2-3 with different individuals choosing word cards that resonate with them. Work through as many cards as you wish. Terms that generate more discussion might take 15-20 minutes, others might take less time.

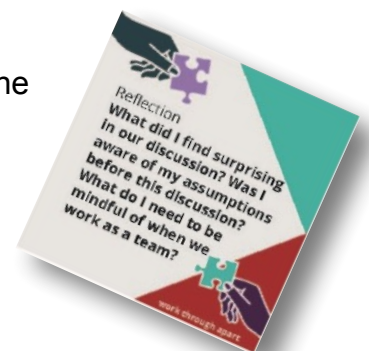


Stage 2: Individual reflection (15 minutes)

Take some quiet time to individually reflect on Stage 1 of the activity. The following prompts might help your reflection:

- What did you find surprising?
- Had you realised your assumptions before this discussion?
- What do you need to be mindful of when working together?
- Where did you find the most similarity and difference in definitions and assumptions?

You do not need to share your reflections with the group, however as a group there might be some thoughts that people want to discuss after reflecting about the activity in Stage 1.



Stage 3: The meeting point (20-30 minutes)

1. As a team, identify the key terms that will be particularly relevant and important for your research project.
2. Choose one of these terms and discuss it as a group. Try to agree on a working definition for the term that you could adopt for the purposes of this research project. Try not to aim for a general 'lowest common denominator' definition but one that draws on the richness of your earlier discussion and disciplines / practices.
3. Record the definition of this word, and the discussion around how your team came to this definition on the "our team definition card" pictured.



Word:

Our team definition:

The etymology for our team:

4. Repeat steps 2 and 3 with further words until all of your key terms have team definitions.
5. Discuss together: Which words will you need to revisit throughout the project?



Optional Activity

Try using this process with terms that are not present within this toolkit but are key to your research. An example might be a thematic term e.g. 'sustainability', 'ageing', or 'poetry'.

SQUARES TO CUT OUT





ceiling

WARM UP



bowl

WARM UP



cat

WARM UP



far

WARM UP



exercise

WARM UP



city

WARM UP



bloom

WARM UP



beach

WARM UP

theory

RESEARCH
LEXICON

reflexivity

RESEARCH
LEXICON

question

RESEARCH
LEXICON

analysis

RESEARCH
LEXICON

outputs

RESEARCH
LEXICON

interpretations

RESEARCH
LEXICON

subjectivity

RESEARCH
LEXICON

hypothesis

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collaboration

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rigour

RESEARCH
LEXICON

results

RESEARCH
LEXICON

replicability

RESEARCH
LEXICON

literature
review

RESEARCH
LEXICON

evidence

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knowledge
claims

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originality

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methods

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LEXICON

measure

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LEXICON

ethics

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criticality

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Word:

Our team definition:

Word:

Our team definition:

Word:

Our team definition:

Word:

Definition:

Word:

Definition:

Word:

Definition:

Word:

Definition:

Word:

Definition:

Word:

Definition:

Discussion

What does this word mean to me? Why does this word mean that to me? What does my definition suggest about the assumptions of my discipline / practice?



Discussion

**Is there a meeting point?
Or a way of describing this term that does justice to its disciplinary strengths?**





Reflection

**What did I find surprising
in our discussion? Was I
aware of my assumptions
before this discussion?
What do I need to be
mindful of when we
work as a team?**



work through apart