Connected Communities

Making Connections: Theory and Practice of Using Visual Methods to Aid Participation in Research

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CONNECTED COMMUNITIES

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Introduction

The objective of this publication is to assist practitioners and researchers to do research in a creative way with the underlying approach of researching *with* rather than *on* people. The publication provides a short rationale about why such an approach is important but then focuses very much on the 'how to', with practical examples and suggestions, and links to further reading. The aim of this publication is to:

- Inspire practitioners and researchers to consider different ways of involving their participants in research

- Give them the knowledge, skills and confidence to be able to use visual methods in their work

- To encourage better engagement by participants and more inclusive practices in order that they can have their voices heard, and ultimately be enabled to contribute in a positive way to social change.
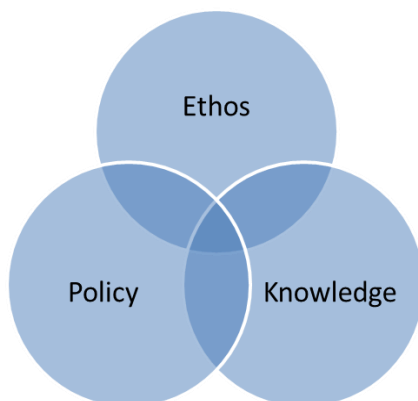
Authors

Context

This publication builds on previous research funded by the AHRC which examined the evidence of children and young people's participation in, and with, criminal justice research[1]. Our overriding conclusion was that this perspective was largely absent. Yet seeking the views and perspectives of children and young people in research is crucial if we are to improve practice and change lives. Researchers and practitioners often cite the 1989 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)[2] - and it is Article 12, in particular, which states that children and young people are entitled to have their voice heard regarding situations and contexts that affect them - as a starting point for justifying the involvement of children. However, there is less discussion about why individual projects pursue participatory approaches and even less so on the practicalities of just how we can do this well[3].

In the studies we reviewed, researchers rarely discussed their justifications for involving young people, at whatever level, in their research. Although the UNRC is often quoted, authors do not reflect further on their own rationale and commitment to participatory approaches. Nevertheless, by examining the background of those conducting the research, we produced a *model of justification*:

Studies written by academic researchers tended to emphasise the importance of better understanding complex social phenomena and were inherently **knowledge** driven. Because of this, children and young people tended to be involved in the research in order to provide information that could help academics to make sense of issues such as why children and young people offend.

In contrast, much of the research in the criminal justice area was conducted by national charities working either to enhance the wellbeing of children and young people or to provide services for children and young people involved in, or at risk of, offending. These charities tended to be very explicit about why they involved children and young people in research. Their justifications were **ethos** driven and based on ensuring that marginalised voices were heard, enabling effective systems change, and enhancing outcomes for children and young people themselves.

The third dimension of the model was a **policy** driven approach. Studies with children and young people that took this approach were usually commissioned by governmental organisations (e.g. national and local Government departments, Youth Justice Board). This approach was based on an appreciation of the development and implementation of policy following the UNCRC which stipulated that the voices of children and young people should be heard and taken into account.

Our review recommended the development of partnership between academia and other researchers in the public, private and third sectors in order to share practice. We reported that there was very little evidence on what practically can be done to support participatory approaches.

Within the community, young people are highly visible and therefore more readily stigmatised and marginalised. At the same time they tend to be, paradoxically, invisible in terms of research, service delivery and policy[4]. Participatory research would seem an effective way of ensuring children and young people can challenge these perceptions, stimulate change and become visible in a positive manner. Any research, however, needs to be clear in its focus and purpose, and provide opportunities for children and young people to engage in a meaningful and relevant way, in order that it can enhance their well-being and be mutually beneficial. In this way children and young people can become active and empowered citizens in their own communities and beyond.

This publication, therefore, explores methods that aim to be participatory, which is how we, as researchers, are accustomed to working[5][6][7][8]. The methods are visually based because we have found this to be particularly successful in enabling and supporting a participatory approach, with children and young people and with adults too. Visual research methods often facilitate participation through their perceived inclusivity, being less demanding of literacy skills [9][10][11][12], but are also empowering, allowing participants to 'set the agenda'[10], and drive the encounter.

Our review's *model of justification* for inclusion of young people in criminal justice research proposes a mixture of reasons for participation, with precise rationales varying between projects. Yet, researchers working with young people more generally have come to recognise the value of participatory research. Firstly, for ethical reasons – young people have a right to be included, but also as a means of enhancing validity through including a range of people in research. The type of visual methods we are advocating, centred on visually mediated encounters,

epitomise this integration of inclusivity and validity.

As many researchers have reported, the use of visual images and activities tends to relax participants and encourage the involvement of those who find reading and writing uninviting[13] or who would prefer not to talk to a researcher about sensitive issues[14]. Yet, as researchers using these methods are also keen to point out, there are risks in relying too heavily on the researcher's interpretation of isolated visual products, such as photographs or drawings. In the advice of others to discuss images with their producers [15] or involve participants in analysis of content[16], we see an argument for visually mediated encounters. In such encounters, the visual products or activities 'are not end products, they are markers in a conversation'[17].

In this publication we explain how to conduct research in this way, detailing some methods which we have developed and used which enable researchers and participants to build shared understandings around a tangible image or activity.

Fundamentally, valid and useful social research is about making connections: between people and between ideas. This is particularly clear in the interview or focus group situation when we are seeking to understand the experiences or perspectives of others. It is essential for the interviewer to establish a relationship with their interviewees and to be sensitive to their individual experiences, but also to use the dialogue and conversation to construct new, shared knowledge. The success of focus groups similarly depends on developing connections between the participants to facilitate discussion that produces 'emergent views that are not reducible to the individuals' [18]. This amounts, as a classic manual on interviewing asserts, to a claim for

the 'interdependence of human interaction and knowledge production'[19].

Visual and spatial activities – drawing diagrams and pictures, sorting images, creating new arrangements – can provide a focus for such interaction between research participants, supporting the establishment of connections and the building of understanding. The misconceptions that can arise from seeing visual products in isolation makes sense when we understand that the research process needs to facilitate a co-construction of new knowledge and shared understandings through making connections.

The next sections focus on the 'how to' aspect of using visual methods in a participatory way.

Further reading

Clark, J. and Laing, K. (2012) The involvement of children and young people in research within the criminal justice area. Discussion Paper from the AHRC Connected Communities Programme Scoping Review.

Clark, J. (2004) Participatory research with children and young people: philosophy, possibilities and perils, *Action Research Expeditions*, 4(Nov): 1-18.

Clark, J., Dyson, A., Meagher, N., Robson, E. and Wootten, M. (2001) 'Involving Young People in Research: The Issues' In J. Clark et al (Eds) *Young People As Researchers: Possibilities, Problems, and Politics* Leicester: Youth Work Press.
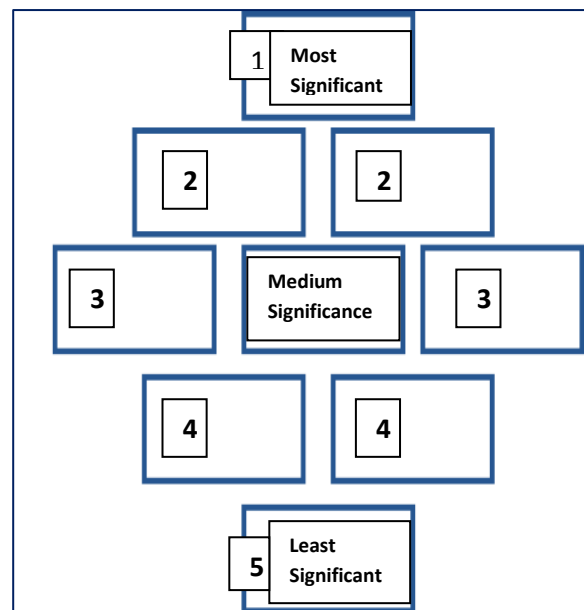
Diamond ranking activity

Background

Diamond ranking is a recognised thinking skills tool [20], valued for extracting constructs and for facilitating talk. Its strength lies in the principle that when people rank items, either statements, objects or images, and discuss the ranking choices, they are required to make obvious the over-arching relationships by which they organise knowledge, thus making their understandings available for analysis and comparison.

Also known as 'diamond 9's, it is an activity that has been traditionally used in classrooms with students to, for example, explore and clarify their own value positions, feelings and thoughts on a topic and is usually carried out with pre-written statements[21]. However, our experience tells us that this is a method which can be used in a variety of settings, with participants of any age and with visual images and pictures[22].

How to…

Participants can be given the same nine photographs or images (or statements or anecdotes) representing a spread of opinions or perspectives. Each photograph is given a short title or number for easy reference and each set of photographs is then cut up and stored in an envelope. Then, usually working in pairs, or threes, the task is to sort, and rank the pictures in a diamond formation.
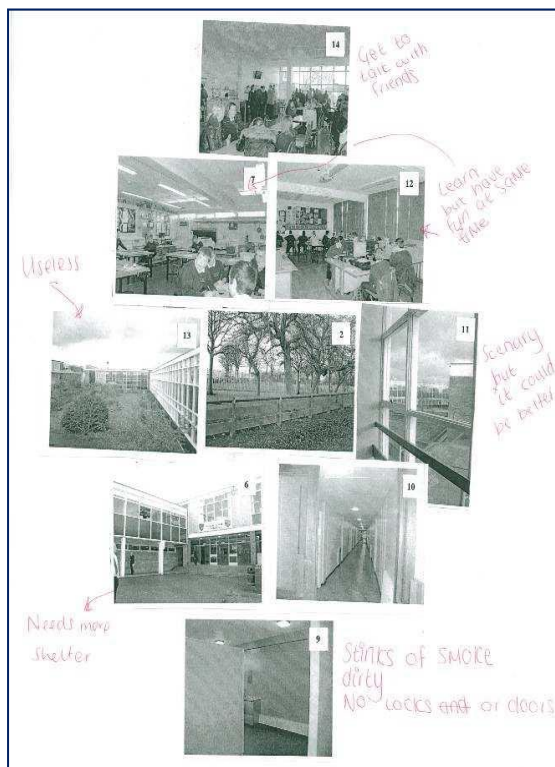
The criteria for ranking are fairly relaxed and will depend on the task in hand, but descriptors such as 'interesting', 'important', 'better', or 'significant', for instance, are used to facilitate and prompt the ranking of the most 'interesting', 'important', which would be placed at the top (row 1) of the diamond. The next most interesting are placed in equal position (row 2), the next three are equal fourth (row 3) and generally represent statements which are neither important, nor unimportant, or are of medium significance. The next two are seventh equal, and the final one (row 5) is that which is ranked as the most unimportant, or uninteresting.

Once the participants have agreed their sortings and rankings, they can stick their images in the diamond formation onto a sheet

of A3 paper. The participants are then encouraged to annotate their diamond with comments and explanations, (based on the discussions which take place). These qualitative comments and explanations offer an additional type of data, as we are interested in both where each photograph is ranked, but also the reasons why each photograph is placed where it is.
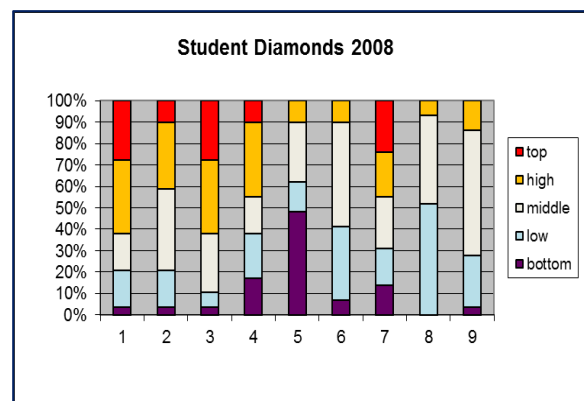

Each group of participants is facilitated by a member of the research team, who can also act as 'scribe' where necessary.
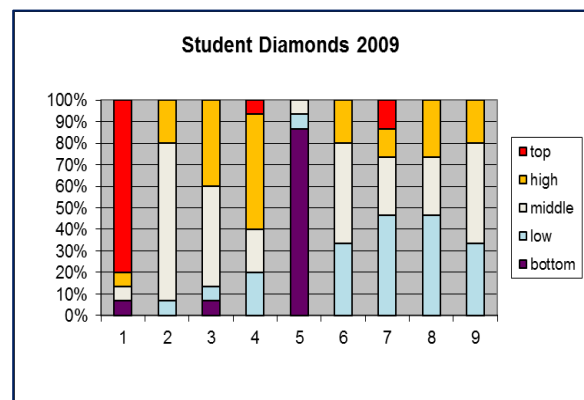
What to do with the data…

The main data here are the completed diamonds with the annotations and notes of the conversation elicited between the participants.

The rankings can be analysed within and across the completed diamonds and the positioning of the photographs can be explored. For example, one photograph may be consistently ranked 'top' or 'bottom'.

The ranking activity can also be repeated a second time to explore any changes over time.

The annotations and comments can be analysed in the same ways as any interviews, using thematic analysis, or using direct quotes from particular photographs or diamonds.

What works best…?

The diamond ranking activity has (like any research method or tool) both advantages and disadvantages. 'Forcing' participants into ranking images into a specific diamond format can be constraining. However, by using photographs, it can mean that participants will not be forced to show an opinion, of a 'static' or simplistic nature on a fixed scale (e.g. a Likert scale or 'smiley face' scale), but
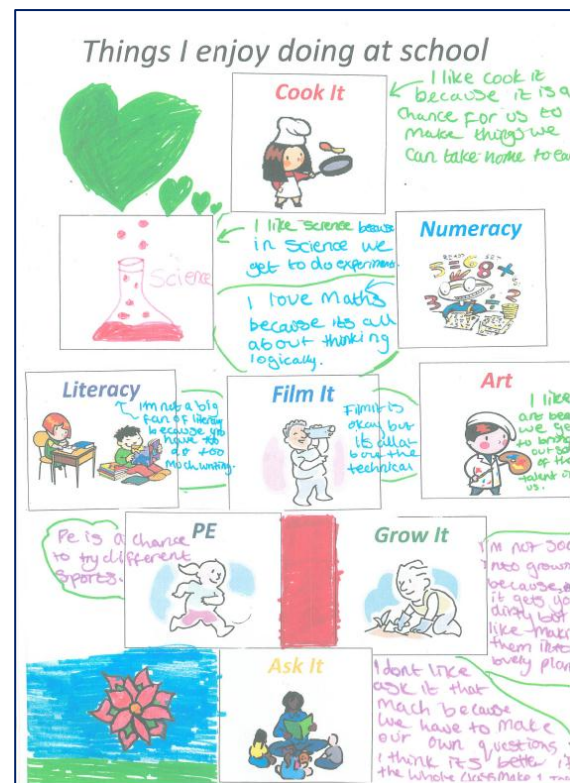
can have a more elaborate and open series of images, therefore representing a wider range of views.

Facilitation of this activity is key and as facilitator, you must remind participants that the photographs do not need to be ranked in numerical order in the second, third of fourth rows, but interestingly, if this does occasionally happen it can be used to help them discuss and process their rankings.

The physical aspect of looking at photographs, first cutting them out, then sorting, ranking and discussing them in pairs means that participants are actively involved and are able to use the images as visual cues. Our experience has shown, as others[23] found, that the photograph is not simply a source of information, but it is a prompt in a collaborative interaction – the diamond ranking activity - by providing: 'visual reassurance when outlining opinions and allow the use of imagination in expanding on the scene'[24].

Things I enjoy doing at school

Further reading

Clark, J. (2012) Using diamond ranking as visual cues to engage young people in the research process, *Qualitative Research Journal*, 12(2): 222-237.

Woolner, P., Clark, J., Laing, K., Thomas, U. and Tiplady, L, (2012) Changing spaces: Preparing students and teachers for a new learning environment. *Children, Youth and Environments*, 22(1): 52-74.

Woolner, P., Clark, J., Hall, E., Tiplady, L., Thomas, U. and Wall, K. (2010) Pictures are necessary but not sufficient: using a range of visual methods to engage users about school design *Learning Environments Research*, 13(1): 1-22.

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Photo elicitation and beyond

Background

The use of photographs to mediate one to one interviews is reasonably well established in a number of social science disciplines. Where the technique succeeds, it would appear to be due to the photographs 'bridging the gap between the worlds of the researcher and the researched'[25]. Images convey ideas to both parties, which can, through discussion, be used to build shared understandings. Further importance of the images as stimuli is sometimes claimed, such as that 'photographs can jolt subjects into a new awareness of their social existence'[26] or that photographs sharpen the memory and give the interview a more immediate, realistic character[27].

The undoubted immediacy of photographs can also be a barrier to making connections and developing new ideas, however. Images may be understood by participants in a particular way and fail to lead to thinking about the issues that the researcher wants to discuss. The classic one to one in-depth interview is also time consuming, so sometimes impractical, and, even with the addition of photographs, talking in this way with a stranger may be intimidating for participants.

For these reasons, we have developed a number of activities based around photographs, to complement or extend photo elicitation, which focus attention and facilitate the building of shared understandings between participants and researcher.

Photo elicitation interviews

How to…

Photo elicitation interviews can be conducted as one to one interviews or in focus group style, using one or a number of images to mediate a conversation. As with any interviewing, audio-recording the discussion is helpful in relieving the facilitator or interviewer of the need to take notes. If this is not possible, or participants feel uncomfortable being recorded, working in pairs with one researcher taking notes, while the other facilitates, can be successful.

The choice of photographs seems central, but in fact, because images can be interpreted so differently by different people, decisions about what to use may be less sensitive than you expect. The major issue of whether to use photographs of people or places recognisable to the participants can be driven by your research questions – are you trying to find out about attitudes to this *particular* place or event, or about understandings *of this sort of* area or activity? Photographs of situations experienced personally by participants may be more immediately understood by them, which can be helpful, but details can be distracting.

What to do with the data…

The main data here are the recordings or notes of the conversation elicited between researcher and participants. These can be analysed in the same ways as any interviews, using transcriptions if preferred. It is important, however, to keep records of which

photographs are being discussed. It can be helpful to number the images, particularly if quite a lot are being used.
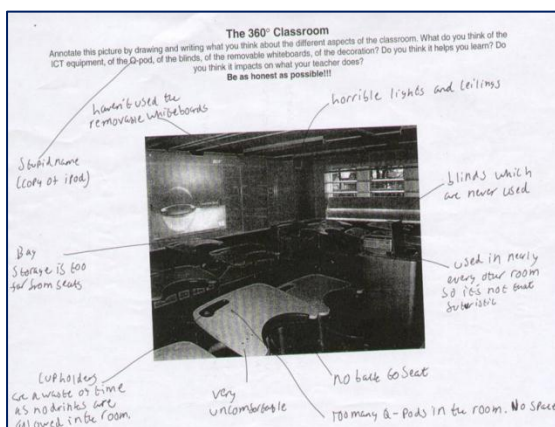
Annotating a photograph

How to…

Where the research issue can be represented by one photograph and the desire is to collect ideas from a wide range of people, annotating a photograph can be practical and revealing.

It is possible to reproduce the stimulus photograph as a poster and invite comments to be written on or around the image. Alternatively, reproduce the photograph on pieces of A4 or A3 paper with plenty of space around it and ask individual participants to each annotate their picture, perhaps in response to some broad questions or prompts[28].

What to do with the data…

The written comments can be investigated for themes or for positive and negative views about a particular aspect. A shared annotated photograph will tend to enable shared views to develop over time, possibly producing the sort of 'emergent'[29] data characteristic of focus group encounters. These are potentially interesting new insights, drawn from your participants as a group rather than as a series of individuals, resulting from their interaction over the image. However, these rich ideas are open to misinterpretation so you need to be careful you can justify any conclusions. Further research or feeding the ideas back to your participants may be required.

In contrast to the shared photograph to annotate, individualised annotations will not produce the shared ideas of your participants. They can, however, enable lots of separate views and ideas to be collected from a large group and collated, in a similar manner to a questionnaire. As well as the advantage of scale, this means of asking for information can preserve anonymity, which can be useful.

Choosing photographs

How to…

A set of photographs is provided and participants are asked to choose a subset of images which are most representative of a particular issue or experience. Although this could be done by individuals, it lends itself to a small group activity and will provoke discussion.

The content of the photographs may be immediately related to participants' experience or you may use impersonal images to convey ideas. We have found that where the photographs relate to an event directly experienced by the participants a set of 50

photographs can be examined but it may be necessary to use fewer impersonal images.

What to do with the data…

You may be interested in which images get chosen most often and standard quantitative methods for considering frequencies can be used, with the information displayed as bar charts or pie charts. It will also be important to understand why particular images are being chosen and here you will need to consider the conversations of participants as they choose, through recording or note-taking, and by asking them to give reasons, verbally or in writing, for their choices.

What works best…?

Each of the methods considered have advantages and disadvantages in terms of the demands they make on time and space, on the researcher and on the participants. Which method is most appropriate for a particular piece of research will depend on these practical issues as well as the aims and questions of the project. It is often helpful to use a mixture of methods to facilitate the collection of differing data – more detail from one to one photo elicited interviews can be combined with a wider range of views from annotated photographs, for example. One

method can also lead into another, for instance using group photograph sorting to choose photographs for photo elicitation interviews[30].

If images are going to be considered through a small group activity or in a focus group situation, the intention will be to enable connections to be made between the experiences of the participants so that new, shared understandings can be built. This entails participants recognising what they have in common so they can function as a group. Looking at photographs can help build this recognition, particularly if the content relates to some shared experience, event or place. Having something to do with the photographs, such as sorting, choosing or annotating can reinforce this sense of shared experience through focusing everyone's attention on a shared outcome. The facilitator can also assist by drawing the group's attention to particular images or asking questions about certain photographs.

When photographs are considered by individual participants, the researcher's role is different. You need to ensure that the participant is comfortable with the activity, has time to think about the ideas provoked by the images and is able to respond through the route you have provided – written comments or a one to one interview. If more open invitations to give opinions are not proving successful, it might be necessary to increase the structure of the encounter through more

focussed questioning or a more narrow activity, such as sorting or ranking. Although this involvement of the researcher's ideas necessarily changes the encounter, it need not invalidate it: all visually mediated encounters entail making connections between the views of the researcher and the researched so their results are products of the context and the task demands [31], with meaning for us as well as for our participants[32].

Further reading

Woolner, P., Clark, J., Laing, K., Thomas, U. and Tiplady, L. (2012) Changing spaces: preparing students and teachers for a new learning environment. *Children, Youth and Environments*. 22(1): 52-74

Woolner, P., Hall, E., Wall, K. and Dennison, D. (2007) Getting together to improve the school environment: user consultation, participatory design and student voice. *Improving Schools* 10(3): 233-248.

Woolner, P., McCarter, S., Wall, K. and Higgins, S. (2012) Changed learning through changed space: When can a participatory approach to the learning environment challenge preconceptions and alter practice? *Improving Schools* 15(1): 45-60.

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The 'toolbox' approach

Background

In carrying out research practitioners often find themselves responding to variable conditions. Research often takes place in the participants' own setting (schools, community centres and homes to name but a few) and so the researcher needs to remain flexible and responsive to these changing circumstances. More importantly still, the participants themselves are all individuals and each will come to the research with their own needs, preferences and pre-conceptions. It is the researcher's responsibility to take account of these differences and, as previously discussed, by doing so it is hoped that not only are participants treated fairly and with respect, but that the best possible data is more likely to be obtained, by working *with* rather than *on* participants.

The 'toolbox' approach takes into account these variable conditions and needs and allows the researcher to have access to a range of resources to facilitate discussion. The intension is to use these resources to engage participants, offering alternative approaches to the traditional interview, by making the activity, rather than the participant, the initial focus. These mediated encounters then allow participants to share perspectives and understandings; this may be in a one-to-one situation with the researcher or in group situations where the activity may not only engage individual participants but also give the group a common purpose and focus.

How to …

Below are some examples of activities that have previously worked well in toolbox situations. They have all been used widely in educational and thinking skills contexts but have most recently been successfully applied by ourselves for research purposes. The examples given are by no means exhaustive, but what they do share is the ability to engage and stimulate conversation.
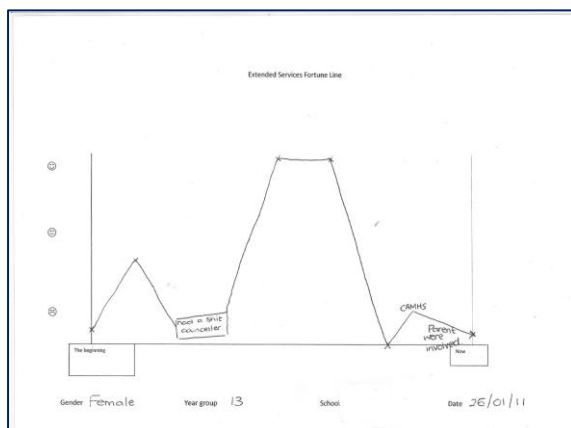
Plus, Minus, Interesting

This activity asks participants to identify a plus, a minus and an interesting aspect of the area under discussion. Alternative wording such as like/dislike or positive/negative may also be used. The activity can be completed individually and followed up by a discussion or alternatively can be done as a group. Resulting discussions provide the opportunity for responses to be 'checked out' for clarity and explored in further depth. Using this activity may prove particularly useful in enabling participants to consider a topic from different perspectives and may be beneficial to a group in facilitating discussion between participants.

Outdoor learning

Plus	minus	Interesting
Enthusiasm of the children	I'm having some difficulty sourcing some resources I need eg: giant weatherproof versions of indoor equipment - not exactly a minus just a small frustration!	Having to juggle directed / guided tasks, independent tasks they can choose to do; plus the time for free play we give them (this is important to have but I don't want them to just end of free-playing too much and not get challenged to do other things).
Makes the staff think how to do things more creatively / in a different way		
Makes us do more hand-on kinaesthetic style learning		
The fire-pit - all the children love it (& I do to)		
Cooking outside and eating our own produce		

Fortune lines

Fortune lines ask participants to chart their response to a subject over a period of time, with events happening along the horizontal axis and their feelings along the vertical axis. Previous examples include 'my learning', 'my alcohol consumption' or 'my behaviour'. Participants would be encouraged to label the graph with key events that have been influential across the fortune line.
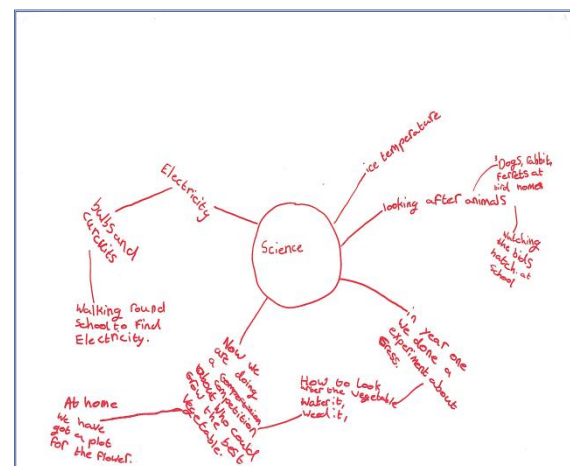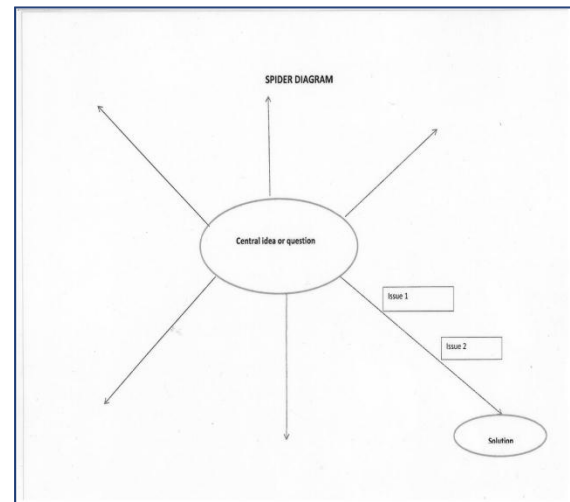

As this activity often focuses on individual's feelings it may be less suitable for sharing in a group. However, the resulting graph may be used as stimulus for a discussion with the researcher and may be a useful tool in exploring potentially sensitive topics.

Spider diagrams and concept maps

Spider diagrams allow participants to gather information and ideas, whilst concept maps encourage participants to consider connections and relationships within a topic. These methods are similar to others such as mind maps or brainstorms and whilst there are a number of guidelines in circulation about how some of these methods should be approached, we are inclined to take a more flexible approach and allow participants to design a diagram that they feel reflects their

thoughts on a subject area. These methods are often particularly productive in groups, where participants can build upon one another's ideas and reflections.

Pictures

Encouraging participants to draw pictorial representations of events, thoughts or feelings can be useful, particularly with young children. The activity is a familiar one and can often be used as an ice-breaker in forming relationships and creating a stimulus for discussion. Children may want to draw themselves in the picture or alternatively may want to draw imaginary characters, either way the picture can be used as a focus for

discussion with the researcher. In the example below a child has drawn a picture of activities after school; this led to a discussion about her feelings and attitudes to childcare provision.

Given that this method has few structural requirements, it also has the advantage of enabling the participant to drive the direction of the conversation with the researcher. This can allow new and unexpected perspectives to emerge.

What to do with the data …

The above activities have the advantage of producing visual data that can be taken away and analysed by the researcher or practitioner at a later date. Comments and information recorded can be collated and analysed in a similar way to interview data, using thematic or grounded approaches.

However, it is important to emphasise that whilst such data can be very valuable, it is the conversations that take place around the creation of the visual that are also of primary importance. In our experience it is the combination of the visual and the spoken explanation/discussion that is often most

powerful and importantly reduces the likelihood of visual data being misinterpreted when taken out of context.

What works best …?

As discussed above, the toolbox method is an approach designed with the explicit intention of being flexible and responsive to participants' needs and preferences. The examples above have all previously worked well in such situations, but they are not exhaustive and no one method will be productive in every situation.

Researchers and practitioners will always have particular research questions that they hope to address, but by remaining sensitive to participants' own needs and having a range of methods and resources to hand, it is intended that both parties may benefit from the experience.

Further reading

Woolner, P., Clark, J., Laing, K., Thomas, U. and Tiplady, L, (2012) Changing spaces: Preparing students and teachers for a new learning environment. *Children, Youth and Environments*, 22(1): 52-74.

Woolner, P., Clark, J., Hall, E., Tiplady, L., Thomas, U. and Wall, K. (2010) Pictures are necessary but not sufficient: using a range of visual methods to engage users about school design *Learning Environments Research*, 13(1): 1-22.

For further information please contact Karen Laing (k.j.c.laing@ncl.ac.uk) or Lucy Tiplady (Lucy.Tiplady@ncl.ac.uk).

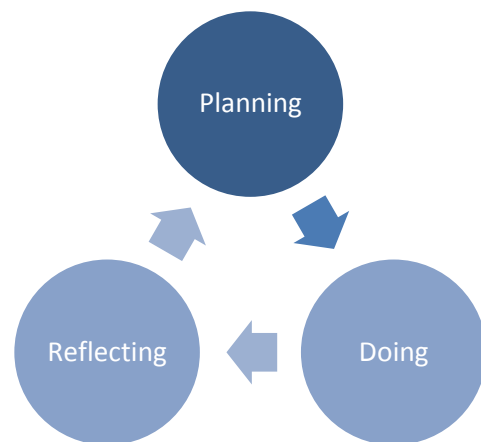# Using visual methods in your own research

Summary

Using visual methods in research is a meaningful way of engaging children and young people during the data collection process. People communicate in different ways, and can connect differently with ideas depending on the media they are using to express themselves. Visual methods enable children and young people to show you how they see the world, as well as, or instead of, telling you.

By using a variety of methods, some which may appeal more than others, participation in research can be more inclusive and enjoyable for those taking part. Authentic shared understandings can be reached. By creating a product, children and young people can get a sense of ownership over the research data, and get the sense that their knowledge and experience are valuable. This changes the balance of control or power between the researcher and the researched, as young people are more easily able to set the agenda of what it is they want to express and become the experts in place of the researcher.

Making visual methods work in your context

Having explored some of the ideas contained within this booklet, you may well have been inspired to try out some of the methods in your own piece of research. The further reading that we have recommended throughout will give you a deeper insight into how you might go about this. Not every method will be suitable for every situation, group or individual and a certain amount of flexibility is recommended. The concept of a 'toolbox' of methods that you can use in order to stimulate discussion can assist you when undertaking what is sometimes unpredictable research, and where circumstances are largely beyond your control (for example, when attending a youth club with many other activities going on).

In order to help you to conduct your research, it is important to think about what might work in your context. Careful planning can help you to prevent problems arising, but as a researcher, you will need to be aware of what is happening around you while you are conducting fieldwork. It is not enough to use visual methods as an activity that can substitute for the researcher. The researcher needs to be aware at all times of the dynamics of the group, ensuring all participants are enjoying a positive experience and able to contribute effectively. Prompting may be necessary to surface meanings and explain annotations. A period of reflection can aid the researcher in assessing what needs to change in future. It may be helpful to ask yourself a series of questions during the research process.

Planning
- What do you want to find out?
- Why are you doing the research?
- Who do you want to participate?
- What methods will you choose?
- Will those methods help you to answer your questions?
- How much time will you need?
- What equipment do you need?
- How will participants benefit from taking part?
- What data will I need?

Doing
- is everyone engaged and interested?
- Does everyone know why they are taking part?
- Does everyone understand the task?
- How can I support participants?
- What is my role?
- Is the method working?
- Am I being child-centred?
- Am I encouraging equal participation?
- Are there ground rules in place?
- How are my own views and perspectives having an impact?

Reflecting
- What did the participants think of taking part?
- How did participants benefit?
- What worked well?
- What could improve?
- What happens next?
- What change can be produced from the results of the research?

What next?

Using visual methods to promote an inclusive approach to involving participants in research is developing all the time. By using the cyclical approach to our practice as researchers as described above – Planning, Doing and Reflecting – enables us to refine and improve our practice continuously and become comfortable with the idea of ourselves as ethical practitioners. We do not always get it right first time. It often takes a process of trial and error, of collaborating with, and learning from those with whom we may have traditionally viewed as research 'subjects'.

Future possibilities to continue developing participatory approaches and visual methods are vast. The emergence of new technologies such as touch screens and the interest young people demonstrate in social media are areas of development for methodology that are, as

yet, under-explored. New technology, used appropriately, has the potential to enhance participatory practice, and provide new ways of describing, conceptualising and doing 'the visual'.

References

[1] Clark, J. and Laing, K. (2012) The involvement of children and young people in research within the criminal justice area. Discussion Paper from the AHRC Connected Communities Programme Scoping Review.

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Jill Clark has worked as an academic researcher since 1992 and is a Senior Research Associate and Business Development Director of CfLaT at Newcastle University. Although now working in the field of educational research, Jill has a strong background in Social Sciences research. Her first degree is in Behavioural Sciences and she then completed her postgraduate degree in Criminology at Cambridge University. Jill has led several research projects and has specialist knowledge and experience of qualitative methods - participant observation, in-depth interviews and focus group discussions and participatory and visual research.

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Lucy Tiplady joined Newcastle University as a researcher within CfLaT in 2005. Since then, Lucy has worked on a diverse range of projects and evaluations within Education and has developed subject specialisms in the areas of practitioner enquiry and visual research methods. Working collaboratively with schools and the wider education community has led to a keen interest in how research methods can be used as tools for enquiry to aid teacher and pupil learning and how visual methods can be used to mediate and enhance interviews.

Pam Woolner has over a decade of varied, direct experience in educational research. This centres on understanding the learning environment provided by schools and investigating the participation of users in this understanding. Her work, bridging architecture, education and visual research methods, is determinedly interdisciplinary and she has been invited to provide expert input into projects and discussions at regional and national levels.

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Connected Communities is a cross-Council Programme being led by the AHRC in partnership with the EPSRC, ESRC, MRC and NERC and a range of external partners. The current vision for the Programme is:

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