

## Assignment 4: Mini Research Report

*Percentage of overall mark: 40%*

*Due: in class, Week 11 (8 – 12 October 2018). A copy must also be uploaded to Moodle.*

*Report length: 1,900 words*

Rationale

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This assignment is designed to demonstrate that you:

- are familiar with the structural format of a research report;
- have developed data collection and analysis skills;
- are able to conduct observations.

Task

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For the purposes of this assignment, imagine that you have been appointed by your local council to conduct further research for the new book they are planning to publish. You have already completed a Critical Review examining the existing research about the local area. NOW the council would like you to complete a short piece of research about the local area. You will a) use four sources and b) conduct research using the method of observation.

Your research will focus on ONE of the following topics (it can be the same one you addressed in the Critical Review, or a different one):

- Population demographics (age, gender, ethnicity, ability, social class)
- Housing (type, standard, condition, renovation, re-development)
- Gentrification (physical and social changes in an area)
- Religion (places of worship, facilities, communities, practices)
- Recreation (parks, sporting facilities, open spaces, beaches, gardens, playgrounds)
- Entertainment (restaurants, hotels, cinemas, theatres, venues)
- Culture/ learning (galleries, museums, festivals, classes, hobbies and pastimes, interest groups)
- Business (retail and other local commercial activity, industry, employment)
- Transport (public and commercial transport, car use, roadways, cycling, pathways)

Research & Task Questions

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Decide on one or two **research questions** - that is, what you aim to investigate through the method of observation. Remember to take into account the limitations of the method and the available resources.

After you have conducted your observation you will write up your research as a Mini Report, to answer (in the Discussion section) the following **task question**:

To what extent do your observations confirm or challenge the previous research you have conducted on this topic?

## A. The Observation

For this assignment you will use the research method of observation:

1. When you have chosen your topic, choose a relevant site for your observation (a research 'hub') in your local area. This 'research hub' could be a shopping strip, a local entertainment precinct, a specific street, a transport station, a park or beach, or a civic building.
2. Decide on some research questions - that is, what you aim to investigate.
3. Spend one hour at your research 'hub' and create a 'walking narrative'.
  - Move through or around the perimeter of the hub and use your eyes and ears (and any other senses that may be useful) to observe and otherwise take it in. You can sit and make notes about your thoughts, but only for a ten minute period. It is important to keep moving to take in the sights and sounds of the area.
  - It is also important to take notes along the way; if you do not record your impressions as you go, you will forget them. You can add more information after your walk, but you must record your experiences and thoughts as you think them, not as you remember them.

Focus Questions for your observation

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In addition to the Research Questions, there will be 'Focus Questions' you might want to answer. They will help you get the 'big picture', but will also help you answer your Research Questions. They should be fairly broad, but they will depend on the particular 'hub' you choose—one of the purposes of observation is to see familiar 'everyday' things in a new way, so remember to allow yourself to take in as much as possible. Here are a few to get you started:

- What kind of 'hub' is it? What are its purposes?
- What do you see? What is around you? What is the aspect/ view?
- Who do you see? What are their characteristics? (i.e. age, gender, ability, ethnic background, etc) What are they doing? Where are they going?
- What sounds do you hear? What can you smell?

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- What examples of the natural environment do you see? Are there large trees or flower beds?
- Are the buildings old or new? What was/ is their purpose? Are they in a state of change? Why?
- What kind of plaques, memorials or historical buildings do you see? What does this tell you about the area as it was, and as it is now?
- What kinds of shops/ businesses are around? What does this indicate about the area? If you are observing people shopping, what have they been buying?
- What kinds of services are around? What does that indicate about the area?
- In what languages are street and shop signs written? What might this indicate?
- Is there a particular spot people gravitate to? Why is this? Who is using it and what are they doing?
- Is it a busy street? Is there a lot of traffic? What type of traffic is it? Where is it going? How accessible is public transport?

(You do not have to answer all of these questions; they are here merely to prompt your thinking about the area you are observing and to help you develop your own questions.)

## B. Mini Research Report

Your Mini Research Report will use the following headings (in italics):

<p><b>Introduction/ aims of the research</b> (<b>approx. 200 words</b>)</p>	<p>In this section, you need to introduce your local area and topic, to clearly state the aim of your research and the specific research questions.</p>
<p><b>Review of the literature</b> (<b>approx. 350 words</b>)</p>	<p>In this section you need to critically review the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One source of statistics (related to your local area and topic)</li> <li>• One research report or journal article (related to your local area and topic)</li> <li>• One book or book chapter (related to your local area)</li> <li>• One news/ media article (related to your local area and topic)</li> </ul> <p>The information in the review needs to be integrated; don't just summarise each source separately.</p>

<b>Method of data collection (approx. 250 words)</b>	In this section you need to briefly describe the method you used to collect the data you will write about in the Results and Discussion sections. Also provide a rationale for the place and time that you chose.
<b>Results (approx. 300 words)</b>	In this section you need to provide an account of what you found when you conducted your observation. Use qualitative and quantitative data.
<b>Discussion (approx. 300 words)</b>	Compare and contrast the findings in the Results section to those in AT LEAST three of the sources referred to in the Review of Literature section. This section is where you answer the Task Question:  To what extent do your observations confirm or challenge the previous research you have conducted on this topic?
<b>Summary and conclusions (approx. 200 words)</b>	Draw your findings together. Does your research indicate areas for future research?
<b>Reflective component (approx 300 words)</b>	Give an account of your 'walking narrative'. This is where you 'tell the story' of your research and reflect creatively on the process.
<b>List of references</b>	(not included in word count)

- The Mini Research Report must include a completed UOSS cover sheet and a title page (not included in word count)
- Appendices may be included if applicable. They will not be included in the word count.
- Use full paragraphs, and grammatically correct sentences. Do not use point form.

#### **Assignment 4 (Mini Research Report) Marking Criteria**

You are marked according to whether you have fulfilled the criteria, and how well you have fulfilled it.

<b>General</b>	
<i>Intro/ Aims</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ⓞ Are the local area and topic introduced?</li> <li>Ⓞ Is the aim of the research stated?</li> <li>Ⓞ Are the research questions stated?</li> </ul>

<i>Review of the literature</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>⑨ Are four sources reviewed critically?</li> <li>⑨ Are they of the types prescribed in the instructions?</li> </ul>
<i>Method of data collection</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>⑨ Is the data collection process described?</li> <li>⑨ Is a rationale for the date, place and time of the observation included?</li> </ul>
<i>Results</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>⑨ Is there a comprehensive overview of the results using both quantitative and qualitative data?</li> </ul>
<i>Discussion</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>⑨ Are at least 3 sources referred to?</li> <li>⑨ Are these sources discussed in relation to the results?</li> <li>⑨ Is the task question answered?</li> </ul>
<i>Summary &amp; Conclusions</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>⑨ Are the main patterns drawn together and are possible conclusions suggested?</li> <li>⑨ Are areas for further research recommended?</li> </ul>
<i>Referencing</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>⑨ Are there in-text references using the Harvard style?</li> <li>⑨ Is there a List of References?</li> </ul>
<i>Presentation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>⑨ Is the report correctly presented (headings, 1.5 line spacing, title page)?</li> </ul>
<b>Content</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>⑨ Are assignment instructions followed?</li> <li>⑨ Was the observation well planned? Were aspects like place and time well-chosen?</li> <li>⑨ Are the research questions appropriate for the aims of the research?</li> <li>⑨ Is the mode of writing appropriate for each section? Is the Report well written overall?</li> <li>⑨ Are sources well integrated?</li> <li>⑨ Are the results effectively and persuasively integrated with the review of literature?</li> </ul>	
<b>Reflective component</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>⑨ Is it a personal account?</li> <li>⑨ Does it reflect on the research process?</li> <li>⑨ Was the mode of writing appropriate for a personal account?</li> </ul>	