

## **Session 1 activity 1**

Suppose you wish to plan a course on research skills. You wish to know as much as possible about the potential students' existing research skills, knowledge and experience.

Design a set of questions that could be used in a questionnaire to collect data on the research skills, knowledge and experience of a group of people such as the people in this class.

Assemble your questions into a list so that you have a rough and ready questionnaire. (A properly designed questionnaire would probably include some other questions and would be thoughtfully sequenced, and beautifully presented!)

## Session 1 activity 2

**In pairs**, discuss the following and note down some suggestions

Is it possible to collect data on customer satisfaction that is valid and reliable? How can it be done? What are the likely problems? How can the problems be solved?

(Generating ideas for collecting suitable data is green hat thinking. Once you have some suggestions then you can use some black hat thinking to identify the weaknesses in them. Seeking solutions to problems involves green hat thinking again.)

## Session 1 activity 3

Suppose you wish to do some research to try to find out why staff turnover is very high in a particular business.

1. Compose a clear and concise statement of a suitable research objective. (This should not be too difficult, so don't spend too long on this.)
2. Identify some investigative questions you think you would need to answer in order to achieve your objective.
3. Devise some questions you could use to collect data that would allow you to answer (some of) these investigative questions. Note down to whom you would ask each of these questions.

(You could usefully look at Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2003) which discusses investigative questions from p289 as a follow-up to this activity.)

## **Session 1 activity 1 follow-up**

1. Review the answers your questions elicited and do the following.
  1. Summarise what you have discovered about your respondents' previous research experience, knowledge and skills, ie summarise the data you have obtained.
  2. Consider how useful that data seems.
  3. Consider how well your questions worked and how successful you think they would be in providing data to inform your planning for the research skills course.
  
- B Think about the experience of answering the other students' questions that you answered.
  1. Did the questions enable you to provide as much information as you could have done about your research skills, knowledge and experience?
  2. Was the experience of answering the questions broadly satisfactory or was it somewhat frustrating?
  3. What other comments can you offer on the questions?