

**Level: Master 1 (Didactics)**

**Module: Methodology in Assessment and Testing**

# **Research Tools**

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# Data Collection

- Data collection is an important process that should be based on a set of principles that determine the quality of the gathered information. These criteria include validity, reliability and practicality. Moreover, research ethics have to be taken into consideration.

# Research Tools

Data collection involves the use of primary and secondary sources. The primary sources are often in the form of research instruments including tests, questionnaires, interviews and observation.

# *The Questionnaire*

A questionnaire may include three types of questions: close-ended, open-ended and multiple choice questions. In fact, the close-ended and the multiple choice questions provide quantitative data while the open-ended questions supply qualitative information.

## ***The Questionnaire***

- When designing a questionnaire, one should take into account the following information:
- Begin with an introduction that elicits the purpose of the questionnaire and asks for the consent of the informants.
- Use a simple style and provide clear instructions.
- Respect the question order by listing the questions in a form that shifts from general to specific and from close-ended to open-ended questions.
- Pilot the questionnaire.

## *The Questionnaire*

When designing a questionnaire, one should also keep in mind the following information:

- Avoid double-barrelled questions. For example: What do you think about learning grammar and vocabulary?
- Avoid leading questions For example: How do you evaluate your level in English?

Satisfactory  good  excellent

- Avoid biased questions. For example: Do you think that the grammar exercises are uninteresting?

# ***The Interview***

An interview refers to a conversation between the researcher and the informant. There are three types of interviews: structured, semi-structured and unstructured. The structured interview may be used for the collection of qualitative and quantitative data. On the other hand, the semi-structured and unstructured interviews provide qualitative data. The interview relies more on open-ended questions; it is time consuming and may introduce bias.

## ***The Interview***

- When designing an interview, follow these instructions:
- Think about the type of the interview you will opt for and the issue you will tackle.
- Prepare the questions or outline in advance.
- When meeting the interviewee, start with an oral introduction involving the greeting, the purpose of the interview and the consent of the respondent.
- Avoid questions that increase bias and make the interviewee feel at ease.
- While listening to the interviewee, take notes or record the speech of the informant. However, recording should not be employed without the permission of the interviewee.



# *Observation*

Observation is a means of collecting information by watching people's attitudes and behaviour or events and settings. Classroom observation concerns the elicitation of events and interactions happening in the classroom. There are various types of observation.

# ***Observation***

## ***Types of observation according to the degree of the involvement of the observer:***

This category includes: participant and non participant observation. Participant observation implies that the observer is involved in the situation as he/she takes part in the activities or interactions under investigation. On the other hand, non participant observation means that the observer does not participate in the observed situation.

## ***Observation***

### ***Types of observation depending on the organization or format of observation:***

This group refers to structured and unstructured observation. Structured observation which is also called systematic observation relies on the use of an observation schedule as the researcher employs a set of techniques for observing. However, unstructured observation does not involve an observation schedule.

## ***Observation***

### ***Types of observation according to research ethics:***

This category includes overt and covert observation. Overt observation means that the observed persons know that they are observed. Covert observation implies that the observer is concealed as the observed persons do not know that they are observed.

## ***Observation***

### ***Types of observation depending on the nature of the observed situation:***

This category involves uncontrolled and controlled observation. Uncontrolled observation which is also called simple observation means that the researcher does not influence the observed people and observation takes place in a natural setting. On the other hand, controlled observation which is also called contrived observation implies that observation takes place according to a specific plan as the researcher influences the observed persons or situation.

# *Observation*

When using observation as a research tool, the researcher has to take into consideration the purpose and the type of observation involved as well as the time and place of observation. Furthermore, he/she should decide about the way of recording observation.

# References

- Cohen, Louis, Manion, Lawrence, and Morrison, Keith. (2007). *Research Methods in Education*. New York: Routledge.
- Lodico, Marguerite G., Spaulding Dean T. and Voegtle, Katherine H. (2010). *Methods in Educational Research: From Theory to Practice*. USA: Jossey-Bass.