**Research Topic**: A case study of reading intervention in year 3

1. **How do you understand the process of research from within your particular theoretical and methodological framework**?

**Research Overview**

Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary defines “research as studious inquiry or examination especiallyinvestigation or experimentation aimed at the discovery and interpretation of facts, revision of accepted theories or laws in the light of new facts, or practical application of such new or revised theories or laws, the collecting of information about a particular subject”. Research according to Bajpai (2011) is “a systematic and scientific procedure of data collection, compilation, analysis, interpretation, and implication pertaining to any business problem”. The process involves methodically sourcing or gathering of data and information and analysis data collected for advancement of knowledge in a particular subject. Unlike what is commonly believed, research is not just about gathering and analysis of data but it's aim is primarily to provide answers to questions in a particular field or area of study. Research is founded on scientific reasoning which could be inductive and deductive or both.

Research is carried out through defined systematic process which generally include:

1. Define research problem
2. Formulate hypothesis
3. Review literatures
4. Select data collection methods
5. Collect data
6. Analyze data
7. Interpret data and report

**Research Methodologies**

There are primarily two basic approaches to research, namely, quantitative approach and qualitative approach. However, there are debate in recent time on the relative merits of quantitative and qualitative research methodology within many of the social sciences. While there are those who see the approaches as entirely separate, other are happy to mix the approaches during research work hence the “Mixed” approach.

*Qualitative Methodology*: It is conducted using words and textual data (McCombes, 2019). Research in such a situation is a function of researcher’s insights and impressions. Qualitative approach results are either in non-quantitative forms or in a form which have not been exposed to rigorous quantitative investigation or examination. It is particularly useful when the researcher seeks to understand abstract concepts, perceptions, behavior, body language, opinions, and even visual data.

*Quantitative Methodology*: This approach involves the generation of data in quantitative form which are subsequently subjected to rigorous analysis as argued by (McCombes, 2019). The approach can be sub-classified into inferential, experimental and simulation approaches to research. Quantitative research involves the measurement and testing of numerical data such as quantity and amount. It is typically used when the research objectives are confirmatory in nature.

*Mixed-Methods Methodology*: The mixed-methods methodology, as the name suggests, combines both the qualitative and quantitative methodologies hence drawing from both their strengths for richer results. (Johnson et al. cited in Jamshed 2014)

**Understanding Research Terminologies**

Some common but most prominent terminologies used in research work which are also generally used interchangeably though distinct are Research Methodology and Research Method. In very simple terms, Research Methodology is the systematic, theoretical analysis of body of methods and principles related to a field of study or branch of knowledge. (Irny and Rose, 2005). Methodology is not designed to provide solutions but rather helps in determining the method or set of methods to apply in specific cases. This therefore make it different from a research method. Research Method, on the other hand, involves the use of tools of experience, authoritative sources, reasoning etcetera, available to man to understand nature and be in tune with its environment. Research methods comprise conduct of experiments, tests, surveys, interviews, use of questionnaires and the like.

**Research Work**

This research work is a case study on a reading intervention program for year 3 pupils called Switch-on Reading program. Switch-on is an intensive literacy intervention program organized to support children identified by schools as being at the risk of reading difficulties in order to help them improve their reading skills. Switch-on is a Xxxxx University programmed introduced to selected primary schools and delivered by Xxxxx trained instructors.

The research seeks to understand the difference made by the Switch-on program in the school’s reading intervention program, in the reading skills of the participating children and the experiences of the stakeholders in the reading intervention program. The stakeholders considered for this research are the pupils participating in the program, the teachers who are directly involved in delivering the program, the pupils class teacher and where possible the school representative.

The research would seek answers to the following research questions regarding the Switch-on reading intervention deployed by Xxxxx University for year 3 pupils:

1. What differences has the reading intervention made to the school?
2. What are the experiences of the pupils involved in the intervention?
3. What are the experiences of the teachers involved in the switch on reading program?

I would apply the qualitative methodology in carrying out this research review. This methodology is considered the most appropriate for the following reasons amongst others:

* The research seeks to understand the benefits of the Switch-on reading program to the school
* It seeks to understand individual and collective experiences of participating pupils and teachers
* The research does not seek to measure or test numerical data such as quantity and amount which is prominently the expertise of the quantitative methodology.
* The research objectives are not confirmatory in nature which the use of qualitative methodology best fits
1. **What are the implications of such a framework for your research?**

The data collected and analyzed through interviews and surveys-questionnaires are to help understand the experiences of the stakeholders in the program and well as understand of the program has made a difference to the school.

Because of the objective of the research tilting towards opinions, perspectives and experiences, qualitative research methodology has been deployed for the purpose of this research work and research method of `interview and questionnaire would be adopted.

1. **How do you understand the nature of knowledge (status of the data that you will collect and analyse)?**

*Interview*: In my particular case, Interview would be ministered specifically to the pupils participating in the Switch-on program to source for primary data for the research. For this reason, the benefits of using interview are documented below including prompt access to response details.

Interview would be a great method that would help with elicit detailed narratives and stories from the pupils. DiCicco-Bloom and Crabtree, (2006) suggests that:

* Based on interviewee response, unplanned follow-up questions can be carefully considered to continue the conversation
* Interview is accompanied by learning when the interviewee becomes engaged hence my task would be to make the interviewee engaged becomes even more important. While this sounds theoretically simply, considering the ages of the interviewee, this can be a horrendous task.
* In view of the ages of the children involved, face-to-face interview would help in identifying the child’s saturating point or where the child is no longer interested in continuing with the research method.
* Interview helps in developing rapport and quickly addressing the initial apprehension to create a safe and comfortable environment that allows the interviewee to share personal experiences.
* Interview provides opportunity for clarification of information without necessarily leading the interviewee.
* Interview allows for primary data to be collected.

*Survey - Questionnaire*:

Below are some of the benefits of questionnaire as stated by Cherry (2019) that would apply to my research project-

* Surveys allow for information describing characteristics of a large sample within a short time.
* The research produces data based on real-world observations
* Questionnaire can be ministered to first time contacts though that would not be the case in this research work as stakeholders are all within the research site
* Surveys are less expensive method of collecting data which in my case help is reducing cost associated in the research.
* Easy to create and administer

While there are benefits to each of the chosen methods as indicated above, there are also disadvantages to this methods some of which are already captured above.

1. **What is your selected research design**?

Research designs are plans and the procedure for research that span the decisions from broad assumptions to detailed methods of data collection and analysis. It involves the intersection of philosophical assumptions, strategies of inquiry, and specific methods’’. (Creswell, 2009). For this reason, I would be using the following methods in collecting data: Interview and Questionnaires.

1. **What is your research focus /questions?**

The exact phenomenon that I would be focusing on is a case study of reading intervention in year 3 pupils. The intervention would be carried out using Switch on reading program. The program is an intensive literacy intervention organized to support children identified by schools as being at the risk of reading difficulties in order to hep them improve their reading skills.

My project aims to find out the experiences of the stakeholders in the reading intervention program among year 3 pupils. The stakeholders considered for my research are the pupils and teachers that are directly involved. Furthermore, it seeks to understand how the program helps improve the reading skills of the participating children and how well the program went.

The following are the research questions that would be put to the participants

* What differences has the reading intervention made to the school?
* What are the experiences of the pupils involved in the intervention?
* What are the experiences of the teachers involved in the switch on reading program?
1. **Explain and justify your choice of methods for the collection and analysis of data**

Generally, qualitative research methodology uses Observations, Interviews, Focus groups, Surveys, and Secondary research are used as data collection methods. For the purpose of this work, the research would deploy the following qualitative data collection techniques to be able to achieve its objectives and provide answers to its research questions:

* *Interview:*

The research seeks to explore meaning and perceptions to gain a better understanding of the benefit contributed by the switch-on reading interventions to the school and understand the experiences of the participants hence the use of qualitative interviewing will encourage the interviewee to share rich descriptions of experiences for the investigator to interpret or analyze. The interview would be semi-structured formats as the structured often produce quantitative data.

Interview is considered the most appropriate research method as it can occur either with individuals or in groups and best fit for gathering information on perception.

Interview would be primarily administered to the participating pupils and would be conducted once for each pupil. This would be prescheduled to ensure maximum participation based on the child and guardian’s availability and will take up to 30 minutes to complete. This would also be done face-to-face.

* *Survey - Questionnaire*:

Survey research which involves collecting information from individuals through their responses to a set of questions shared by the reviewer (Check & Schutt, 2012, p. 160). Survey can use quantitative questions, qualitative questions or both though surveys are mostly used in social and psychological research (Singleton & Straits, 2009). Surveys were mostly shared through the mail; however, survey research has developed into a rigorous approach to research including having to address queries like how to distribute (survey method), and when to initiate the survey and follow up with nonresponders to reduce nonresponse error.

Effective survey has 6 key steps:

* [Determine](https://www.scribbr.com/methodology/survey-research/#step-one-define-the-population-and-sample) who will participate in the survey
* [Decide](https://www.scribbr.com/methodology/survey-research/#step-two-decide-on-the-type-of-survey) the type of survey (mail, online, or in-person)
* [Design](https://www.scribbr.com/methodology/survey-research/#step-three-design-the-survey-questions) the survey questions and layout
* [Distribute](https://www.scribbr.com/methodology/survey-research/#step-four-distribute-the-survey-and-collect-responses) the survey
* [Analyze](https://www.scribbr.com/methodology/survey-research/#step-five-analyze-the-survey-results) the responses
* [Write up](https://www.scribbr.com/methodology/survey-research/#step-six-write-up-the-survey-results) the results

For the purpose of this research work, questionnaire would be administered only to the participating teachers in the program, pupils’ class teacher and school administration, as appropriate. The questions would be documented to allow for stakeholders engaged to share their experiences in the program as well as opine on the benefit of the switch-on program to the school based on their experience.

Non respondence error is the greatest challenge in using this method. However, this the stakeholders are also within the research site, follow up would be easier to ensure a 100% respondence.

1. **Sampling, access to a research site, validity, and bias:**
* Sampling:

The research sampling has been predetermined by the school where I am doing my placement with. This is a project where the school has interest in in order to understand the difference the Switch-on reading intervention has made to the school. The sampling for the purpose of this research work covers all the six participating pupils in year 3, aged between eight and nine years old in a predominately white, low/middle-class public primary school in Xxxxxxxxx, United Kingdom. The participating students include four boys and two girls. The students have been selected by the aforementioned school because they are struggling to reach the age-appropriate reading level set by the government. These are pupils having difficulties in reading and therefore requires addition reading support. Support in the sense of a specialized and targeted reading training.

On the other hand, the two teachers who are directly involved in the Switch on reading intervention program and have undergone training in the program would form part of the stakeholders sampled for this research work and one year 3 class teacher whose student are engaged in the program.

Inclusion criteria:

* Participants will be only students in year three in the selected school
* The participants will be those children having difficulties in reading and participating in the reading intervention program.
* Teachers will be only those carrying out the reading intervention
* The class teacher of pupils participating in the intervention program

Exclusion criteria:

* Students above or below year 3
* Pupils not part of the reading intervention program even though they might be in year 3
* Pupils that are outsiders, that is, not part of the participating school.
* Teachers not taking part in the reading intervention program
* Class teacher whose pupils are not part of this intervention program
* Access to a research site:

In terms of access to the site, there are no issues to it because the research site is my placement school. It is where the research will be conducted, and all the teachers and pupils are selected from the school.

* Validity:

The concept of validity is not a single, fixed, or universal but rather, a contingent construct, inescapably grounded in the processes and intentions of a particular research methodologies and projects (Winter, 2000). As a researcher it is my responsibility to know what stance to take towards my research process and my research participants. It is for me to establish what relationship there will be between me as a researcher and what I am going to research. I would take the stance of a faithful reporter according to (Blaikie, 2007) by keeping the integrity of the phenomenon. It is my responsibility to remain faithful to the facts under investigation and maintain the phenomena under investigation by generating reports in which the social actors are able to recognize themselves and others as well. The research participants would be allowed to speak for themselves during my interview with them and give their own point of view.

* Bias:

I acknowledge that there may be some bias because I am delivering the intervention. As an insider, in my subconscious, I may want the intervention to work so that might create some bias in my data interpretation and analysis. However, I will ensure this is mitigated the generated codes from my data is independent and purely based on the data that would be analyzed.

1. **How do you see your role as a researcher in relation to issues of: - theoretical sensitivity (are you going to be an 'insider', an 'outsider', a 'co -constructor' or data, a participant / practitioner, or an action researcher?) - ethics (issues of access, consent, and power)**

Addressing the issue of theoretical sensitivity, which is essential to my research project, it is argued that Theoretical sensitivity refers to the ‘researchers characteristics such as insight and skills to make data meaningful, perception and analysis elements from the irrelevant elements that must be followed as a matter of principle in all steps of the research’ (Javadi-Pashaki and Darvishpour, 2019). (Strauss and Cobin, cited in Orland-Barak, 2002) argues that all through the years of field work and professional experience a person obtains an understanding of how things work in practice. When this knowledge is brought into practice it aids the researcher in making sense of the happenings and actions she is witnessing. In turn, as research in gaining theoretical sensitivity, I will go into the research setting with a few predetermined opinions as possible.

Moreover, obtaining informed consent from people who are being researched has been considered a primary element of the ethical conduct of research and (Tinker & Coomber cited in Crow 2007). Therefore, there is need to obtain consent from participants.

Participating Consent

* Everyone participating in this research project will be voluntary. All children participating in the project will be invited through the gate keeper, in this case it will be the head teacher. An email will be sent teachers and to parents / guardians of the children participating, stating the purpose of the research, the questions that would be asked, the study outline and reasons for conducting the interviews. I will also share information sheets and consent form. Participants will be requested to read the information sheets thoroughly and ask any question before the consent form is signed. The signed consent form will be returned to me prior to commencement of the research with the participant. There is possibility of students feeling pressured to participate because of the dual role of teacher and researcher (BERA 201), in case of such concerns by students the university secretary would serve as an intermediary for the student. Consent to carry out the research has been requested for.
* The participant will be only those who give positive feedback to the invitation letter. They would be students who are involved in the reading intervention, while the teachers are my classmates in the university who are also involved in carrying out the switch on Reading program. I am sure the students will feel relaxed during the interviews as I would have built a good relationship with them to gain their confidence. For the teachers we have built a friendly relationship nevertheless they would be reminded not to be bias in their reports. I am sure my relationship with these teachers will certainly not compromise the research but profit it.
* Parental / guardian and school consent will be sought. Furthermore, I will seek full consent of the children by making it clear that they have the final say in whether they participate in the research or not. Children and indeed all participants will be told that they have the right to withdraw from the project at any time.

Since I will be working with children participating in both the research work and in the intervention program, there might be some potential risks as called out in the following points:

* The issue of consent is potential risk in this research, whether consent of the children involved in the research or that of the teachers. Participants would only be used for this research only when they consent to participating by signing the consent form. Should the participant consent to take part, all necessary steps will be taken to protect their privacy and ensure the anonymity and non-traceability of participants and/or other individuals for whom confidentiality would be expected, for example, by using pseudonyms, for both individual and institutional participants, in any written reports of the research and other forms of dissemination.
* In the cause of the research, there could be some children who might get upset. If at any time they feel this way, I will make them understand that their participation is strictly voluntary and that at any point in time they are free to withdraw from participating in the research. My treatment of potential research participants will in no way be prejudiced if they choose not to participate in the project.
* The research will be conducted in line with the protocols of the British Education Research Association. <https://www.bera.ac.uk/publication/ethical-guidelines-for-educational-research-2018>.
* Participants may bring family member/ close friend who can wait for them outside the interview room. In case the participant gets distressed, the researcher will stop the collection of data and ask if they want to continue later or if the researcher should keep the data already collected.
* If the participant feel they would like to speak to someone during the research, the researcher will make arrangement for the participant to speak to student services.
* I might find a conflict of interest between my participation and the research agenda. However, I would abide by the ethics to ensure bias are eliminated and data are factually represented in the report.
* Teachers might feel threatened. In such circumstance, I would reassure the participants that only personal information that are essential would be obtained and that confidentiality of such identifiable information will be maintained unless the researcher obtains the express permission of the participant to do otherwise. This is to ensure that participants are protected against injury or illegal invasions of their privacy and to preservation of their personal dignity.

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