Things to think about

- One of the best ways to find out how research works is to read a few studies. Go through both a quantitative study and a qualitative study and see how they are constructed.
- How do quantitative and qualitative research methods complement each other?
- Do you have a burning question or passionate area of interest? How would you turn it into a research question? What steps would you take to develop a study that you could carry out in your school environment?
- Why is it worthwhile for governments to fund research?
- Pupils and students in some schools are already involved in research projects. Find out about some of them by visiting http://www.leru.org.uk/current_research_collaboration/london_lives_(student_voice)/index.html or http://childrens-research-centre.open.ac.uk/
- Find a research study that was widely covered in the press and consider how different newspapers wrote about it. Look at the research itself and see if you can write a “neutral” story. Can it be done?

Further resources

Understanding Society
A world-leading study of the socio-economic circumstances and attitudes of 100,000 individuals in 40,000 British households. It is funded by the ESRC and run by the Institute for Social and Economic Research. The study allows for deeper analysis of the population as they respond to regional, national and international change. The findings quoted on page 1 of this resource are taken from Chapter 2 ‘Family Relationships’: by Professor John Ermisch, Maria Iacovou and Alexandra J Skew. The full chapters can be found at research.understandingsociety.org.uk/findings/early-findings. Visit www.understandingsociety.org.uk/

Gapminder
Professor Hans Rosling’s website brings quantitative data to life with amazing graphics and video.
www.gapminder.org

Timescapes
ESRC-funded quantitative longitudinal study exploring family relationships over time.
www.youtube.com/watch?v=ElOph9yVI3I
www.timescapes.leeds.ac.uk

Centre for Longitudinal Studies
The Centre houses three internationally-renowned birth cohort studies: the 1958 National Child Development Study, the 1970 British Cohort Study and the Millennium Cohort Study.
www.cls.ioe.ac.uk/

Mass Observation
http://www.massobs.org.uk/index.htm

National Centre for Research Methods
ESRC-funded Centre providing a range of resources on research methods.
http://www.ncrm.ac.uk
Methodologies
References and contributors

References

Centre for Longitudinal Studies, Ko’hort, CLS Cohort Studies Newsletter Summer 2010
Payne, G. and J. (2004), Key Concepts in Social Research, Sage
ESRC Impact Case Studies: www.esrc.ac.uk/impact-case-studies

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SOCIAL SCIENCE FOR SCHOOLS

The Social Science for Schools website, www.socialscienceforschools.org.uk, is packed full of useful resources, covering topical issues and concepts relevant to young people. Among these are printable resources, as well as case studies, opinion pieces, and a library of external links which may be of interest to teachers and students alike.

Feedback and enquiries can be sent to schools@esrc.ac.uk