



Education and Culture DG

Lifelong Learning Programme

# Cultural Treasure Hunt

Workshop on RESEARCH TOOLS  
Aeolis

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# Research tools

1. What research is?
2. Different approaches to research
3. The Academic Proposal
4. Literature review
5. Empirical research tools
6. Interpretation and evaluation of data

# What research is?

- **Research** can be defined as the search for **knowledge**, the testing of hypotheses and of ideas, usually using a scientific method.
- Generally, it follows certain structural process:
  - Observations and Formation of the topic
  - Hypothesis
  - Conceptual definitions / Literature review –defining the tools
  - Gathering of data
  - Analysis of data
  - Test, revising of hypothesis
  - Conclusions, reflective action

# Different approaches to research

- **Empirical** or **theoretical** research
- **Deductive** or **inductive** research
- **Qualitative** or **quantitative** research

# The Academic Proposal

- Choosing **subject** (make sure it is researchable)
- Literature review-Drawing an **hypothesis**- Imagining **conclusions**
- **Identifying** issues, problems, and **clarifying** questions
- Establishing a **methodology**, the **direction** of the research and the research **plan**
- **Analysis of findings**

# Research tools: Literature review

- It is an account of what has been **published** on a topic by **accredited scholars** and **researchers**.
- It is not just a descriptive list of the material available, or a set of summaries, but a **critical approach** to it.
- It aims to inform the reader the **state of knowledge** concerning a particular topic.

# Research tools: Literature review

- Where to find the information:
  - **Bibliography** (Libraries, institutes, academies...)
  - **E-journals** (through the OPAC – Electronic Journals Finder). Search by: Exact title
    - Browse A-Z lists
    - Select subject
    - Search for journals in specific databases
  - **E-books:** 2 biggest platforms: DawsonERA
    - Ebrary

# Research tools: Literature review

- Where to find the information:
  - Athens account:** authentication system to access online resources-only for students and academic researchers
  - Online databases:**
    - Bibliographic: provides information about where to find articles in journals, chapters of books, etc.
    - Full text: download the material directly.



# Research tools: Literature review

- Bibliographic databases
  - PsycINFO
  - Social Science Citation Index (via Web of Science)
  - ASSIA (Applied Social Sciences Index & Abstracts)
  - Education Research Complete
- Full-text databases
  - Nexis
  - Education Research Complete
  - PsycBOOKS
  - PsycARTICLES
  - Science Direct
  - PEP Web

# Research tools: Literature review

- Search strategy:
  - Identify key concepts
  - Think of other synonyms to describe the concepts
  - Look for “topics=”, “concepts=” and combine them in a logical way
  - Join different concepts with AND
  - Join alternative concepts with OR

# Research tools: Literature review

- Search strategy:
  - Truncation: It limits a word into its root, by typing \*  
E.g. Empath\* will find empathise, empathises, empathy...
  - Wildcards: Finding different varieties of a word by replacing a letter in the word with ?  
E.g. Wom?n will find both woman and women
  - Apply the search strategy to different databases

# Research tools: Empirical data

- **Primary** and **secondary** sources
- **Qualitative** and **quantitative** data according to methodological considerations.
- Importance of **pretesting-PILOTING PHASE**

## Data Collection techniques:

- Sampling, questionnaires, surveys, participant observation, interviews, focus groups, case studies, simulation, discourse analysis

# Research tools: Empirical data

- **Sampling:**
  - It is the process of selecting units (e.g., people, organizations) from a population of interest so that by studying the sample we may fairly generalize our results back to the population from which they were chosen.

# Research tools: Empirical data

- **Questionnaires:**

- Formally set out the way in which the research questions of interest should be asked.
- In its design we have to consider:
  - The objectives of the research, the target group of respondents.
  - Question contents, question phrasing, types of response format questions question sequence and layout.
- Must be developed carefully, pretested and revised.

# Research tools: Empirical data

- **Surveys:**
  - Fastest and cheapest method of gathering information from a large sample.
  - The researcher follows a prepared script that is essentially the same as a written questionnaire.
  - Types:
    - **Telephone** surveys
    - **Mail** surveys
    - **Web** surveys

# Research tools: Empirical data

- **Participant observation:**
  - It is the most natural way to collect data. It allows the researcher to gain **first-hand experience** of human behaviour, meanings, relationships, and contexts.
  - It can be **unstructured** or **structured**.



# Research tools: Empirical data

- **Interviews:**
  - Used when the research purpose requires **in-depth** exploration of opinions or **open-ended** responses.
  - Skills to be developed:  
careful **listening**, noting **non-verbal** cues, **monitoring** the progress of a conversation while participating in it and taking **notes**.

# Research tools: Empirical data

- **Focus groups:**
  - Group of people led by a moderator in an **in-depth** discussion on a particular topic or concept.
  - Aims: to learn and **understand** what people have to say about a topic and understand their arguments.
  - Discover the amount of **emotional involvement** with the topic under discussion.

# Research tools: Empirical data

- **Case studies:**
  - Based on an **in-depth, longitudinal** (over a long period of time) investigation of a **single** individual, group, organization or event.

# Research tools: Empirical data

- **Simulation:**
  - "Simulation means driving a **model** of a system with suitable inputs and observing the corresponding outputs" (Bratley, Fox & Schrage, 1987).

# Interpretation and evaluation of data

- Differences between quantitative / qualitative approaches

## WORKS USED:

- Axelrod, Robert, **Advancing the Art of Simulation in the Social Sciences** *Japanese Journal for Management Information System*, Special Issue on Agent-Based Modeling, Vol. 12, No. 3, Dec. 2003.
- <http://www.blackwellpublishing.com/researchproject/weblinks.asp>
- <http://www.socscidiss.bham.ac.uk/s9.html>
- <http://writing.utoronto.ca/advice/specific-types-of-writing/literature-review>
- <http://www.qual.auckland.ac.nz/>
- <http://www.ischool.utexas.edu/~palmquis/courses/discourse.htm>

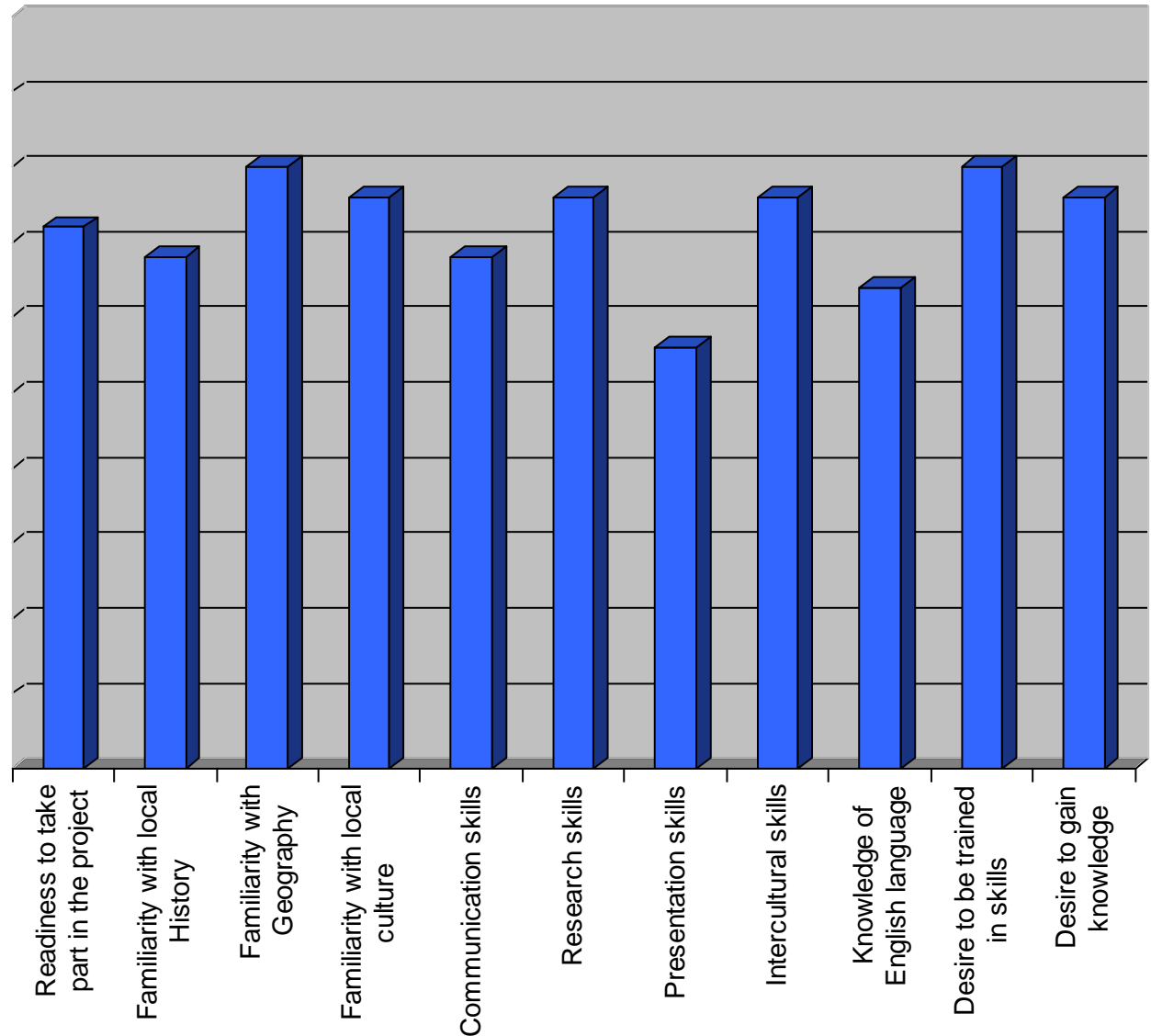
Very good / very much

Good / Much

Acceptable

Could be better /  
not very

Unsatisfactory /  
not at all



# Learner's training needs

- In general, volunteers feel **ready** to participate in the Cultural Treasure Hunt project.
- They show a **positive attitude** towards the project and their participation in the meeting as a way of exchanging experiences.
- **Knowledge** of their region: confident in Geography and local Culture, but need **more training in History**.
- **Training skills**: their most important **concern**, above all, in relation to **presentation skills** and **English language**, as well as **communication skills**.
- Fairly prepared in research and intercultural skills.
- High **expectations** about their participation in this seminar as a way of improving their current practices on **cultural tourism**.





# THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION!

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Cultural development society of  
Lesvos island

