**EPS Lecture 7 – 27th October, 2008**

**Research in Education – Nick Nelson**

General introduction to research methods in education – practice best based on research as it is less likely to be based on policy, trends etc.

Types of research:

* Surveys – good for generalisations, large scale (expensive), superficial, highly structured.
* Case studies – clear understanding of a particular and specific situation, relatively detailed, small scale, unstructured.
* Experiments – to find relationships between things whether one thing causes another, intermediate in scale, difficult to set up in social science contexts.
* Action research – professionals engage in research to improve practise, professional researchers.

Ways of collecting data:

* Observation –
  + in education, usually of people. Complete observer, observer as participant, participant as observer, complete participant.
  + Structure in Observation – decide what is important and watch for it. Try to ignore what is not important. However, other things may then happen that are important so may want to do unstructured observation.
* Interview –
  + even careful interviewer will in some way reveal their point of view.
  + Flexibility in what is covered, sense of participation in research.
  + Structured or unstructured – open ,closed, somewhere in between. Open give more scope for understanding but difficult to analyse. Closed interviews have framework so can make sure important points are covered – may be a mismatch between question and answer.
* Questionnaires –
  + most use closed questions (see slides for types of closed and open questions).
  + Closed questions may have misleading conclusions.
  + Open questions provide freedom of expression but they are difficult to code and can be misinterpreted.
* Tests and assessments –
  + Most widely used data type used by schools and policy makers.
  + Wide range of technical and philosophical issues that are glossed over.
  + Norm referenced used for selection (best n%).
  + Reliability – margin for error. Indices of reliability – e.g. reliability of 0.9 means a mark of 62 would be worth plus or minus 3 marks so between 59 and 65.
  + Validity is the extent to which it is a good indication of whatever it’s supposed to measure.
  + Tests are measures of achievement in a particular context. E.g. a good result in a maths test does not necessarily mean you are good at maths, just maths in that context.
* Documents
* National surveys
* ‘Secondary’ data

Ethics – expected to discuss ethics of research. Look at Homan article (See slides for reference).

* Have to get consent for research. Generally pupils don’t get asked and consent is given on their behalf.
* ‘Insider’ researchers should not be ‘gatekeepers’ – conflict of interests.

**Assessment for Learning – Graham Herbert**

KS3 tests scrapped – implications for teachers – have to devise own.

What’s happening in assessment? See slide.

Assessment of learning = summative

Assessment for learning = formative.

Diagnostic - Helps us seek out barriers to learning an individual may have or describe a talent/gift an individual may have.

Adaptive – bank of questions, system throws in harder questions if pupil is performing well.

Evaluative.

Principles of assessment

* Reliability and consistency
* Validity
* Fairness and equity
* Transparency
* Efficiency or manageability.
* Criterion referenced – grades get better not because pupils are brighter but because teachers become more focused on the criteria and therefore get better at enabling students to pass exams.

Validity – no such thing as a valid test – it is the inferences to which you put it that are valid. I.e. the purposes to which you put the data.

Reality of assessment – if reliable and manageable then less valid, if valid and reliable then less management, etc. (see circular diagram on slides). Any assessment is a compromise.

Impact:

Before assessing anything, ask yourself why. (see slide on purposes of assessment)

Match up purpose to method of assessment.

Determine conditions for assessment.

Work out impact it has on candidate and assessor.

Process

Implications – when providing feedback, concentrate on the task, not the person.

Give one thing to improve- make it manageable to increase chances of success.

Key to successful assessment for learning is feedback.

Focus of feedback has to be the teaching intention (WALT and WILF). Not marks and grades.

Peer assessment – 2 stars and a wish.