

Task 2: Ethics for research in schools

Step 1: Write down some characteristics that you associate with being a researcher.

This list may work as an inspiration: *Patience, punctuality, honesty, justice, availability, accountability, selflessness, reflectivity, creativity, collaboration, helpfulness, authority, kindness, fairness, objectivity, warmth, empathy, respectfulness...*

Step 2: Read the case in the box.

You are a research assistant in a project at the teacher education institution. You and you a more experienced researcher in the project are in a school doing research, and you interview pupils.

In the interview situation, you notice that the questions in the interview protocol are not as suitable as you would have expected. The pupils answer the questions, but you notice that the pupils do not feel comfortable with the situation. The pupils act a bit odd and they seem to be nervous.

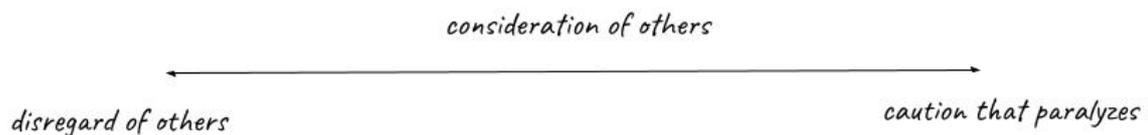
You do not know why the pupils act in this way. You are unsure if the questions are inadequate or if it is just a challenging situation for the pupils; Is there something else in the situation that you are not aware of? You have seven interviews in the same school. That is good, since the process of gathering data is delayed and you have a strict timetable. You are under pressure with the process of collecting data. You have made a promise to your research team to conduct 15 interviews during this week. If you stop the interview process now, you will not reach the target and this means that the data collection process in the research project suffers.

At the same time, you feel troubled. What is the reason that the pupils are nervous and worried in the interview situation? Could it be that you interpret the situation entirely wrong and perhaps you mistakenly interpret signals that really are not there. The experienced researcher does not seem to be concerned at all. The worst scenario would be that the experienced researcher thinks that you imagine all sorts of things!

Revisit the list of characteristics you created in step 1 and consider which characteristics you think would be useful for the research assistant in this case.

Example: consideration of others

⇒ How would you describe having too much or too little of those characteristics in the role of a researcher?



Discuss together in the group the characteristics “in the middle”, and their relation to the extremes that reflect too much or too little of the characteristics.

Finally, reflect on what kind of researcher you are. If you do not have research experience yet, consider your ideals; the researcher you would like to be or be able to look up to.

References:

These exercises are inspired by the VIRT²UE project (<https://community.embassy.science/t/more-about-virt2ue/31>), which has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research programme. In our context, it is adapted to teacher education.

You can find more virtue exercises here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DvShnn0L12U&list=PLabbUwyulAry4tzZ12eHI5JOJhJGJGieE6k>

Support on the platform Embassy of Good Science in seeking support in handling day-to-day research practices and dilemmas: https://embassy.science/wiki/Main_Page

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