



# Aligning research questions to methodologies

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# 5 tips for starting a research project: From an idea to a research question

How best to involve others into your research planning, process and production





- Tip 1: Take time to establish what you're interested in
- Tip 2: Find your focus
- Tip 3: Don't think about methods too soon
- Tip 4: Define your reality
- Tip 5: Refine aims and research questions



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# What are your research questions ?





# Example questions

- What is learning?
- Do 4<sup>th</sup> year medical students like lectures?
- How professional are postgraduate medical trainees?
- Is teaching clinical skills in the clinical environment effective?
- How well prepared for practice are UK medical graduates for complex clinical decision making?



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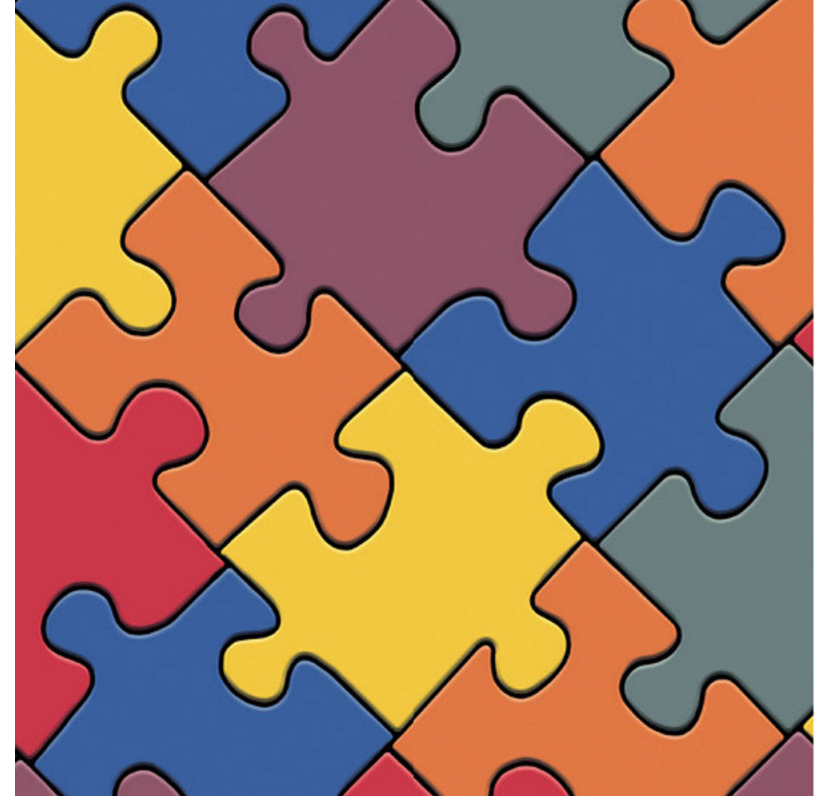
Alignment of  
question &  
methodology is  
important





# Aligning your study

1. ROs aligned with specific problem
2. RQs aligned with ROs
3. Method must be appropriate & consistent with ROs & RQs
4. Research design → method
5. Methodology → design



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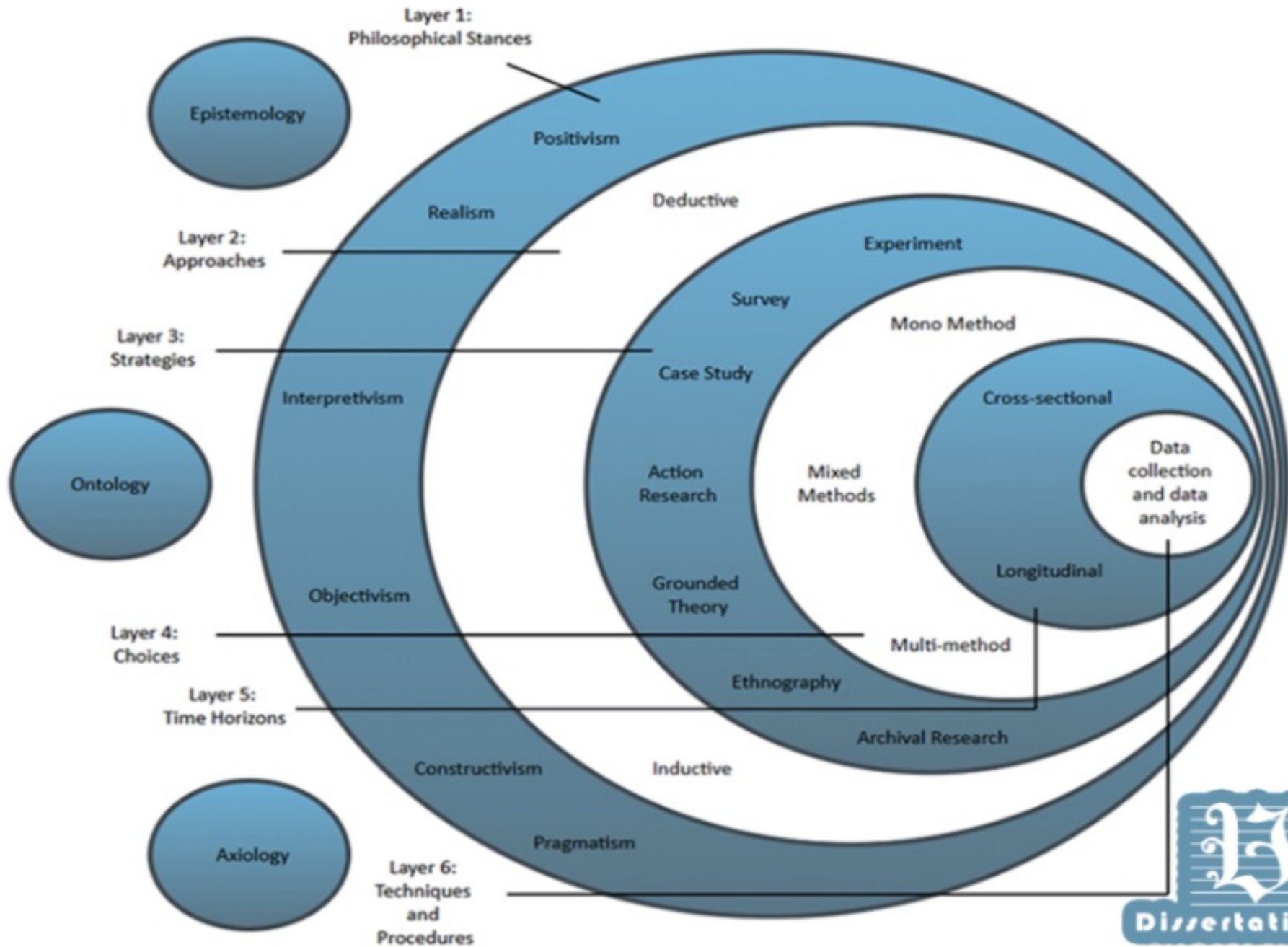
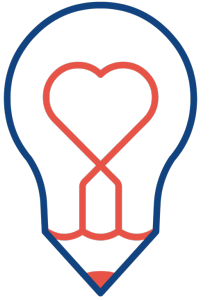
## Methodology

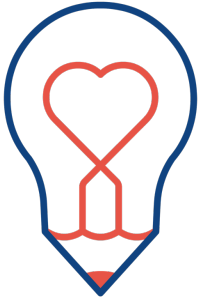
- Rationale for research approach
- Lens through which the analysis occurs
- May incorporate several different methods

## Method

- The tool used to answer your research question
- How you collect your data







# Terminology

- **Ontology** - the nature of reality and of what really exists
- **Epistemology** - the relationship between the knower and what is known
- **Axiology** - what we value
- **Methodology** - the strategy and justifications in constructing a specific type of knowledge
- **Method/s** - individual techniques



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# Research Questions



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# Part 2: top tips for aligning RQ and methodologies

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# Tip 1: Collaborate

## Build your research team

- Work with a methodologist
- Include mentorship
- Pick people you will learn from
- Pick people you will enjoy working with
- Don't just look locally





# Tip 2: Consider evidence synthesis

## Don't jump straight to empirical research

- Grant and Booth 2009: 14 types of literature review
- Not the poor relation!
- Highly publishable, highly cited
- Pre-requisite to good research
- Meta-view, conceptual







# Tip 3: Be creative

## You can tailor your methodology

- be creative - you can tailor methodology as long as you defend the changes and coherent – and mixed methods –and can reverse engineer research question





# Tip 4: Write it and share it

## Write it down

- Write (and possibly publish) your protocol
- Share it widely for critical feedback and improvement
- Consider applying for a small grant
- Reed et al. 2007 (JAMA). Association between funding and quality of published medical education research.





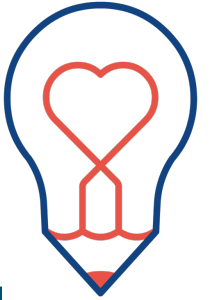


# Tip 5: Be realistic

## Think through design choices

- Does the work justify the need?
- Do you have the resources in the team e.g. time, expertise
- Is the work ethical and will you be able to recruit?





## Virtual Issue on Qualitative research for clinical educators – the 'How to' series.

*The Clinical Teacher* is a practical journal for busy clinical teachers to help enhance learning and teaching with the ultimate aim of improving health care. But we also have a role in promoting scholarship and being the place where many new authors choose to publish. The *How to* series aims to help those new to, or less experienced with, qualitative approaches to research and evaluation learn more about this area of inquiry in an accessible way. In our experience, qualitative methodologies have been frequently seen as less valid or in some ways easier options than quantitative biomedical studies. Yet those who delve deeper into the qualitative literature may feel overwhelmed by this different way of thinking and doing. Helmich and Mattick in their editorial introducing the series make the case for clinical educators to embrace qualitative research with its focus on interviewing, observation and analysis – methods we employ on a daily basis in clinical practice.

[Free Access](#)

### Epilogue: Celebrating the completion of the 'How to...' series on qualitative research

Anu Kajamaa, Jill Thistlethwaite, Terese Stenfors

The Clinical Teacher | Pages: 593-595 | DOI: 10.1111/tct.13302

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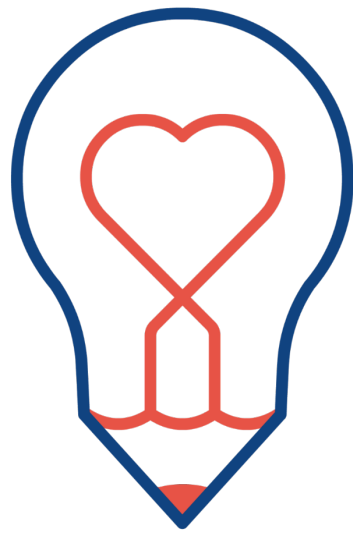
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# Questions?



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