**What is research?**

**Objectives and characteristics of research**

**Definitions:**

**Read carefully the following definitions, then answer the questions below.**

* Leedy and Ormond (2001) “ … the systematic process of collecting and analysing information (data) in order to increase our understanding of the phenomenon about which we are concerned or interested”
* Slavin (2007) research is “organised and systematic inquiry that seeks to answer well-framed questions”
* Compact oxford English dictionary (2005) “the systematic study of materials and sources in order to establish facts and reach new conclusions”
* Cooper and Schindler (2008) define research as an organised inquiry carried out to provide information for solving problems.
* Brandtner et al. (2015) define research as a logical process of steps applied to collect and analyse data in order to improve the knowledge and understanding of a topic or issue respectively to solve a problem perceived.

**Discussion:**

From the above definitions, identify the following:

**Nature of research**: study, process of steps, inquiry,…

**Characteristics of research**: systematic, organised

**Steps of research:** asking well-framed questions, collect data, analyse data, draw conclusion

**Objectives of research:** to increase understanding, to establish facts, provide information for solving problems, ….

**Homework:**

Task 1: use the key words of the definitions above and formulate in your own words a definition of research.

Task 2: Consider the following questions and indicate the objective in each case. ( correction )

* What are the main sources of sustainable energy that can replace polluted energy? (solve a problem)
* What is the relationship between genetics and crime predisposition? (Understand the relationship between phenomena)
* How does the universe expand? (Genuine curiosity)
* What are the effective strategies in teaching speaking to EFL leaners? (Provide a basis for making decisions)

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| L2: Characteristics of research. Qualities of researchers.  Objectives:  - Understand the features of research  - Distinguish between research and non research  Lecture content:  In daily situations, lay people may be involved in processes of asking questions and drawing conclusion; can those situations be considered instances of systematic research?  Two or three brief examples are given. (a mother trying a few herbs to heal a flue, a researcher conducting experimentation in a laboratory to find out the healing effects of the same plant)  Practice:  Task one: consider the following scenarios and evaluate the research or the researcher.   * X and Y were assigned a project by their teacher; it consists in collecting information about the role of motivation in learning a foreign language. The students collected a lot of materials from the library and the Internet, and they presented the topic in front of their classmates. The teacher was very satisfied with the well-documented paper. * M is convinced that his genetic origin is superior to others. He decided to conduct research to defend this idea. * N has always wondered why some students finish their assignments within the deadlines imposed by the teacher while others do not. He decided to collect information in order to know the causes and help in solving the problem. To answer the question, he followed a number of steps starting from refining his question and ending with the interpretation of the collected data and the formulation of a conclusion. * R likes to oppose the ideas of others, so he tries continuously to find weaknesses in the claims and arguments of researchers. * S is interested in understanding the effect of competitiveness on learning. He spent long hours in the library where he read books and articles about the topic. After collecting enough data, S integrated the information through paraphrasing, summarising, and referencing. At the end, he included a list of bibliographical entries in an alphabetical order.   Task two: decide whether the following features are associated or not to research. Justify your answer.   * Research is guided by a question or problem. * Research is a transfer of information rom one place to another. * Research seeks evidence from personal experience and performance. * Research is guided by opinion. * Research uses systematic procedures. * In research, conclusions are supported by evidence. * Research is an organised procedure of inquiry. * Research is limited to transfer or rearrangement of collected data. * Research is ethical; it does not harm people or environment. * Research uses logical thinking to reach conclusions. * Research is cyclical. * Research is analytical. * Research is logical.   Task three: a) identify the qualities of the good researcher, and explain your choice.  b) Put the characteristics in categories depending on their type (personality, ethical, cognitive qualities)  Subjectivity, prudence, intellectual honesty, scepticism, good reasoning powers, intellectual curiosity, willingness to consider new ideas, commitment, patience, inaccuracy in data reporting, rush in data analysis, fairness in acknowledging the contribution of others, having a critical and analytical mind, good observation skills, good sense of logic, being judgemental, meticulousness, freedom from prejudice. |