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# Research at the online frontier:

respecting the research questions in  
the time of Covid-19 and beyond

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*Senior Lecturer (IDL)*

*Elizabeth.Hidson@sunderland.ac.uk*



**University of  
Sunderland**

# Today's talk

- Introduction: speaker background and research interests
- The challenge of research issues in the time of Covid as an opportunity to participate in a community of practice
- Methodological background: digital and visual research methods in education and educational technology research
- Postgraduate level educational research in the time of Covid: studying 'schooling' when 'schooling', staff and students are online/offline/hybrid
- Tools to think with: summary

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## ***Senior Lecturer in Education: Programme Leader for PgCert Education (SCITT)***

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My background is in UK secondary education (ages 11-18). I trained initially as a teacher of Information Technology in 1999, and spent 14 years in London schools. I have held multiple whole-school, middle and senior leadership roles up to and including sole Deputy Headteacher. Strategic projects that I have worked on include the Specialist Schools programme, Building Schools for the Future (BSF), academisation and setting up a new sixth form.

As an Advanced Skills Teacher (AST) and Lead Practitioner, I mentored teachers at all stages of their careers across London in primary and secondary schools. I was also a TDA Teacher Advocate and part of their first 'Talk to a Teacher' Facebook campaign, as well as being the featured ICT teacher in the national teacher recruitment 'Class of Today' interactive DVD.

I moved to the North East to study full-time for my doctorate at Durham University. I also worked as a post-doctoral Research Associate at Newcastle University on a range of funded international educational technology research projects and taught on PGCE, MA and doctoral researcher training courses at Durham University and Newcastle University before joining the University of Sunderland's International and Independent Distance Learning Team in 2018.







# TPEA

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Founded in 1992 the MirandaNet Fellowship is an international community of professional educators which has forged a unique approach to continuing professional development (CPD), education, innovation and research.



ITTE is an association of teacher educators who share an interest in improving learning through the application of digital technology in teaching and through the effective teaching of ICT as a subject and the pedagogical application of digital technology by all teachers.







**Prof Deborah Lupton** @DALupton · Mar 16, 2020



Doing or planning fieldwork and stuck for what to do in these times of [#SocialDistancing](#)? Please check out and contribute to my new crowdsourced list of resources on 'Doing Fieldwork in a Pandemic'. [#IsolatedAcademia](#)

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DOING FIELDWORK IN A PANDEMIC  
DOING FIELDWORK IN A PANDEMIC Isolation  
measures to contain the spread of COVID-19 means ...  
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# DOING FIELDWORK IN A PANDEMIC

Isolation measures to contain the spread of COVID-19 means that social researchers who have for doing fieldwork in a pandemic - specifically, ideas for avoiding in-person interactions by using mediated forms that will achieve similar ends.

Social research has been conducted online for many years, of course. There are many examples of using online survey tools or doing content analyses or ethnographies using existing online interactions as research materials. Interviews have been conducted by phone or Skype for a long time. This document was initially directed at ways for how to turn fieldwork that was initially planned as using face-to-face methods into a more 'hands-off' mode. However, people have added useful material about 'born digital' research (content already generated on the internet by online interactions), which provides an alternative source of social research materials if researchers decide to go down that path.

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***Suggested citation:***

Lupton, D. (editor) (2020) Doing fieldwork in a pandemic (crowd-sourced document). Available at: <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1clGjGABB2h2qbduTgfrqbHmog9B6P0NvMgVuiHZCl8/edit?ts=5e88ae0a#>



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[Epistolary \(Asynchronous\) Interviews](#)

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[Online, Synchronous, Video-Based Focus Group Interviews \(added by Nathan Browning\)](#)

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[Using Facebook Groups](#)

[Using Google/Microsoft Forms for Data Collection](#)

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[Autoethnography \(added by F. Güzin Agca-Varoglu\)](#)

[Duoethnography \(added by Vibeke Oestergaard Steinfeldt\)](#)

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[Netnography/Virtual Methods \(added by Gabriella Wulff\)](#)

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[Using YouTube \(and Online Video\) for \(Teaching\) Observational Studies \(added by Robin Smith\)](#)

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[Arts-based Project Combined with Skype Interviews \(added by Nicole Brown\)](#)

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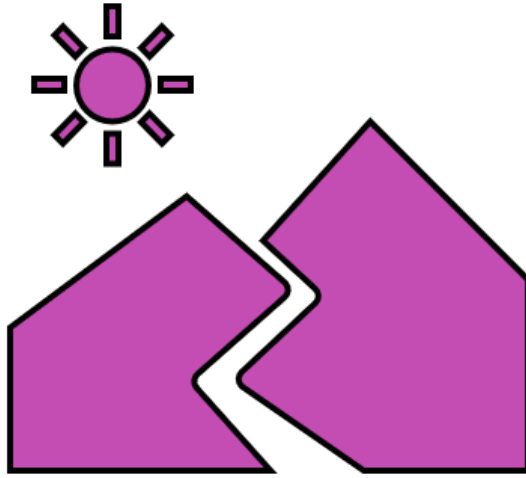


DOING FIELDWORK IN A PANDEMIC  
DOING FIELDWORK IN A PANDEMIC Isolation measures to contain the spread of COVID-19 means ...  
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**“Communities of practice are groups of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly. ...”**

Wenger (1998)



# “A methodological frontier...”

Weller (2015)

Weller, S. (2015). *The potentials and pitfalls of using Skype for qualitative (longitudinal) interviews*. NCRM Working Paper. NCRM.





# VIDEO JOURNAL OF EDUCATION AND PEDAGOGY

Editor-in-Chief E. Jayne White

BRILL | SENSE

**Hidson, E. (2020).** Internet Video Calling and Desktop Sharing (VCDS) as an Emerging Research Method for Exploring Pedagogical Reasoning in Lesson Planning. *Video Journal of Education and Pedagogy* 5(1) 1–14 DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1163/23644583-00501001>

**Keywords:** emerging research innovations; video calling; desktop sharing; digital research methods; pedagogical reasoning; lesson planning



VJEP\_5.1\_Hidson\_Video 1.wmv (22.4 MB)



VJEP\_5.1\_Hidson\_Vide... wmv (45.06 MB)



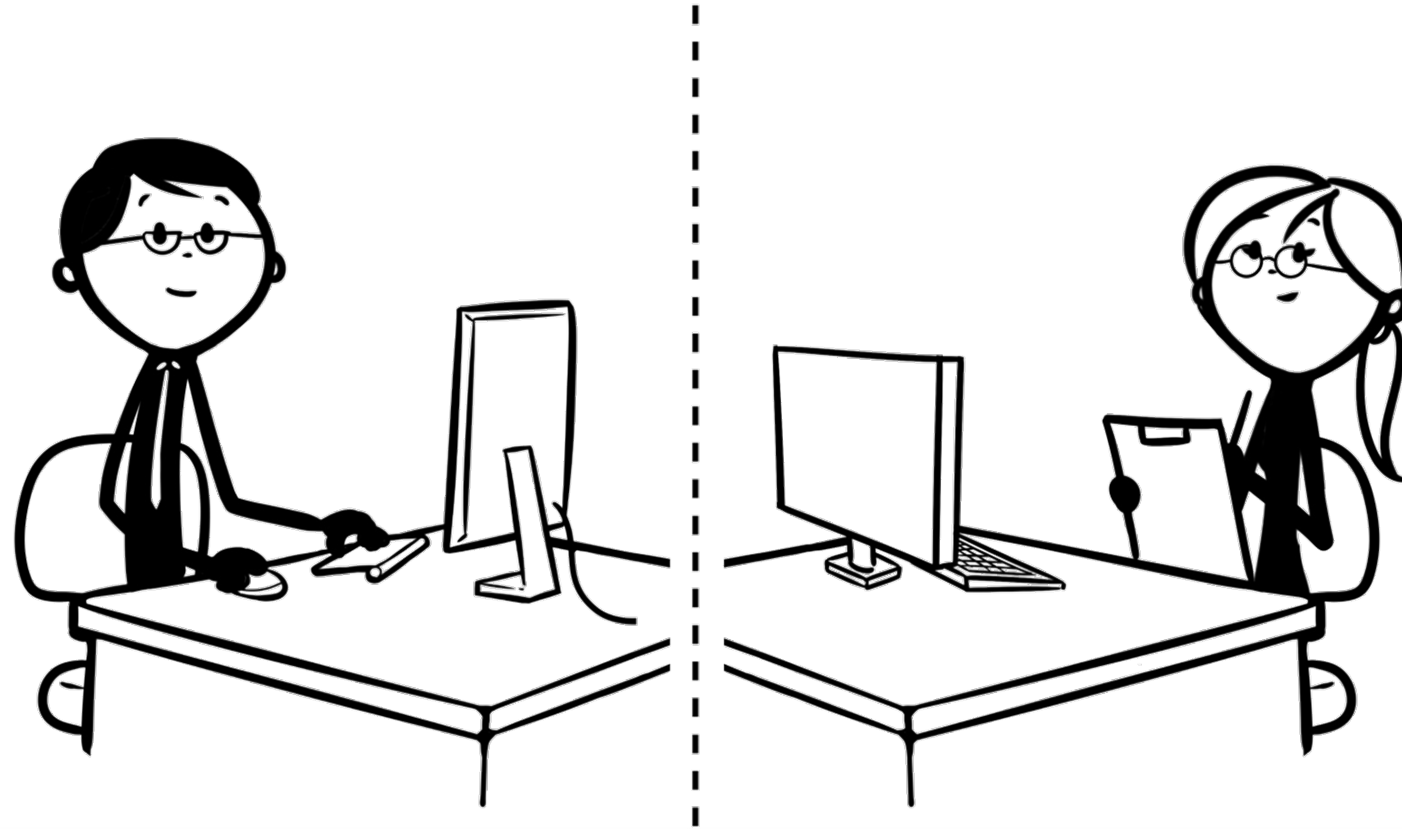
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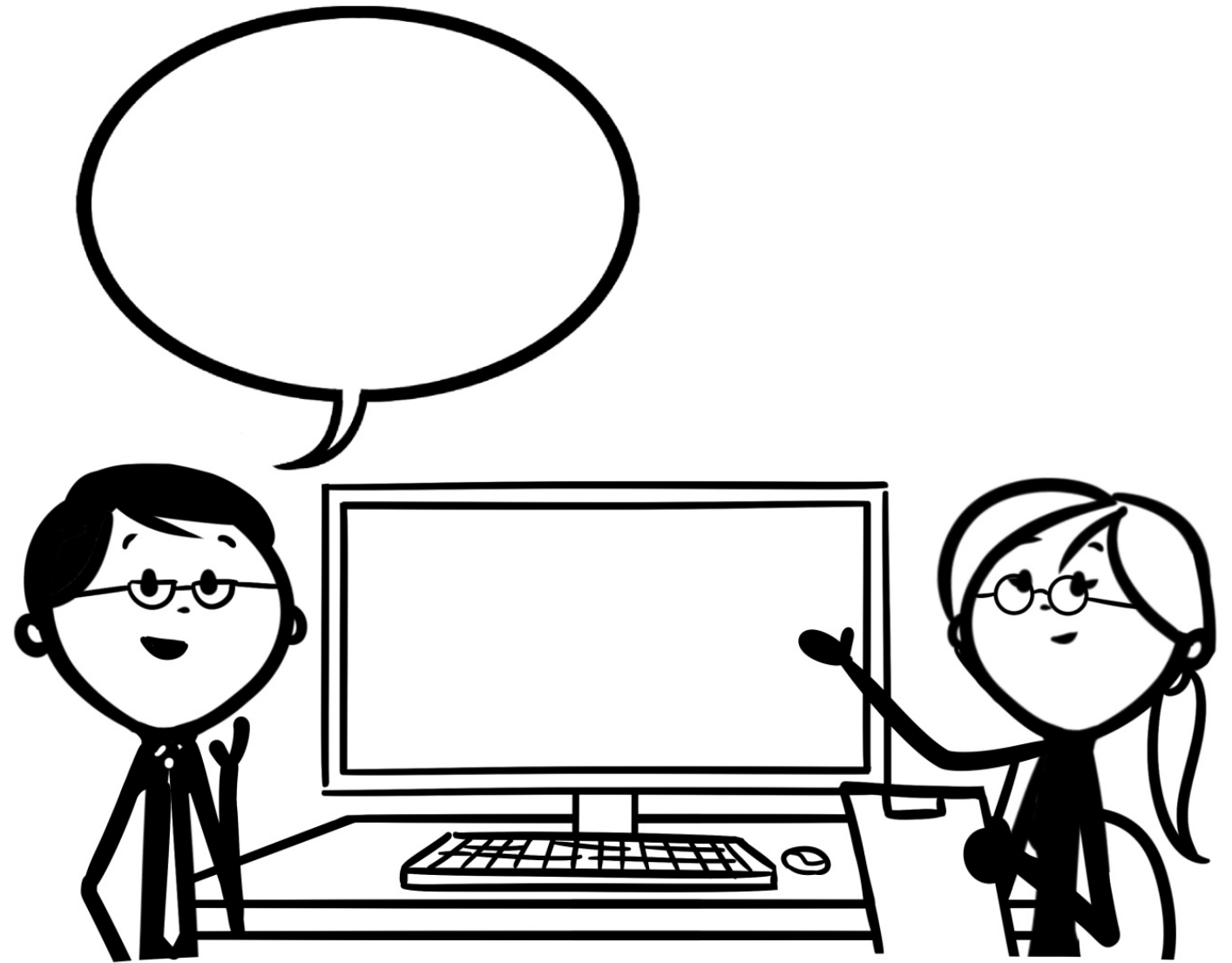
# Research Questions

1. How are teachers **planning** Computing lessons?
2. How is pedagogical content knowledge (**PCK**) demonstrated in the planning process?
3. How is the Computer Science **subject knowledge** requirement being addressed by different teachers?

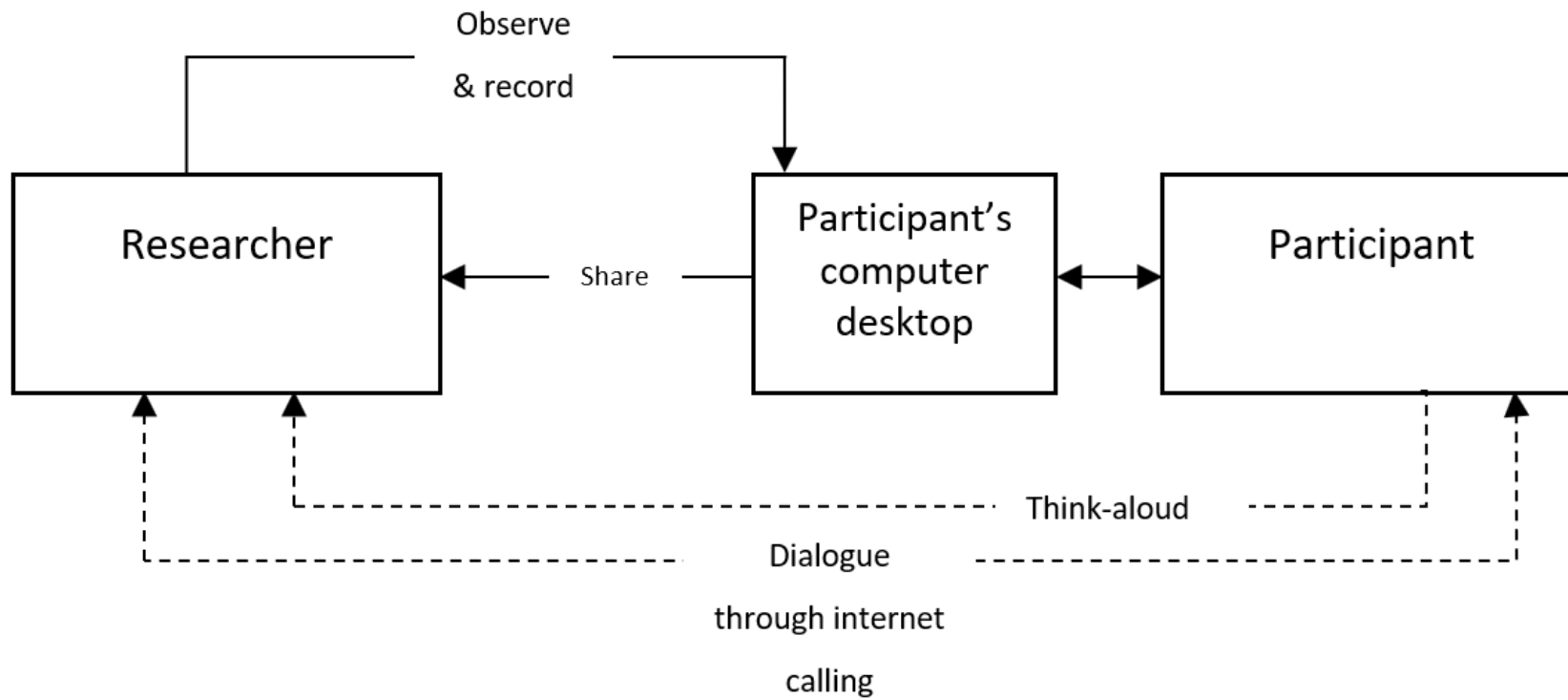
# Data Collection Methods



# Video- Stimulated Interviews



## *Model of desktop sharing method*



Hidson (2018)

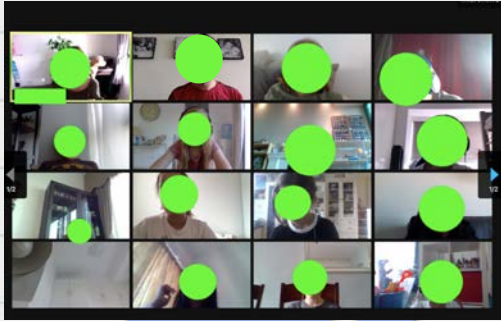


# Relevant take-aways

- Research questions, problems and challenges provided the stimulus for methods to capture practices in an authentic manner
- Beginning with visual methods led to visual ethnography, then video methods, and then to an embracing of recall, reflection and dialogue that became possible through internet video calling and desktop sharing channelled by this methodological heritage into a discrete research method
- The surprising and enabling effect of doing research differently
- It could be done differently, and perhaps better: an online research method in its own right, depending on the nature of the research question, may be more suitable



# Education in a pandemic...







You need your  
research tools



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# The academic 'story'

- What is the story of the intervention in the school? Why does it happen? What do you know about the topic?
- What do you know about research methods? Which are the best ones for your research? Why?
- Who did you talk to? What did you see/hear? What documentary data do you have? What did you learn?
- How well is the intervention working for these students? How do you know?
- How does that compare to what you read in the literature? Could the school do it any better?



# International Journal of Social Research Methodology

- The Editors Notebook -

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**CALLS, COVID-19, NOTEBOOK**

## Teaching online research methods online with asynchronous international distance learning students during Covid-19

December 22, 2020

socmediaeditor

*By Elizabeth Hidson and Vikki Wynn*

### Challenges in asynchronous international distance learning pre-Covid

Working on an international distance learning teacher training programme brings multiple challenges, the biggest of which had previously been the asynchronous pattern of teaching and learning for the academic elements. Teaching is based on a systematic instructional design approach adopted by our university and broken down into weekly thematic units to support acquisition, discussion, investigation, collaboration, practice and production to meet learning outcomes. Recorded micro-

### Developing research-informed practitioners

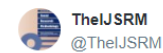
The importance of developing research capacity in trainee teachers stems from the expectation that they will become research-informed practitioners who can use evidence to inform decision-making (Siddiqui and Wardle, 2020). Being consumers of research is not enough, however: teachers need to also develop the tools to carry out their own research in school settings. The first MA-level module that our trainees



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Tweets by @TheJSRM



Retaining the individual voice in multiple-context qualitative research  
@DrDebbieMorgan shares her approach to data analysis in 'Analysing

## Establishing the heritage of research methods and methodology

Good teaching is good teaching, and it follows therefore that good research practice is still good research practice, irrespective of a global pandemic. Early rapid evidence assessments concluded that teaching quality was more important for remote teaching and learning than how it was delivered (Education Endowment Foundation, 2020), which had also been our starting point when considering our own research methods pedagogy. The initial teaching of research methods starts on our programme with key concepts and expectations: conceptualisation, literature, developing research questions, justification of research methods, consideration of ethics, all designed to ensure that the student teacher can apply theory to practice. We start with a formative proposal assignment to ensure early engagement with methodology and methods.


Our face-to-face online group sessions, themed as weekly 'coffee shop' meetings, provide a collaborative forum for knowledge exchange and trouble-shooting. Trainee teachers join to listen, to share ideas, to pose questions and problems and the module leaders respond with a dialogic teaching approach, helping to contextualise research methods in school settings and develop knowledge and understanding in a supportive online space.





# Pedagogy by proxy

- Metacognition – thinking about thinking and learning about learning
- Gain insight into others' approaches – pedagogy by proxy
- A chance perhaps to rethink what methodology and methods tell us about researcher positionality, ontology and epistemology?



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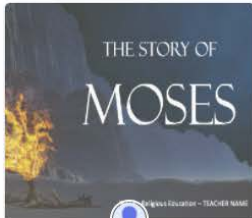


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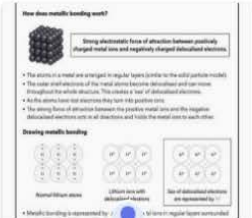
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MOSES - Lessons 1 to 4: Egyptian Slaves/Identity/Killing



JenTocher

Bloom's Reading Activity Grid



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2.10 Metallic bonding, AQA Chemistry

Paper 2, Section B: Writing

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# Unplugged computing

- IT capability – knowing when and when not to use technology - a deliberate and justified choice
- Pedagogy before technology – an insight for research methods.
- RQ before methodology and methods

## Teaching spreadsheets through dance #rscon3 #ukedchat #edchat

In my second year of teaching, I went all out and in a moment of madness and creativity, decided I would teach my students spreadsheets, through dance:



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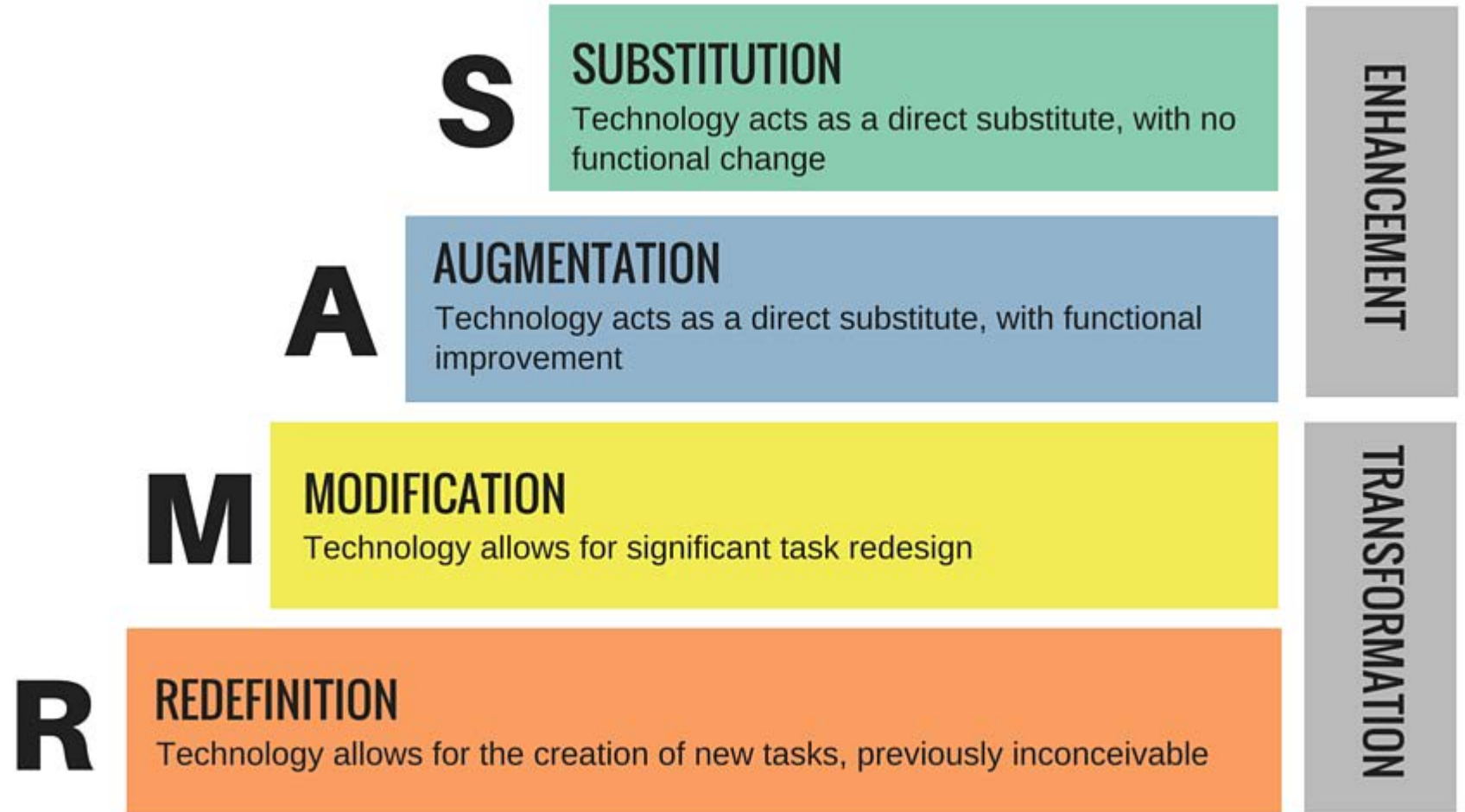
Open a topic to see all related unit plans, lessons, curriculum integrations, and programming challenges.

<b>Binary numbers</b> Ages 5 to 10 6 lessons 7 curriculum integrations 23 programming challenges		<b>Error detection and correction</b> Ages 5 to 10 3 lessons 5 curriculum integrations 24 programming challenges	
<b>Image Representation</b> Ages 5 to 10 1 lessons		<b>Kidbots</b> Ages 5 to 10 4 lessons 4 curriculum integrations 50 programming challenges	
<b>Searching algorithms</b> Ages 5 to 10 6 lessons 4 curriculum integrations		<b>Sorting networks</b> Ages 5 to 14 4 lessons 2 curriculum integrations	

# The Substitution, Augmentation, Modification, and Redefinition (SAMR) model

A taxonomy-based approach for selecting, using, and evaluating technology in school settings (Puentedura, 2006)

A tool to (re)think with?





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Project overview

Community engagement

Resources and Rapid Evidence Review

See our list of reading and resources and our Wayfinder Guides

- [Wayfinder guide to adapting interview practices for Covid-19](#)
- [Low and middle-income countries \(LMICs\) / Global South research during the pandemic](#)
- [Alternatives for interviews](#)
- Researching with participant groups with additional challenges
- [Participatory and deliberative methods](#)
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- [Doing ethnography in the pandemic](#)
- [Survey and longitudinal methods](#)
- [Secondary data and Covid-19 data](#)

## Changing Research Practice: Undertaking social science research in the context of Covid-19

*'COVID-19 is not just a medical pandemic; it is a social event that is disrupting our social order.'* (Teti, Schatz & Lienberg, 2020, 1)

This new and urgent project from NCRM and funded by the ESRC is looking at how Covid-19 is disrupting our research practice by challenging researchers who are conducting social research to re-consider their designs, re-think their ethics, broker different kinds of access, and adapt their research methods. Responding to the public health mandates, limitations on contact and access, and disruption to people's lives researchers are moving swiftly and sharing accounts, advice and resources on social media and in research papers. Via this project NCRM researchers are playing a key role by engaging with and facilitating timely debates, synthesising useful evidence, and sharing solutions to the challenges. The NCRM portal will offer a response hub to support researchers developing and adapting methods in this challenging period with a view to lasting impact for research communities.



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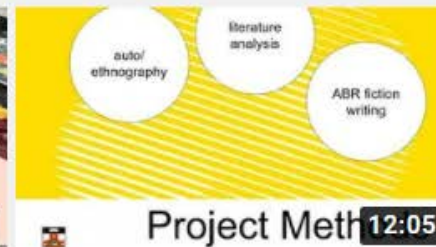
Digital Diaries as Social Research Method

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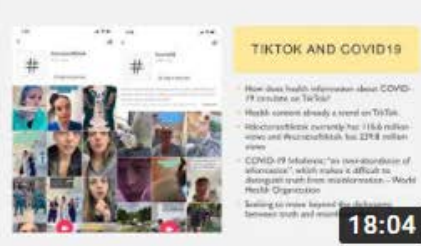
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The Story Completion Method

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# Summary

- Computing, education and social science research - different disciplines to your own, perhaps, but similar issues – all prompting a Covid-19 re-think
- Harking back to IT capability – when and when not to use technology: ‘unplugged’ versus ‘online/remote’ as a deliberate and justified choice
- Similarly in educational technology, pedagogy **before** technology and tools, so research questions **before** methodology and methods
- Learning from others and micro-learning – communities of practice such as Lupton’s crowd-sourcing (exactly what we are doing here today)

# Thank you

@DrHidson



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