OSC

The Sherlock Librarian

Investigating the Workplace

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- Why do workplace research?
- Evidence based practice
- Overcoming barriers
- Skills involved in the research process
- Pros and cons
- Building a research plan

Formal

Informal

Practical

Local

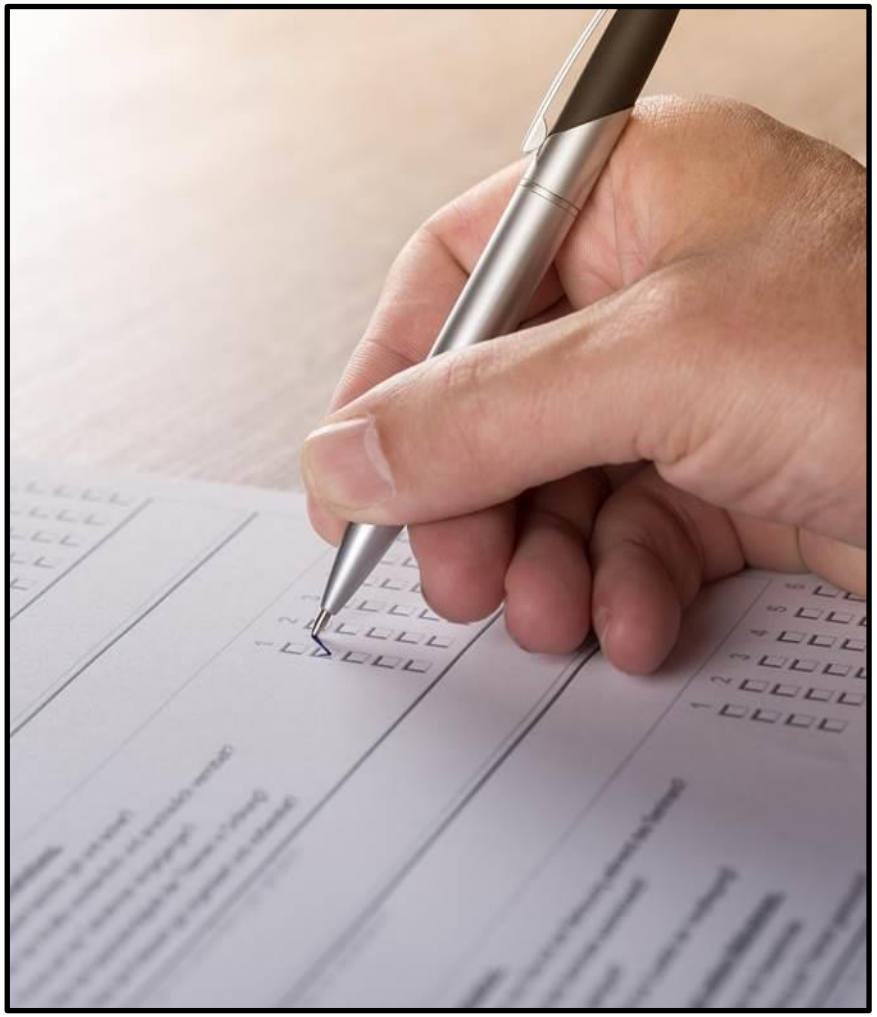
Large scale

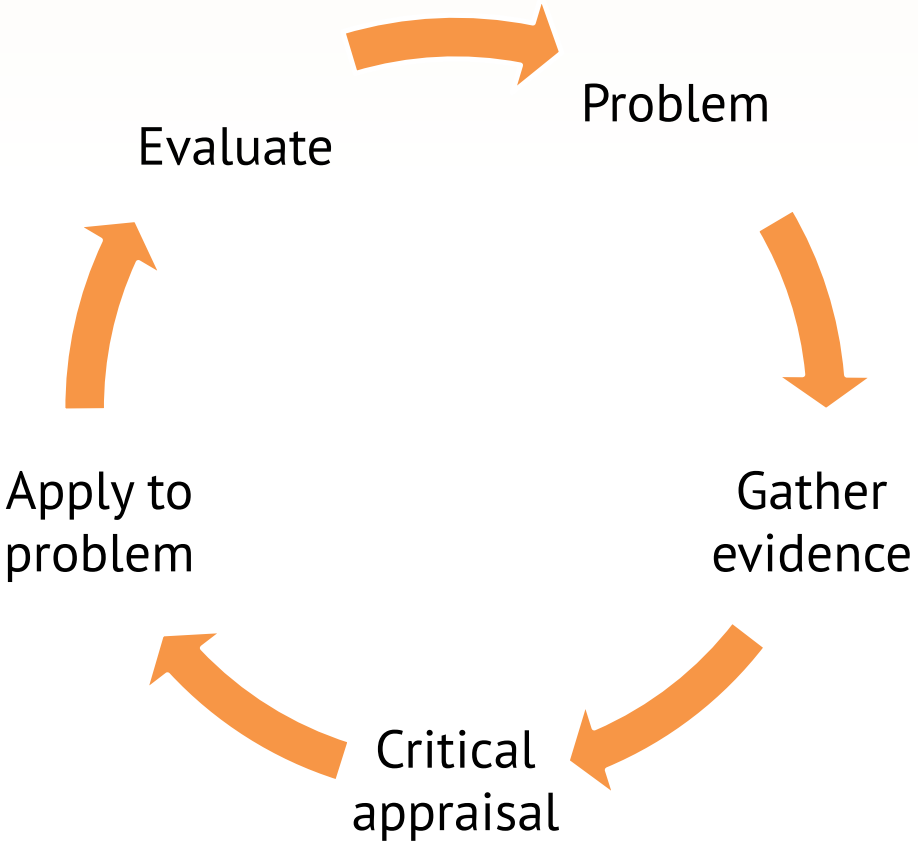
Theoretical

Workplace research =

to see a problem in the workplace and investigate ways to solve it

- Solving a problem
- Proving your case to stakeholders
- Career advancement
- Help others learn from what you have done




Problem
Gather evidence
Critical appraisal
Apply to problem
Evaluate

- Finding time
- Lack of resources
- Lack of support
- Political barriers
- Personal barriers

- Intended outcome can help you form your research question(s)
- Do you want to change a process? Inform people about something? Prove a hypothesis?

CAUTION: Don't let the outcome you want **influence** your research

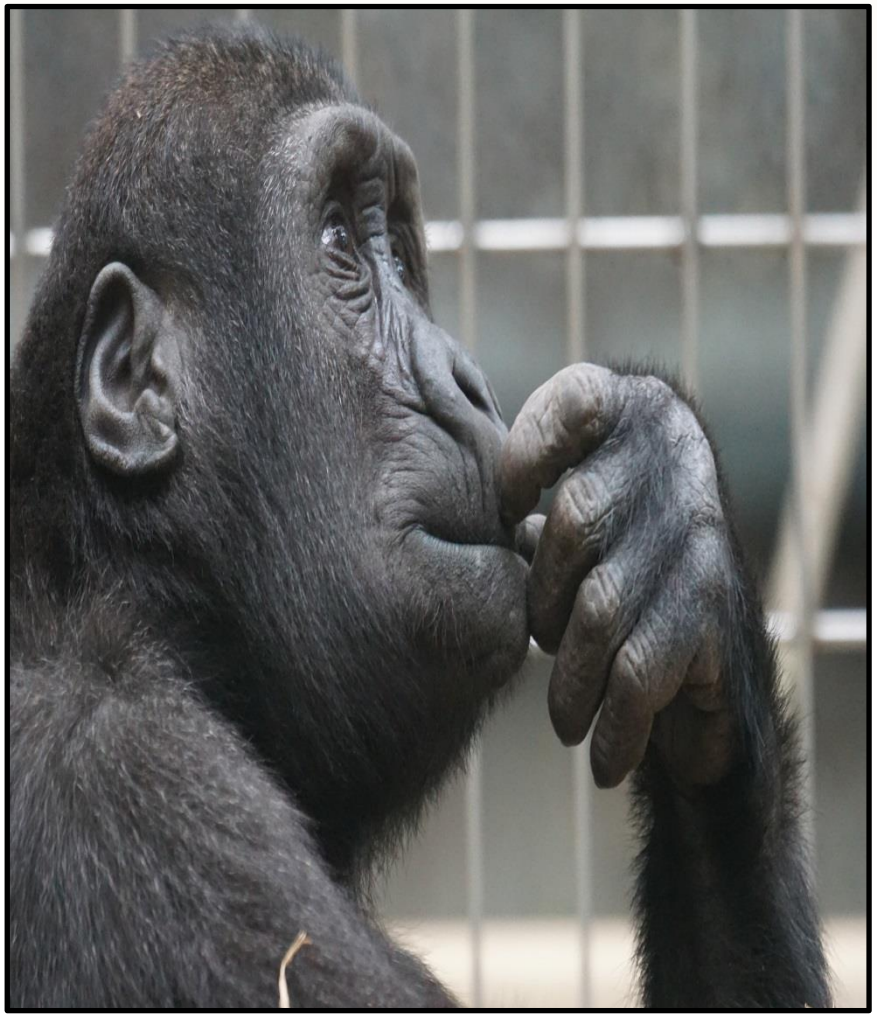
- Time management
- Ability to take criticism
- Communication skills
- Negotiation
- Neutrality

- Insider knowledge
- Higher level of access
- Established level of trust
- Can make a contribution to organisational change

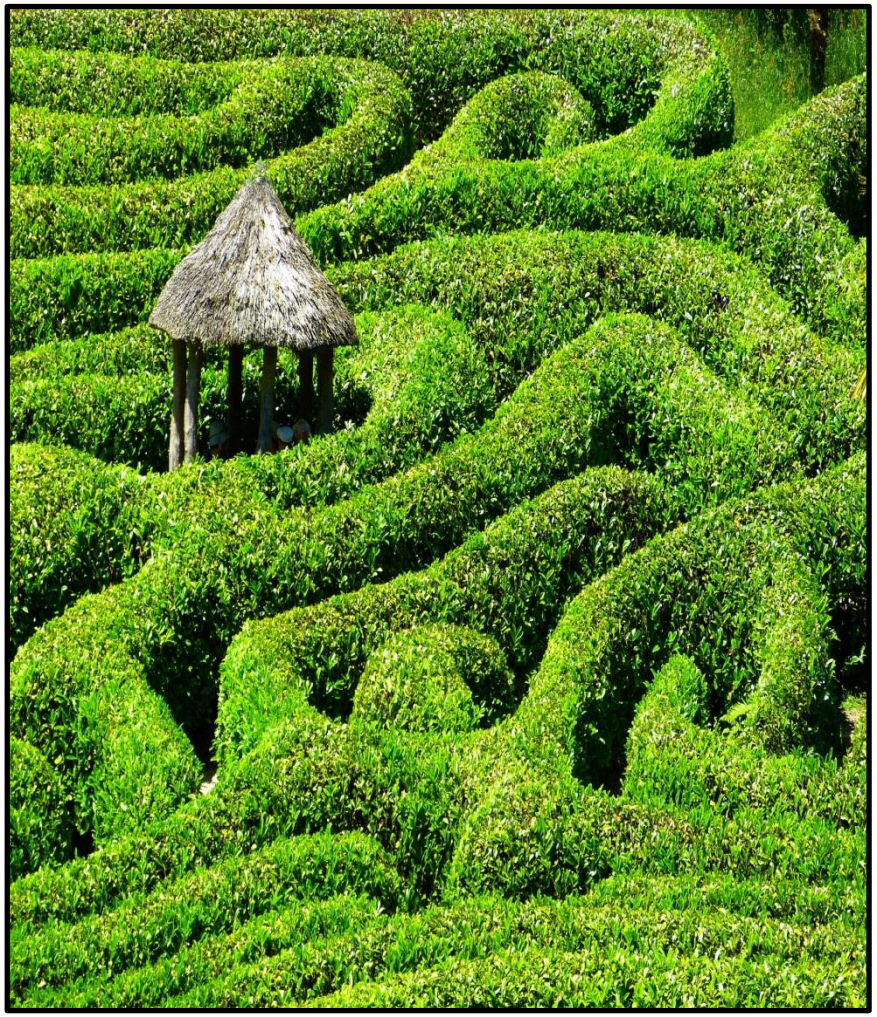
- Impact on objectivity
- Colleagues may not see you as a researcher
- Risk of finding out negative information
- Responsibility for change

My Plan:

- Have you noticed something at work?
- Could you improve on a process?
- Think you have a better way to do something?



- Do you want something to change?
- Are your proving a hypothesis?
- Are you making the case for more resources?

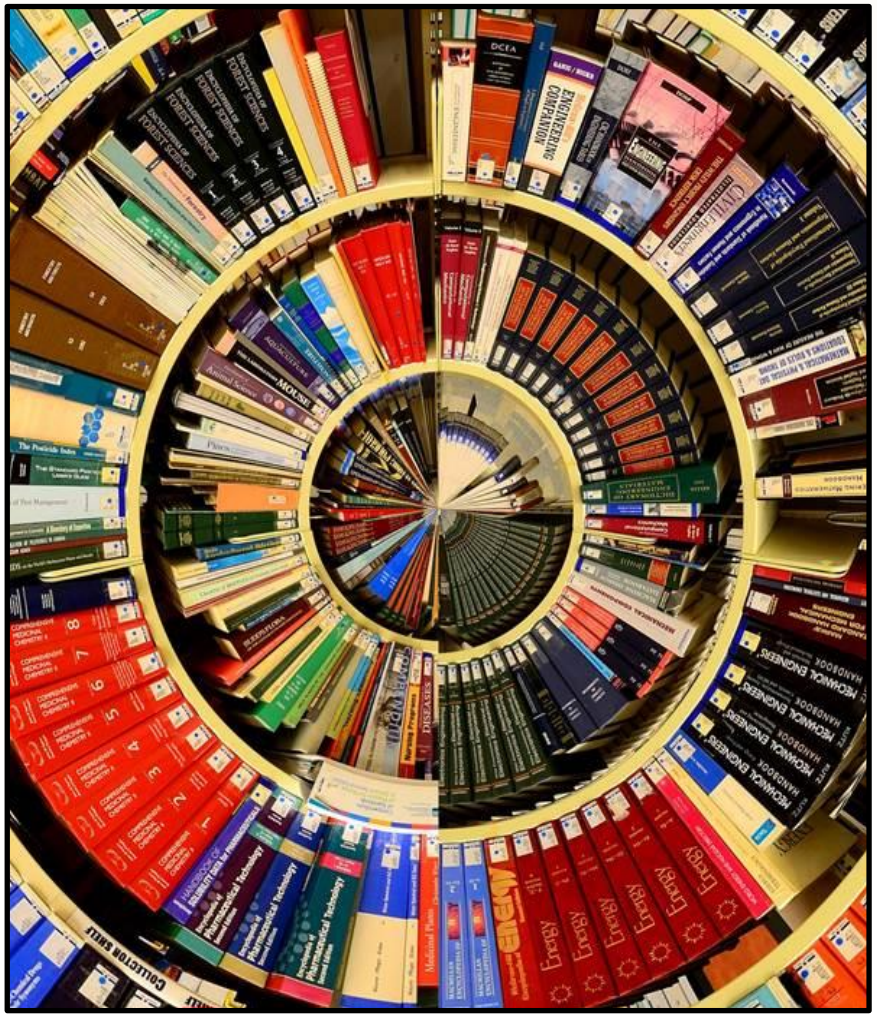


- How can you frame your problem into a question you can answer?
- Be practical!
- One piece of research = many questions

- ✓ What do I want to achieve with this research?
- ✓ Will it hold my interest for the length of the project?
- ✓ Will the findings be useful to my organisation or the wider library community?
- ✓ Have I made any assumptions that need to be checked?
- ✓ Is it doable?

from *Workplace Research* / Zina O'Leary & Jennifer S. Hunt

- Choose the right method for your research
- Think about what is manageable
- Consider any issues which might make things difficult



- Dealing with people often means dealing with sensitive data
- How will you keep participants and data safe?
- Is there an ethical review process at your workplace?

- Be realistic
- Plan for the unexpected
- Do any external factors influence your timescales?

- How will you communicate with key stakeholders?
- Is it appropriate to share the results with a wider audience?
- Formal or informal?
- Professional development

- Swap your plan with your neighbour
- Is there anything missing from the plan?
- What would you do differently?

Questions?

Combine efforts with a colleague

Don’t be afraid to talk about what **hasn’t** worked

Think about scale – what is achievable?

Be open about what you are doing

Have fun!

Good luck!