



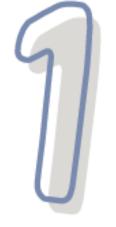
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THE PROJECT SO FAR...



STEP 1

Participant-generated photos is the visual 'mobile' method for participants to aid memory, stories, insight, and commentary (Welford et al, 2015; Richard & Lahman, 2014).

KEEPING IN TOUCH

Weekly or fortnightly contact with participants through What's App through messages and via photos.



PHOTOS!

Since the start of the project over 100 photos or videos have been sent with explanations. These will form the basis for the step 3 of the project.

STEP 2

Go-along 'mobile' interviews will actively engage in the activity/space with the participant to interact and facilitate dialogues (Moran et al., 2020; Russell et al., 2022).



GO-ALONG OBSERVATIONS

Participant- led invites to club nights, training and races or events. Observations will enable understanding of the participants role and activities within athletic settings.

'MOBILE' NOTES

Voice and written notes to myself. These are written up to include reflections, and pose questions and are sent to the participants for any additional notes from the field.



'MOBILE' PHOTOS

An important part of go-along 'mobile' methods is to gain a sense of place and atmosphere and so my photos form part of the observational notes sent to the participants.

WHATS NEXT?

Step 1: ongoing for a further 5 months Step 2: go-along interviews during Sept/Oct Step 3: photo elicitation interviews.



A participant centred approach to understanding athletics in the UK

USING 'MOBILE' METHODOLOGIES

This research focuses on the state of athletics in the UK from the perspective of grassroot coaches in the sport through a calendar year. The specific longitudinal study emphasis is beneficial for contextualizing and understanding how experiences vary amid changing club schedules, training demands, organisational priorities, and infrastructure and resource demands.

As much of coaches' work is voluntary, their experiences are crucial to understanding the heart of the sport, their perception of themselves, and the nature of their role. Institutional practices, goals, and values affect decisions to volunteer and their resultant experiences (Wicker, 2017). Such volunteerism is considered substantive labour (in terms of physical, financial cost, and emotional cost) and can shape how volunteers craft their identities and social lives. The way they interact, communicate, and behave provides insight into how they identify themselves within the sport and why they remain in that role throughout their lives (Baxter et al, 2021).

Accordingly, the study aims to:

- Discover what it means to be a coach within athletics;
- Develop understanding and context to the complexities of voluntary working within athletics:
- Reveal perspectives of the athletics eco system to develop recommendations for future practice.

KEY LEARNINGS FROM OBSERVATIONS/INTERVIEWS SO F. Sociability and community is central to group cohesion and WhatsApp groups play a key role.

- Flexibility in approach to managing individuals within group environment. Sense of place, sociable locations, cafes and catch ups are very important. The effect of place on group cohesion has enabled trust and rapport to build between coaches and athletes but also between athletes and athletes.







- Photo-elicitation interviews will be conducted at the end of the 12-month research period.
- The participant-generated photos will form the basis for photo-elicitation interviews so that the participants can actively engage with the interpretation of images as data.
- Key focus will be understanding the notable connection to the wider work on serious leisure (e.g., Stebbins, 1996).
- The role of an athletics coach aligns with the definition of serious leisure as they tend to demonstrate a deep selffulfilment by pursuing a volunteer core activity that requires skill, knowledge and experience but also a substantial investment of time and money to maintain.

REFERENCES

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