

Notes on the videos

When this course was piloted, some students suggested that it would be good to see some videos of research with children actually taking place. We therefore decided to film two interviews, one between Mike Gallagher and Iona (aged 7) and another between Gill Highet and Alexandra (aged 9). Mike had never interviewed children before, but had experience of ethnographic fieldwork, whereas Gill had considerable experience of interviewing young people.

Ethics were obviously a key consideration for us. Mike spent some time with the two children, explaining exactly what the process would involve and answering their questions. In particular, we decided that after the filming, the children ought to be given the right to veto any parts of the footage which they did not want to be seen by others. Mike arranged a screening where they could watch the videos of themselves. While Alexandra was happy for us to use whatever we wanted, Iona asked us not to include several sections. For example, there was a quite lengthy introduction/set-up phase, in which Mike went through a list of rights and responsibilities and negotiated consent with Iona, which she asked us not to use. We also gave each of the children vouchers to the value of £20 in return for their assistance.

As the interviews were designed for training rather than for data collection, the choice of topic was fairly arbitrary. We generated a few possible topics and consulted the children on which they would be most interested in talking about. Their preferred topic was 'things I like to do' but they were also happy to talk about 'people who are important to me', so we decided to design the interviews around these themes. Gill and Mike independently designed their interviews, using their own preferred format and research tools. For example, Mike decided to use post-it notes and drawing exercises, while Gill used a diagramming/writing tool adapted from a previous project (a scan of this is available for students to consult).

It should be emphasised that the clips were chosen for their instructive value. They are not intended to be in any way exemplary of 'good' interviewing technique, but rather to show what interviewing children can be like. Several of the clips highlight mistakes or problems, and are intended to provoke critical reflection on Gill's and Mike's practice as a means of learning.

After the interviews, Gill and Mike wrote some brief reflections on the interviews, and these are also available for students to consult.