Apply: the ASA network of applied anthropologists

Careers in Applied Anthropology

Postgraduate Workshop Pack: Students' copy

Introduction

Welcome to the workshop 'Careers in Applied Anthropology'. The workshop has been organised by members of Apply, the ASA network of applied anthropologists. Details about Apply can be found on the website: www.theasa.org/networks/apply.htm. The workshop has been funded by C-SAP. C-SAP is the Higher Education Academy Subject Network for Sociology, Anthropology and Politics.

This pack contains copies of today's presentations, research problems, information about further resources and an evaluation form.

Your facilitators for today are:

[Name and sentence or two of detail.]

[Name and sentence or two of detail.]

Today's workshop lasts 4 hours, with a 20-minute rest break with refreshments. Your facilitators will write up the timetable. It is important that you attend the whole workshop since your peers will be relying on your continued input for the small group work which takes place in both parts of the session.

The following exercises have two objectives:

1. To give you experience of designing an applied research project for a funding body that does not have knowledge of anthropology.
2. To enable you to translate your skills and market your expertise outwith your own discipline.

Exercise 1: Research proposals - using anthropological methods

This exercise gives you an opportunity to practice applying your anthropological skills to applied research problems. In small groups, you will be given one research problem. You have 40 minutes to work out how you would go about undertaking the research. Write your plan in brief on paper.

- In the second exercise, you will present and defend your research plan to the funders.

Exercise 2: Presenting the proposals

Research proposals often have to be presented and defended to the prospective funders. Usually a number of organisations will have submitted bids, and the presentation of the proposal is part of the competition to get the grant. Using the research plans you have developed, you are now going to present your proposal to 'the funders'.

- Research proposals often have to be defended to the prospective funders. Usually a number of organisations will have submitted bids, and the presentation of the proposal is part of the competition to get the work. Using the research plans you have developed, you are now going to present your proposal to 'the funders'. At the same time, you will be selling the skills of your research team and trying to convince the funders that you are the best team to deliver the research.
- You have 15 minutes to decide how you will present the proposal. You will present for about 3 minutes, and then answer questions. We suggest that 2 or 3 of you are involved in the presentation, and the others should observe, making notes for feedback afterwards.
- Consider how you will sell the value of anthropologists, and how you will defend the methods chosen. Remember that the funders are very unlikely to be anthropologists themselves, and may be sceptical about what anthropology can offer, particularly when outcomes often need to be 'measurable'.
- You should also prepare a paragraph each that summarises the skills and experience that you bring to the team. Your team should then present a summary of the skills and experience along with the proposal.

Sample Research Problems

The research problems provided below are similar to those undertaken by applied anthropologists, but are not real or exact examples of research tenders from the named (in some cases fictional) commissioning bodies.

Problem 1: Education
Commissioning body: Global Education Foundation
Title: Education Advocacy
Budget: £65k
Timescale: 8 months

Research requirement
Following the World Education Forum in Dakar and the introduction of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in 2000, civil society organisations across the world have taken on the task of education advocacy, campaigning to ensure that their governments provide Education for All. In order to support capacity building of small non-governmental organisations (NGOs), the Global Education Foundation wishes to commission research into good practice in education advocacy. Research proposals should include the planned methodology including location of case studies, and justifications of the qualifications of proposed staff for this project.

Problem 2: Education
Commissioning body: Young People Speak Out
Title: Programme evaluation
Budget: £65k
Timescale: 8 months

Research requirement
Young People Speak Out (YPSO) is a small voluntary agency that uses video to re-engage disengaged young people in school in Scotland. Small groups of 14/15 year olds work with a YPSO leader over 12 weeks to write, perform, shoot and edit a video which will then be shown in the school. This programme is school based and has been running for 6 years - largely funded by The Local Education Authority. An independent evaluation is now required in order to secure future funding.

Problem 3: Health

Commissioning body: An NHS Trust
Title: GPs and medicine prescription.
Budget: £70k
Timescale: 8 months

Research Requirement

Given concerns about the 'postcode lottery' for health service provision, an NHS Trust wishes to commission research into the ways in which GPs prescribe medicine. It is particularly concerned to find out which GP practices in the area spend more on prescribing medicines than others do – that is, which GP practices write more prescriptions than others. The research should also examine why some GP practices spend more money on prescribing medicines than others, and what influences the GPs to prescribe medicines. The research team will be multi-disciplinary, including a statistician, an economist and an anthropologist.

Problem 4: Health

Commissioning body NHS Health Scotland
Title Ethnic minorities and physical activity
Budget £45k
Timescale 6 months

Research requirement

Recent research has shown that people of South Asian ethnicity have high rates of diabetes and heart disease compared to the UK majority population. They also have lower rates of physical activity. This health-promoting agency therefore wishes to commission a study to explore the barriers to engaging in physical activity for South Asians living in Scotland and what the motivating factors might be. The study should focus on adults (18-40 yrs old) with children and should explore both the parents' levels of physical activity as well as their attitudes towards physical activity in their children.

Problem 5: Health HIV/AIDS

Commissioning body: National AIDS Council Secretariat (NACS) Papua New Guinea (PNG)
Title: The impact of culture on sexual practices
Budget: £75k
Timescale: 1 year

Research requirement

Numerous reports have stressed the need to understand the cultures in which HIV/AIDS thrives. The PNG NACS is inviting applications for funding of action research projects to investigate the impact of traditional beliefs and cultural norms on sexual behaviour. The research will identify the cultural variables that drive the infection rate. Based on these findings, the research team will design a social marketing strategy to bring about the necessary cultural changes to reduce the infection rate. Research proposals should include the planned methodology including location of case studies, and justifications of the qualifications of proposed staff for this project.

Problem 6: Government

Commissioning body: Engagement Unit
Title: Understanding Local Groups
Budget: £100k
Timescale: 1 year

Research requirement

Interactions by HM Government staff in other countries have highlighted the need to be able to identify influential local groups in a particular society. The motivations, needs and ways of operating of such groups can have significant impact on the ability of the UK Government to support good governance, security, development and poverty amelioration in the country concerned. The Engagement Unit is therefore commissioning work to produce a framework and strategy for identifying and engaging with local groups in other countries. Proposals should include planned method, sources of information and dissemination plans.

Problem 7: Industry

Commissioning body: Spring Shippers inc.
Title: Warehouse review
Budget: £15k
Timescale: 6 weeks

Research requirement

A parent company of shippers that has taken over a warehouse in London's East End has asked for advice. It has 80 staff and stores food and drink for various contractors. But it is losing money, losing contracts, has a high theft rate, is considered overstaffed and has what the holding company managers assert is a recalcitrant and 'bloody minded' union. Yet the warehouse is well sited in an area of business that is generally profitable: the company has four 'sister' warehouses that all show healthy profits.

The project includes four weeks for fieldwork and one week to write-up; the lead anthropologist may recruit two student helpers. Proposals should include consideration of ethics, methods, inter-team collaboration and potential support from others with experience in adjacent fields. What should be considered before taking on this assignment? How would the research be planned and what would the research team look for?

Problem 8: Information Technology

Commissioning body: A large search engine.com
Title: Exploring the Data Deluge
Budget: £70k
Timescale: 6 months

Research requirement

Managing vast amounts of data is a growing problem for researchers. Knowing where to look for information; how to collect, manage and evaluate it; processing and analysis of data using software; and dissemination of results and publication are all part of the everyday practice of research. Scientific and medical researchers are suffering from a 'data deluge'.

Information sources and service providers are concerned that researchers may not be making the best use of their resources and services. A review of researchers' information and data practices and processes is therefore being commissioned. The study is to be carried out by a social scientist and an information technologist. The funders require data on five different fields of scientific research, using mixed methods research. The final report is to be submitted in six months from the start date.

Problem 9: Economic Development
Commissioning body: Communications Unit
Title: Social Networks of UK minority groups
Budget: £50k
Timescale: 6 months

Research requirement
 It is understood that minority communities in the UK are not isolated and discrete groups but that they have wide ranging networks of connections, often reaching across the world. It has also been observed that minority communities in the UK are more often residents in deprived areas that attract special funds for economic development and regeneration activities. What is less well understood are the ways that goods and services circulate amongst these networks and also the ways in which networks overlap and merge.

The research team is required to carry out a social network mapping exercise and accompanying economic analysis of the circulation and distribution of goods and services amongst three key UK minority communities - (such as Bangladeshi, Pakistani and Chinese – exact research subjects to be agreed with the research team). The final report will include observations regarding how better understanding of these networks can help to deliver economic development objectives amongst those minority groups in the UK. The research team will be multi-disciplinary and involve a computer modeler, an economist and an anthropologist.

List of Resources

This list of references is intended to be drawn on as a resource, which we hope will help you to identify the research methods and language used in particular disciplinary contexts. Some of these are basic undergraduate text books that may be helpful simply as a quick reference guide. For instance, Bryman (2008) has a very simplistic discussion of epistemology but represents a useful source to explore a range of research methods and methodologies, including the use of ethnography and participant observation outside anthropology. You already have excellent research training – this is simply meant to allow you to understand how to 'pitch' those skills in an interview!

Websites for applied anthropology

'Apply': The ASA network of Applied Anthropologists
   www.theasa.org/networks/apply.htm

The Society for Applied Anthropology
   http://www.sfaa.net/

The Social Research Association
   http://www.the-sra.org.uk/

The National Association for the Practice of Anthropology (A Section of the American Anthropological Association)
   http://www.practicinganthropology.org/

You will find more links on the Apply website

General Sociology & Social Policy Texts

Aldridge, A. and Levine, K. 2001. *Surveying the Social World: Principles and Practices in Survey Research.* Maidenhead: Open University Press.

Atkinson P (Ed) 2001 *Handbook of Ethnography* London, Sage

Barbour RS & Kitzinger J (1999) *Developing focus group research. politics, theory and practice.* London: Sage.

Bryman A. 2008. *Social Research Methods* 3rd Edition, Oxford, Oxford University Press.

Buckingham A and Saunders P 2004 *The Survey Methods Workbook* Cambridge, Polity Press

Chamberlayne, P., Bornat and Wengraf, T (eds) 2000 *The Turn to biographical methods in social science: comparative issues and examples* London, Routledge.

Harrison B (2002) Seeing health and illness worlds – using visual methodologies in a sociology of health and illness: a methodological review. *Sociology of Health and Illness*. 24, 856-872.

Hine, C 2004 'Social Research Methods and the Internet: A Thematic Review' *Sociological Research Online,* vol. 9, no. 2, <http://www.socresonline.org.uk/9/2/hine.html>

Mason J (2006) Mixing methods in a qualitatively driven way. *Qualitative Research.* 6, 9-25.

Pawson R, Tilley N (1997) *Realistic Evaluation*. London: Sage.

Social Policy Research

Becker, S. and Bryman, A. (eds.) 2004. *Understanding Research for Social Policy and Practice*, Policy Press, Bristol.
- Lots of examples of real research and discussion of the relationship between research and policy

Criminology

King, R. and Wincup, E. (eds.) 2008. *Doing Research on Crime and Justice*, Oxford University Press, Oxford
- More theoretical and concerned with issues of politics and ethics – lots of real examples

Jupp, V., P. Davies and P. Francis (eds.) 2000. *Doing Criminological Research.* London: Sage.
- This one is less exciting but is a useful how to do it book.

Housing Research

Robertson, D. 2008. *Looking into Housing: A Practical Guide to Housing Research*, Coventry: Chartered Institute of Housing.

Health

Lambert H & McKevitt C (2002) Anthropology in health research: From qualitative methods to multidisciplinarity. *British Medical Journal*. 325, 210-213.

Mays N & Pope C (1995) Observational methods in health care settings. *British Medical Journal*. 311, 182-184.

Nettleton, S. 2006. (2006) *The Sociology of Health and Illness*, 2nd Edition, Cambridge: Polity.
- This is an excellent starting point if you are new to the study of health and illness.

Education

Bond. R., Paterson. L. (2005) Coming down from the ivory tower? Academics' civic and economic engagement with the community. *Oxford Review of Education* Vol 31, No 3 pp331-351

James.M. (2006) Balancing rigour and responsiveness in a shifting context: meeting the challenges of educational research. *Research Papers in Education*. Vol 21 No 4 pp365-380

Kane. J., Lloyd. G., McCluskey. G., Stead, J., Weedon. E. (2008) Collaborative evaluation: balancing rigour and relevance in a reseach study of restorative apporaches in schools in Scotland. *International Journal of Research & Method in Education.* Vol 31, No 2. pp99-111

Tobin. J. (2007) An anthropologist's reflections on defining quality in education research. I*nternational Journal of Research & Method in Education.* Vol 30, No 3, pp325-228

'Starting Points for Research in schools'
www.sera.ac.uk/docs/2007/SEARSEEDStartingpoints.pdf

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Careers in Applied Anthropology
Evaluation Form

Thank you for attending Apply's Careers in Applied Anthropology workshop. In order to help us develop the workshop for other students, we would be grateful if you would answer the following questions and hand the form to a facilitator before you leave.

1) Content of the workshop

Inappropriate   Very relevant

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Comments (it is helpful to have your comments on why you gave this rating)

2) Format/structure of the workshop (please circle one)

Inappropriate   Very relevant

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Comments (it is helpful to have your comments on why you gave this rating)

3) Presentations by the facilitators were … (circle one)

Very poor   Excellent

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Do you have any suggestions for improving the content or delivery of presentations?

5) What, if anything, did you find particularly useful/enjoyable about the workshop?

6) What would have improved the overall workshop?

Next steps

What are your plans for your career after your postgraduate degree?

Did this workshop make you think differently about your career options? (Circle one)

Yes   No

Do you have any other comments?

Many thanks for your time.