1.8 Researching Education: Methods in Context: 10-minute Pack

AQA 7192 · about 10 minutes

Total Marks

Name: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / _____

Answer ALL questions. Unless the question asks for brief points, write your answers in full sentences. Allow about 10 minutes for this pack.

1 State one theoretical reason a positivist researcher would prefer using official exam result statistics rather than participant observation to study academic attainment in secondary schools.

(Total for Question 1 is 2 marks)

2 Compare two strengths of using video-recorded lessons and non-participant observation when analysing teacher pupil interaction in a classroom setting.

(Total for Question 2 is 4 marks)

3 Define what sociologists mean by 'participant observation' when researching pupils and classrooms in a school setting.

(Total for Question 3 is 2 marks)

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Mark scheme · 1.8 Researching Education: Methods in Context: 10-minute Pack

Question 1

identifies a positivist reason, e.g. positivists favour quantitative, measurable data that can be analysed for patterns and general laws **B1**

brief development, e.g. official statistics provide reliable, comparable numerical measures across schools **B1**

Answer: A positivist would prefer official exam statistics because they provide quantitative, measurable data for analysing patterns and making general comparisons across schools, seen as more reliable and objective than observation.

Question 2

identifies a strength of video recording, e.g. allows detailed replay and micro analysis **B1**

identifies a strength of non-participant observation, e.g. researcher can observe without altering the interaction as much as participation might **B1**

explains comparison, e.g. video supports detailed, repeatable analysis while non-participant observation supports real time, broader context awareness **B1**

further development, e.g. video provides a permanent record improving reliability, non-participant observation may improve naturalism if the researcher is unobtrusive **B1**

Answer: Video recording allows detailed replay and micro analysis and provides a permanent record that improves reliability. Non-participant observation lets the researcher watch without joining in, which can keep interactions more natural. Video helps repeatable, detailed study while non-participant observation supports awareness of broader context and naturalism.

Question 3

identifies participant observation as the researcher joining the group being studied, taking part in activities **B1**

development, e.g. in a school this could mean the researcher acting as a teaching assistant or joining lessons while observing **B1**

Answer: Participant observation is when the researcher joins and takes part in the group being studied; in a school this could include acting as a teaching assistant or joining classroom activities while observing.

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