

Convivial Research Activity

A fun, interactive, highly energetic data-gathering activity in which participants gather information from their colleagues. This activity is especially useful for groups that might not know each other very well, and need to both get to know the group as a whole and get to know each other as individuals. It can also work well for groups in which people already know each other well, because it lends itself to asking new and fun questions. It can be used as an ice-breaker or a deep data-gathering activity – or both simultaneously!

1. Identifying Research Questions

Questions are gathered or created in advance of the event (or the activity can be adapted for each research groups to define their own question). Good questions for this activity are questions that generate fairly short answers, but still help participants to get a picture of the whole group or that prompt thought and interesting discussion. Some questions will lend themselves to qualitative research; some quantitative.

2. Research Teams

Divide participants into small teams of ideally 3-4 people; each team gets or creates one question (could perhaps be adapted to ask more than one question per research group)

3. Research Methodology

Each team first decides upon their research methodology – e.g., how they will collect data. Will they ask a multiple choice question? Open ended? A scale from 1-5? Will they divide and conquer, or work together? Are they aiming for a large number of data points or fewer deeper responses?

4. Research Commences

The group is let loose to conduct research. Teams go around the room, asking other teams their question and answering the questions of other teams. A certain amount of cheerful chaos ensues at this point.

5. Data Analysis

Teams return to their corners to tally up their results and engage in data-analysis and sense-making. What themes emerge, or what nuances? What can they learn or extrapolate from their research findings? Each team decides how they will visually represent their data. Some questions will lend themselves to graphs, while others might just require a bulleted list of the most common responses. The research question & findings are displayed on large chart paper.

6. Sharing of learning.

In a small group, each team might present out, or in a larger group, a gallery walk allows everyone to take a look at everyone else's findings.