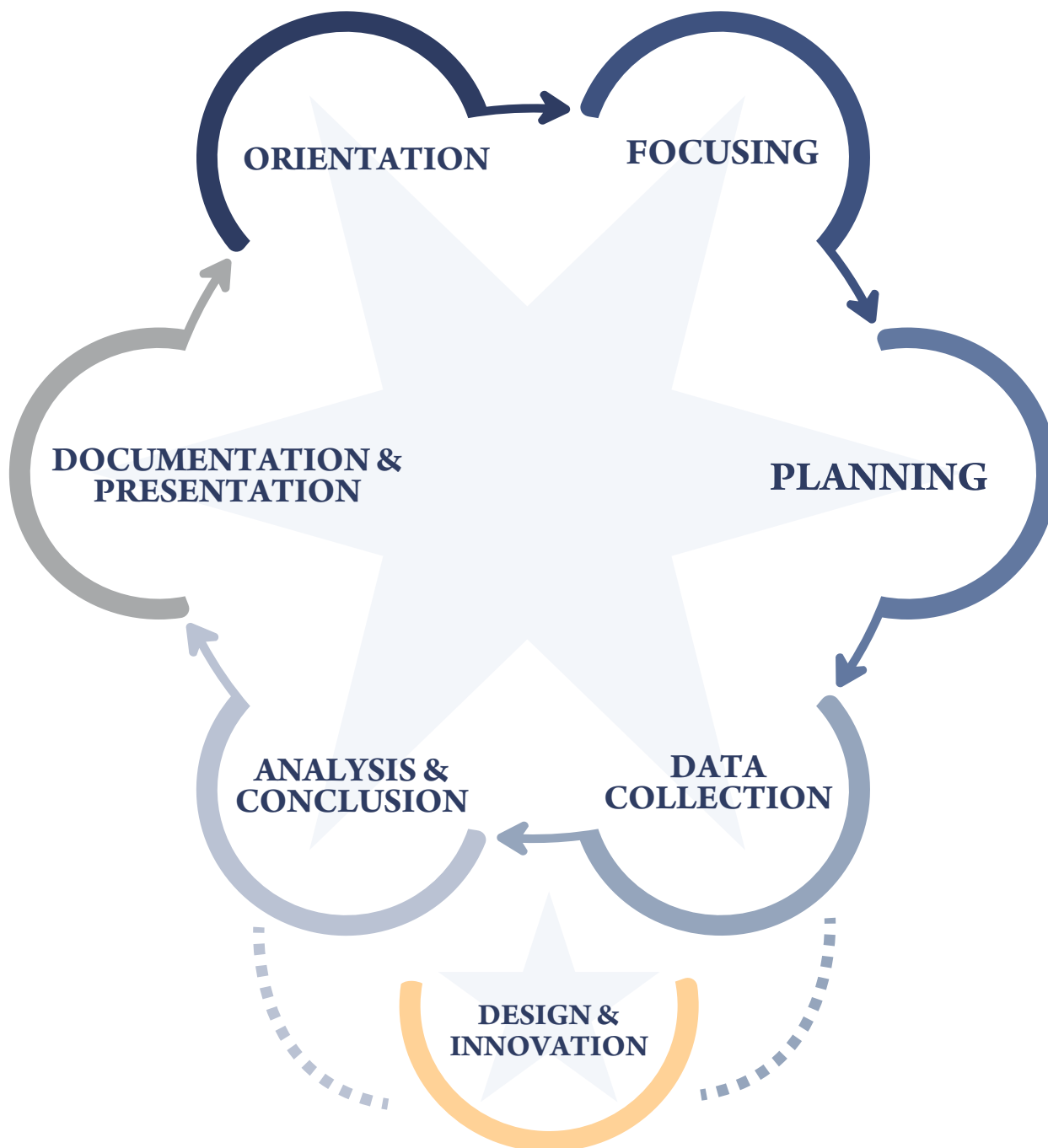


7 Steps of the Practitioner Research Method

Payam Sheikhattari, MD, MPH

Practitioner Research Cycle

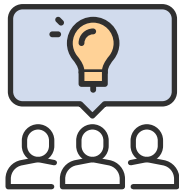


Step 1: Orientation

Keep the following goals in mind:

1

Identify common reasons for engaging in practitioner research



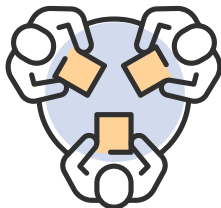
2

Learn techniques that help with selecting a significant practice problem



3

Explore methods for more in-depth understanding of an issue from multiple perspectives



4

Define the practice problem in a way that could be used to determine the “focus” of the practitioner research



Key Question:

What are the common reasons for engaging in practitioner research, and what techniques could practitioners employ to choose and become oriented to a significant practice problem?

Step 2: Focusing

Provide technical instructions for performing an in-depth problem analysis.

Formulate your research objectives, which later will guide you through the process of identifying and formulating important research questions and their respective sub-questions.

Key Question:

What are some activities and inquiries that could assist practitioners in crafting their research questions?

Types of Research Questions

1

DESCRIPTIVE QUESTIONS

Seek to describe the issue under study or provide information about needed improvements.

Example: "What do our young people know about drugs and their effects?"

2

DEFINING QUESTIONS

Seek to define an important idea or concept from the perspective of a particular group of people.

Example: "How do youth in our neighborhood define violence?"

3

COMPARATIVE QUESTIONS

Aim to identify differences and similarities between different groups or situations.

Example: "What problems do girls need help with, as compared to boys?"

4

EVALUATIVE QUESTIONS

Focus on assessing the effectiveness of a specific action or intervention.

Example: "Has our neighborhood action resulted in safer streets?"

5

EXPLANATORY QUESTIONS

Seek to understand the reasons or causes behind a particular phenomenon.

Example: "Why is the new family center so successful?"

Step 3: Planning

Identify methods for data collection.

Identify target groups and estimate the number of needed respondents.

Prepare an effective work plan, appropriate budget, and cohesive research plan.

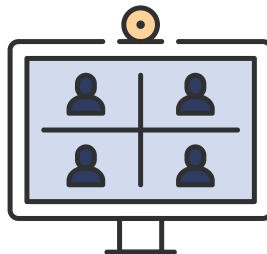
Step 4: Data Collection

Select data collection tools and activities that can be used in professional practice settings.

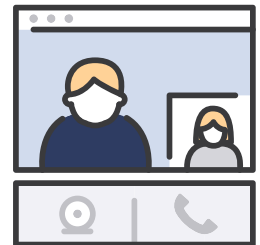
Document Analysis



Systematic Observation



Interviewing

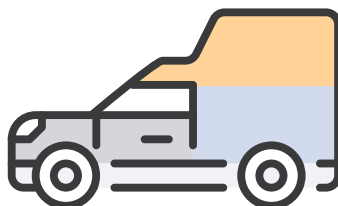


Questionnaires

(surveying, testing, or interviews)



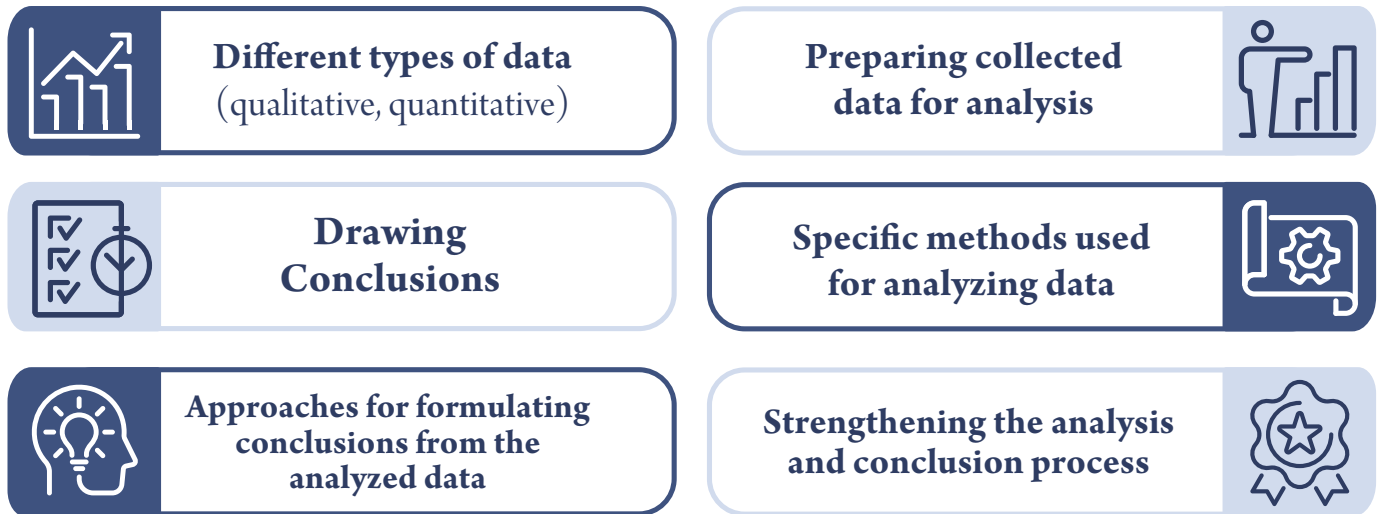
Site Visits



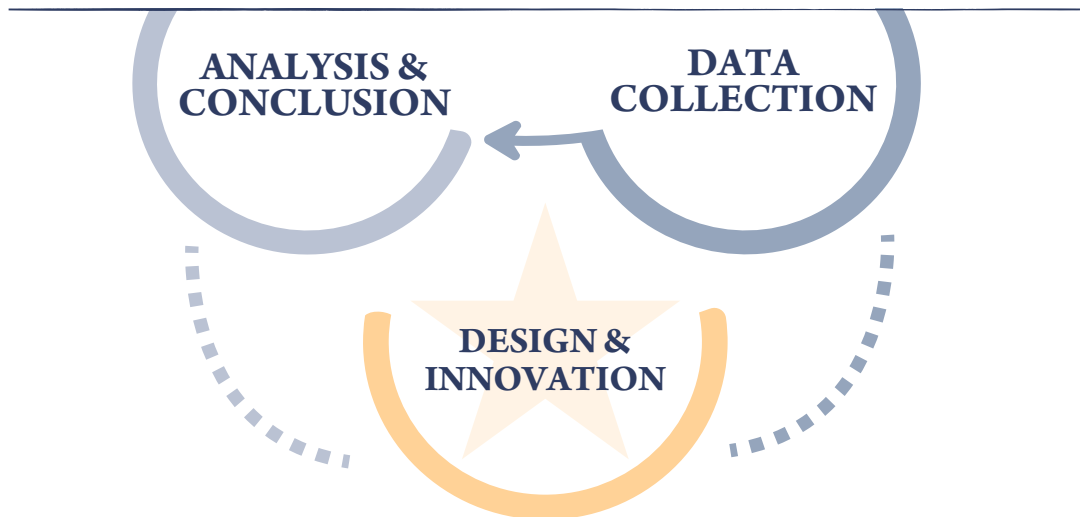
Alternative Data
Collection Methods



Step 5: Analysis and Conclusion



Step 6: Design and Innovation



Two phases of design research, specifically relevant when testing a new intervention:

EXPLORATORY RESEARCH:

Collect and analyze data needed for identifying the key elements (design principles) for a possible intervention

INNOVATION LOOP:

Guides the development and implementation of the intervention, repeated as many times as needed to develop the intervention

Step 7: Documentation and Presentation

Consider the characteristics and interests of the target audience

Select format/medium and communication strategies for disseminating the findings (Reports, Presentations, Etc.)

Implement innovative activities informed by the findings

Introduce strategies that could maximize their impact

Evaluate the research

Reflect

Develop recommendations for future research



Social Innovations
team at ICTR

This publication was made possible by the Johns Hopkins Institute for Clinical and Translational Research (ICTR) which is funded in part by Grant Number UL1 TR003098 from the National Center for Advancing Translational Sciences (NCATS) a component of the National Institutes of Health (NIH), and NIH Roadmap for Medical Research. Its contents are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official view of the Johns Hopkins ICTR, NCATS or NIH.

