

EXERCISE 4.2

Writing a thesis proposal

1. Context

What are the current issues and trends in your area of focus?

- (a) The broad external and internal context of the environment in which your organization is located. For example: what is going on, the strategy policy documents, etc.
- (b) The local organizational or discipline context. How is your organization situated in relation to the broader context? What is going on in your hospital, school, business or service?
- (c) Your particular topic issue. Where does that fit into the above two contexts? What will your work contribute in these contexts?

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2. Action

What is the action? What is the rationale for this action? Why is it worth doing? What is the desired future? What is the present situation? What is the plan to move from here to there? What is the time schedule? Where do you, as the researcher, fit into the action? What are the ethical challenges, both within the project itself and in seeking approval from an ethics review board?

3. Research

What is the rationale for researching this action? What is the contribution to knowledge that this research intends to make? Why should anyone not directly involved be interested in this? How do you intend to inquire into the action? How do you ensure quality and rigour in your action research?

4. Insider action research

How do you do action research in your own organization? How will you manage preunderstanding, role duality and organizational politics? How do you plan to learn in action? What quality processes will you build into your initiative? What are the particular ethical challenges that you will face?