

Positionality Worksheet

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'Reflexivity is an attitude of attending systematically to the context of knowledge construction, especially to the effect of the researcher, at every step of the research process.' (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006)

We acknowledge that while researching and designing for different contexts and spaces, we each bring our own individual and organisational positionality to the work.

Who you are and what you've been through influences how you see the world, your decisions, and your actions. It is important to situate ourselves within the social, cultural, political, etc context of our research so that:

- We can identify the potential biases and gaps within our teams, especially as related to the research/design context or topics of inquiry
- We can work to represent unrepresented perspectives that may be important to the validity and success of the project
- When published or released, the reader or users know the perspectives from which the work was produced

"A researcher's background and position will affect what they choose to investigate, the angle of investigation, the methods judged most adequate for this purpose, the findings considered most appropriate, and the framing and communication of conclusions" (Malterud, 2001, p. 483–484).

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fTHFud7fr8c>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ORrF7cKktrQ>

Below is a template for each team member to fill out as to their positionality regarding a given project.

It is important to note here that a researcher's positionality not only shapes their own research, but influences their interpretation, understanding and ultimately their belief in the 'truthfulness' of other's research that they read or are exposed to. Open and honest disclosure and exposition of positionality should show where and how the researcher believes that they have influenced their research, the reader should then be able to make an informed judgment as to the researcher's influence on the research process and how 'truthful' they feel the research is (Holmes, 2014). In essence, the positionality statement should address who you are, how you see the world

**(your paradigm), and your relationship with the research participants/user groups/
research or design topic and project.**

Savin-Baden & Major (2013) identify three primary ways that a researcher may identify and develop their positionality. Firstly, locating themselves within or around the subject, i.e., acknowledging personal positions that have the potential to influence the research. Secondly, locating themselves around the participants, i.e., researchers individually considering how they view themselves, as well as how others view them, while at the same time acknowledging that as individuals they may not be fully aware of how they and others have constructed their identities, and recognizing that it may not be possible to do this without considered in-depth thought and critical analysis. Thirdly, locating themselves about the research context and process, i.e., acknowledging that research will necessarily be influenced by themselves and by the research context. It's important to note that investigating and clarifying one's positionality takes time.

Here are some questions to consider as you begin to write your positionality statement:

- How do you understand the research process and knowledge? (paradigm)
- What are your beliefs about this topic?
- Any history or personal interaction with this topic?
- What are your understandings of systems of oppression and their influence on your research?
- What is your connection to your participants? Do you share any commonalities, identities, or experiences with your participants?
- What do you think you will find in this study?
- What are your hopes for this study?
- Anything else that is important for the reader to know about you?