

2 COLLECTING EVIDENCE

Technique	Outline	Example
Your teaching approach and what happens...		
Journal/Diary	Narrative account of thoughts, feelings, views, ideas, values, about oneself, the activities or the children, made immediately.	Writing up how a geography lesson went, what happened, who did what, why you think so, how it felt...
Field Notes	Descriptive, contemporaneous account of what happened or was observed, outlining events, even what was said.	Describe the sequence of a geography lesson, who did what, what the outcome or impact was...
Action/interaction log	List, as on a time chart, the activities undertaken by yourself or a group of children to see what happened, with whom, when, as it happens.	List in sequence, with the time or, for example, every 5 minutes, the activities undertaken during a geography lesson.
Audio/video record	Make an audio or video recording either yourself (or use a colleague) to hear/see what happens during a class lesson, focussed on the children or yourself.	Set up a microphone for a group during a discussion about an environmental issue, then analyse the conversation to see how they used language to express their knowledge, understanding and values...
The children's / your colleagues' learning and thinking		
Photographs	Provide stimulus photographs for children to respond to, either open-ended or with a specific task, to identify the knowledge or attitudes they bring to the image in the picture.	Give individual children a photograph each about which they have to write down what they think the place it shows is like, what life is like in that place...
Interview	A face-to-face interview can be structured, semi-structured or open-ended, depending upon your purpose and the type of questions you want to ask and follow up.	Conduct a semi-structured interview with colleagues about their geography planning, with the same questions to ask every one but enabling you to use supplementary questions to clarify or explore specific points...
Group discussion/review	Use a stimulus to encourage a group of staff or children to discuss or evaluate a topic, value, resource and so on.	Set up a discussion about the kind of approaches colleagues use to teach about places, to identify the variety of strategies used across the staff group...
Episode/incident analysis	Examine a typical episode during a lesson e.g. a dialogue between two children, about a topic, to analyse the nature of the discourse involved.	Record a discussion between yourself and two children about how a river flows and what happens as it does, then analyse the discussion to identify what type of discussion it was such as defining, describing, explaining, evaluating.

Outcomes from children and staff		
Artefact study	Examine children's written, drawn and rough work which are discarded to see how they inform you about the nature/process of their thinking and working.	From a session in which children have been planning an enquiry their rough working notes and analyse these to identify aspects of how they went about their planning.
Document analysis	Analyse documents concerned with planning or teaching e.g. minutes of planning meetings for the curriculum or children's completed work in a folder.	Read through the minutes of meetings on planning of the school geography curriculum to establish what information exists about its development.
Resource Use	Observe the way in which particular teaching resources are used by children in tasks they undertake to identify how they go about using them.	Watch and note the way a group of children use a set of materials from a locality pack to do the set task ; note reading, search, classifying skills used in the process.
Assessment task	For a topic that has been studied, set a variety of types of question/task (identification, description, explanation, problem, and so on) to assess what the children know, understand, can do, value and other criteria.	Give individual children a map and three photographs and set them questions that require them to describe what they can see, match the photographs to the map and offer a solution to a problem, then examine the variety of responses.
Problem survey	Set up a survey to be undertaken by children, for which there is no one right way, and observe how the children respond to the task, what support is needed by whom...	Children plan and undertake a local study enquiry in which you observe who provides what sort of contribution and how they set up, undertake and evaluate the enquiry.
Questionnaire	Devise a set of questions to find out specific information, views, experience, depending upon the purpose in mind.	Use a questionnaire to find out about the impact of changes to the literacy and numeracy curriculum on geography teaching in partnership schools.
Checklist	Devise a checklist for use in a structured lesson in order to record what is seen to be happening or to list what is in documents.	Create a checklist of behaviour expected to be seen, in sequence, during a fieldtrip then use to monitor children in action.
Rating scale	Use a rating scale to evaluate an activity, e.g. how often a resource was used, how helpful texts were, how imaginative a topic had been.	Ask children to rate the helpfulness of resources used in a settlement study and the different aspects of the unit planned by the teacher.
Attitude scale	Used to identify the extent to which we agree, disagree or are uncertain/ambivalent about particular topics/values, using statements to which a response is made.	List a number of statements to do with attitudes to geography in the school curriculum, teaching it, collecting resources and ask colleagues to complete the attitude scale anonymously about whether they agree, are uncertain about or disagree with the statements.

Note: For detailed outlines on the use of these and other techniques, see, for example, Aldridge & Wood, 1998; Altrichter, Posch & Somekh, 1993; Basse, 1999, Cohen & Manion 1994; McKernan, 1996.

Reference: S. Catling (2000) *Raising Achievement in Geography* p.36