CHAPTER 21

Fieldwork inquiry: What are the effects of travel in the local community?

21.1 Overview

21.1.1 Scenario and task

Task: Produce a report about the impacts of travel movements around a local school or traffic hotspot, and devise a plan to better manage traffic and pedestrian movement.

People travel for many reasons at the local scale — for example, they may travel to work, to shops, to visit friends and to local sporting venues. Often there are times when traffic congestion occurs, creating danger areas for motorists and pedestrians. Examples of places where such congestion occurs are schools and shopping centres. Undertaking fieldwork allows you to observe and collect original data first-hand.

Your task

Your team has been commissioned by the local council to compile a report evaluating the impacts of travel movements around a local school or traffic hotspot. You will need to collect, process and analyse suitable data and then devise a plan to better manage future traffic and pedestrian movement in the area.

21.2 Inquiry process

21.2.1 Process

- Open the ProjectsPLUS application for this chapter located in your eBookPLUS. Watch the introductory video lesson and then click the 'Start Project' button and set up your project group. You can complete this project individually or invite members of your class to form a group. Save your settings and the project will be launched.
- **Planning:** Navigate to your Research Forum. Research topics have been loaded into the system to provide a framework for your research. You can also add your own new topics.
- As part of a class discussion, determine a suitable location for your fieldwork study. This might be your own or a local school, or a nearby shopping centre. Talk about some of the issues related to your fieldwork site and then devise a key inquiry question — for example: *What are the effects of . . . ?* or *How can we reduce the impact of . . . ?* This will be the focus of your fieldwork. You then need to establish the following:
  – **What** sort of data and information will you need to study the travel issue at your site?
  – **How** will you collect this information?
  – **Where** would be the best locations to obtain data?
  – **When** would be the best times of the day or day(s) of the week to obtain data?
  – **How** will you record the information you are collecting?

If you wish to collect people's views on the issue, or suggestions for improvements, you will need to plan and write suitable survey questions.

21.2.2 Collecting and recording your data

- As a class, plan the field trip by identifying and allocating tasks and possible sites to groups or pairs. It is often easier to share data collection. Once everything has been planned, you will need to perform your allocated tasks on the day.
- In class, invite your school principal or a member of your local council to be a guest speaker discussing your fieldwork site. They may be able to assist with background information that you may

not be able to gain elsewhere. They can also provide a different perception of the effects of travel at your site. Plan a series of questions you would like to ask and be prepared to take notes that you can use in your report.

- After the field trip, it may be necessary to collate everyone's data and summarise surveys so that everyone has access to the shared information.

21.2.3 Processing and analysing your information and data

- Look at your completed graphs and maps. What trends, patterns and relationships can you see emerging? Within your fieldwork area, are there some places that have a bigger issue with cars and pedestrians than other areas? Is there an interconnection between traffic congestion and time of the day, or day of the week? What have your surveys revealed? What are the major effects of travel at your fieldwork site? How do people perceive the travel issues in this place? Go back to your key inquiry question. To what extent have you been able to answer it? Write your observations up as a fieldwork report using subheadings such as:
  – Background and key inquiry question
  – Conducting the fieldwork [planning and collecting data]
  – Findings [results of data analysis].
- Visit your Media Centre and download the report template to help you complete this project. Use the report template to create your report.

21.2.4 Communicating your findings

- Now that you have identified a traffic problem and collected and analysed data, it is time to try to solve it. Your completed map and supporting data will form part of your management plan for the future. What have been the main issues that have emerged from your fieldwork research? How can you best manage these issues? Using your base map, create an overlay or annotated map to show possible options for reducing the traffic problem. You will need to support each proposal with data that you have gained from your fieldwork. Possible ideas could include:
  – changing parking restrictions
  – staggering times of drop-off and pick-up
  – introduction of traffic wardens to guide traffic
  – creation of a one-way system.

Your teacher may arrange for your completed report to be presented to your school or local council. Considering your audience, what is the best way to present your findings? You might like to produce a PowerPoint presentation or an annotated visual display.

21.3 Review

21.3.1 Reflecting on your work

- Think back over how well organised and prepared you were for the fieldwork, the data you collected and how you processed the data for your report. Download and complete the reflection template from your Media Centre.
- Print out your Research Report from ProjectsPLUS and hand it in with your fieldwork report and reflection notes.

Your ProjectsPLUS application is available in this chapter's Resources tab in your eBookPLUS. Visit **www.jacplus.com.au** to locate your digital resources.

Suggested software
- ProjectsPLUS
- Microsoft Word or any other word processing tool
- PowerPoint or any other presentation tool

Media Centre
Your Media Centre contains:
- a sample traffic count data sheet
- a sample survey question sheet
- a report template
- an assessment rubric.