



RESONANCE LAB

METHOD TOOLKIT



Read 03 — Method

THE MOVE

Knowing that note, the instruments most capable of playing it are assembled. Each instrument is derived from peer-reviewed publications in established research traditions. Improvisation has no place here. Instead, the ensemble is chosen based on what is actually available and what is actually being learned. This is the default. Its exact shape, for any given engagement, is a conversation with the people closest to the work — community members, institutional partners, or both. Every instrument in the ensemble is chosen to detect frequency precisely — the community's own, and whatever is already acting on it.

GROUNDING METHOD

Method selection is not a single yes-or-no gate. It is a genuine multi-criteria decision, and the correct tool for that is a Weighted Decision Matrix — sometimes called a Pugh Matrix, a standard technique in multi-criteria decision analysis. Every real instrument for this question is scored against every real criterion at once, weighted by what actually matters for this specific engagement, so no single factor is allowed to override every other consideration by accident.

Grounded in: **Pugh, Total Design (decision-matrix method)**; multi-criteria decision analysis (MCDA); instrument characteristics drawn from **Kvale & Brinkmann, Krueger & Casey, Spradley, and Wang & Burris**. Full criteria definitions and scoring guide: **A3.0**.

This is the approach Resonance Lab defaults to. The right depth and technique for a given engagement — timeline, budget, and who the actual stakeholders are — is a scoping conversation, not a fixed requirement.

The Instruments — Method

Baseline scores (1–5) reflect each instrument's documented characteristics. Assign a weight (1–5) to each criterion for this specific engagement, multiply, and sum for a Weighted Total. Criteria definitions and a full scoring guide: **A3.0**.

Example — A1 with every weight at 1 except Sensitivity Fit at 5: $(2 \times 1) + (1 \times 1) + (2 \times 1) + (3 \times 5) + (4 \times 1) + (5 \times 1) = 29$. Do this for every row, then compare — the largest total is the best fit for this engagement.

Instrument	Data Type	Depth wt:	Group Dyn. wt:	Self-Report wt:	Sensitivity wt:	Feasibility wt:	Verbal Fit wt:	Weighted Total
A1 Structured Interview	Qual / Text	2	1	2	3	4	5	
A2 Semi-Structured Interview	Qual / Text	5	1	2	4	4	5	
A3 Unstructured / Conversational	Qual / Text	5	1	2	5	3	5	
B1 Focus Group	Qual / Text	2	5	2	1	2	5	
B2 Dialogue Circle	Qual / Text	3	4	2	2	2	5	
C1 Non-Participant Observation	Qual / Text	3	4	5	3	3	1	
C2 Participant Observation	Qual / Text	4	4	5	3	2	1	
D1 Closed Survey	Nom / Ord	1	1	2	4	5	5	
D2 Open Survey	Qual / Text	2	1	2	4	5	5	
E1 Photovoice	Qual / Visual	4	3	3	3	2	1	

Geospatial and Network are added dimensions, not primary outputs — any instrument above can carry one if the underlying data also has a location or relational structure.

This toolkit is one of nine. Full walkthrough: labresonance.com/method

A3.0 — Criteria & Scoring Guide

BEFORE YOU START

What this is: A scoring guide for the Weighted Decision Matrix — a real multi-criteria decision analysis technique (Pugh), adapted here specifically for choosing a research instrument.

When to use it: Alongside the matrix on the Read 03 — Method spread, whenever weights are actually being assigned for a real engagement.

How to use it: Read the anchored 1/3/5 descriptions before scoring, not after — that order is what keeps the weights honest rather than reverse-engineered to favor a method already preferred.

Source: [Designing and Validating a Research Questionnaire – Part 2 \(face and content validity\)](#)

Use this guide to apply the Weighted Decision Matrix on the Read 03 — Method spread. No prior research training required — each criterion below is a plain question with anchored scores, not a judgment call made from scratch.

1. For each of the six criteria, assign a Weight from 1 (barely matters for this engagement) to 5 (matters a great deal), based on the actual project – not a general rule.
2. The ten instruments already carry baseline Scores (1–5) reflecting each method's real, documented characteristics.
3. Multiply each Score by its column's Weight, then sum across the row for each instrument's Weighted Total.
4. The highest Weighted Total is the recommended instrument. Review the next two highest before finalizing – a close second may fit better once real constraints are considered.

Depth Needed

How much rich, individual-level detail does this question require?

- 1 = Pattern across many is enough
- 3 = Some nuance matters
- 5 = Cannot answer without deep detail

Group Dynamics Relevant

Does the question require seeing how people influence each other?

- 1 = Individual view answers it
- 3 = Group reaction adds context
- 5 = Question is about shaping

Self-Report Risk

How likely would stated behavior differ from actual behavior?

- 1 = Self-report likely accurate
- 3 = Some gap plausible
- 5 = High risk of inaccuracy

Sensitivity Fit

How comfortable would disclosure be in front of others?

- 1 = Highly sensitive
- 3 = Manageable with trust
- 5 = Low sensitivity

Feasibility

Given real timeline and budget, how realistic is this to arrange?

- 1 = Very difficult
- 3 = Achievable with effort
- 5 = Straightforward

Verbal Fit

Can this experience be put into words, or is it better shown?

- 1 = Poorly suited to words
- 3 = Partially describable
- 5 = Fully describable

What makes a question good, not just present: after drafting with [A2.1–A2.6](#), check it against Face Validity (does it look, on its surface, like it measures what it claims to) and Content Validity (do domain experts or community members agree it actually covers the relevant ground). A question can score well on this matrix and still fail both — score and validity are separate checks.

A3.0b — Instrument Data-Type Reference

BEFORE YOU START

What this is: Ours, not borrowed — a reference table translating each instrument's real output into the data-type vocabulary this Score uses consistently from here forward.

When to use it: Right after picking an instrument on Read 03 — Method, before going to the field.

How to use it: Treat the tagged type as a default, not a guarantee — confirm what actually came back in Translate 04 — Data Collection's [A4.6](#), since real fieldwork sometimes departs from the plan.

Matches the Data Type column on the Read 03 — Method spread.

CODE	INSTRUMENT	DATA TYPE PRODUCED	NOTES
A1	Structured Interview	Qualitative / Text	
A2	Semi-Structured Interview	Qualitative / Text	
A3	Unstructured / Conversational	Qualitative / Text	
B1	Focus Group	Qualitative / Text	
B2	Dialogue Circle	Qualitative / Text	
C1	Non-Participant Observation	Qualitative / Text	
C2	Participant Observation	Qualitative / Text	
D1	Closed Survey	Nominal / Ordinal	
D2	Open Survey	Qualitative / Text	
E1	Photovoice	Qualitative / Visual	

Geospatial and Network describe a data's structure — whether it carries a location or relational dimension — separate from its measurement scale. An engagement can be built entirely around either.

A3.1 — Structured Interview Guide

BEFORE YOU START

- What this is:** The most rigid of the three interview forms in this Score — the right choice specifically when comparability matters more than depth.
 - When to use it:** When the Weighted Decision Matrix scored highest on comparability across many respondents, not richness from a few.
 - How to use it:** Write every question exactly as it will be read aloud, then do not deviate from that wording once fieldwork starts.
- Source: [Kvale & Brinkmann – InterViews](#)

Fixed wording, fixed order, asked identically to every participant.

A3.2 — Semi-Structured Interview Guide

BEFORE YOU START

What this is: The middle ground of the three interview forms — grounded directly in Kvale & Brinkmann's seven-stage interview structure, the standard reference in qualitative interviewing.

When to use it: When both comparability and room for the unanticipated are needed — the most commonly chosen of the three in practice.

How to use it: Write real core questions, then write real probes for each — an unplanned probe in the moment is where the richest material tends to come from, but only if the core is rehearsed first.

Source: [Kvale & Brinkmann – InterViews](#)

Core questions asked of everyone, with room to probe and follow unexpected threads.

A3.3 — Unstructured / Conversational Interview Guide

BEFORE YOU START

What this is: The loosest of the three interview forms, drawing on Kurakani (Nepali: "conversation"), a documented South Asian community-research tradition of informal conversational inquiry.

When to use it: When the relationship with participants calls for conversation over protocol, or when a fixed question order would itself damage trust.

How to use it: Prepare topic anchors, not questions — return to them only if the conversation genuinely stalls, never to redirect it back toward what was expected.

The lightest structure of the three interview types — closer to a guided conversation than a protocol.

A3.4 — Focus Group Protocol

BEFORE YOU START

What this is: The formal half of this Score's two group formats, grounded in Krueger & Casey — the standard applied reference for focus group research.

When to use it: When seeing agreement and disagreement surface between people, in a structured, comparable way, is specifically needed.

How to use it: Recruit for genuine diversity of perspective within the group — a focus group of people who already agree produces little the interviews in [A3.1](#)–[A3.3](#) could not have said alone.

Source: [Krueger & Casey — Focus Groups](#)

A formal, comparative group format. Best when the goal is a bounded, structured comparison of perspectives.

A3.5 — Participatory Dialogue Circle Protocol

BEFORE YOU START

What this is: The open half of this Score's two group formats, grounded in two documented Nepali dialogue traditions: Chautari Guff, open conversation at a communal resting place, and Pandheri Guff, quieter dialogue traditionally among women at a water source.

When to use it: When a formal focus group's structure would itself work against the kind of trust the conversation needs.

How to use it: Let the turn-taking method set the tone — a passed talking piece signals something different to a room than an open floor does.

An open, non-hierarchical group format.

Turn-Taking Method

- ☐ Talking piece — an object passed in sequence; only whoever holds it speaks
- ☐ Open floor, self-selected order

A3.6 — Non-Participant Observation Protocol

BEFORE YOU START

What this is: The outsider half of this Score's two observation forms, grounded in Spradley's Participant Observation — the standard ethnographic reference for both variants. The observer records the setting from outside it, present but not taking part.

When to use it: When the observer's own presence in the activity would change what is being observed, or when observing without altering the interaction is specifically the point.

How to use it: Decide the ethical boundary of non-intervention before beginning, not in the moment — write it down here so it is not improvised under real pressure.

Source: [Spradley – Participant Observation](#)

The observer remains outside the activity being observed.

TIME	OBSERVED (WHAT HAPPENED)	INTERPRETED (WHAT IT MIGHT MEAN)

☐ Ethical boundary of non-intervention, decided in advance

A3.7 — Participant Observation Protocol

BEFORE YOU START

What this is: The insider half of this Score's two observation forms, same source as A3.6 — Spradley — applied where genuine participation is actually possible. The observer takes part in the activity while also recording it, unlike A3.6's outsider stance.

When to use it: When outsider observation in A3.6 would itself be impossible, or would miss what only a participant could see from inside the activity.

How to use it: Keep the reflexivity record honest — log where the observer's own presence likely changed what happened, not only what happened.

Source: [Spradley — Participant Observation](#)

The observer is genuinely part of the activity being observed.

TIME	OBSERVED (WHAT HAPPENED)	REFLEXIVITY NOTE (HOW MY PRESENCE SHAPED IT)

A3.8 — Closed Survey Template

BEFORE YOU START

What this is: Grounded in Dillman's Tailored Design Method — the most widely cited framework for survey design and response-rate maximization, still the field standard.

When to use it: When the Weighted Decision Matrix scored highest on scale and comparability, not individual depth.

How to use it: A typical instrument runs 15 to 25 items. Order easy, non-threatening items first — Dillman's own research is specific that question order measurably affects whether someone finishes the survey at all. Every item should be checked against Face Validity and Content Validity before fielding, per [A3.0](#).

Source: [Dillman – Internet, Phone, Mail, and Mixed-Mode Surveys: The Tailored Design Method](#)

Fixed response options, for comparability at scale.

#	QUESTION	RESPONSE TYPE
		Multiple choice / Likert / Yes-No
		Multiple choice / Likert / Yes-No
		Multiple choice / Likert / Yes-No
		Multiple choice / Likert / Yes-No

A3.9 — Open Survey Template

BEFORE YOU START

What this is: Same grounding as A3.8 — Dillman's Tailored Design Method — applied to open rather than closed response items.

When to use it: When the reach of a survey is needed but the interviews in A3.1–A3.3 are not feasible at the scale this question requires.

How to use it: Keep open items genuinely few — no more than 3 to 5 per instrument. Dillman's own findings show completion rates drop sharply once free-text burden rises, defeating the scale this instrument was chosen for in the first place.

Source: [Dillman – Internet, Phone, Mail, and Mixed-Mode Surveys: The Tailored Design Method](#)

Free-text response at scale.

#	QUESTION (OPEN RESPONSE)

A3.10 — Photovoice Protocol

BEFORE YOU START

What this is: Photovoice — a real, named participatory methodology (Wang & Burris, 1997), not a generic "show and discuss" exercise. Participants document their own experience through photography, then interpret their own images collectively.

When to use it: When the experience being studied is easier to show than to say, or when language itself may be a barrier interviews and surveys cannot get past.

How to use it: Never skip Session 1's ethics and consent training — Wang & Burris are explicit that image-based methods carry real risks to participant privacy a standard consent form does not fully cover.

Source: [Wang & Burris – Photovoice](#)

Grounded in Wang & Burris. Uses the SHOWeD technique for group discussion of images.

- ☐ **Session 1 — Ethics, consent, and camera training**
- ☐ **Session 2 — Group discussion using SHOWeD (What do we See? What is really Happening? How does this relate to Our lives? Why does this situation exist? What can we Do about it?)**

Glossary

The physics, and what it means in practice. Every linked term across this document points here.

PHYSICS	PRACTICE
Medium What a wave travels through	Medium A community, organization, or society — already has its own rhythms and ways of organizing
Wave A disturbance that transfers energy through a medium	Wave Any program, policy, or strategy entering a community, organization, or society
Frequency (f) Number of wave cycles per second (Hz)	Community Frequency The rate at which a community, organization, or society repeats its core rhythms Measured by: participation rates, cultural retention indicators where participatory; usage or administrative records where not.
Frequency (f) Number of wave cycles per second (Hz)	Intervention Frequency The rate at which an introduced program, policy, or strategy repeats its own rhythm Measured by: program schedule and cadence; funding or renewal cycles.
Wavelength (λ) Distance of one full wave cycle (m)	Community Wavelength The reach of one full cultural cycle across people, geography, and generations Measured by: cultural spread, intergenerational transmission where participatory; demographic or geospatial distribution where not.
Velocity (v = fλ) How fast a wave's energy moves through the medium	Community Velocity How fast meaning and knowledge move through a community's own networks Measured by: response time to cultural events where participatory; network density or digital logs where not.
Amplitude (A) The energy or intensity of the driving force	Amplitude The intensity of resources actually committed to an intervention Measured by: dollars committed, people reached, frequency and duration of contact. <i>High amplitude with the wrong frequency is loud dissonance, not resonance.</i>

Glossary (continued)

PHYSICS	PRACTICE
f_community = f_intervention When frequency of wave matches frequency of medium	Resonance When the frequency of an intervention matches the natural frequency of a community Measured by: uptake, sustained engagement, trust where participatory; adoption or usage metrics where not. <i>If the community resonates with and amplifies the intervention, social transformation can take shape.</i>
f_beat = f_c - f_i When frequency of wave does not match frequency of medium — audible beating	Dissonance The gap between the frequency of a community and whatever is currently acting on it Measured by: drop-off and pushback where participatory; divergence in statistical or geospatial measurements where not.
A' > A at resonance Growth in a driven system's own response amplitude, greatest at resonance	Amplification What a community does with an intervention, if it resonates — carrying it further than what was put in Measured by: continued use after the engagement ends; adoption or replication beyond original delivery. <i>This is the mechanism behind social transformation — not the resources committed, but what the community does with them.</i>

Bibliography

Sources cited in the Method Toolkit.

Read 03	<u>Pugh — Total Design (decision-matrix method)</u>
A3.2	<u>Kvale & Brinkmann — InterViews</u>
A3.4	<u>Krueger & Casey — Focus Groups</u>
A3.6 / A3.7	<u>Spradley — Participant Observation</u>
A3.8 / A3.9	<u>Dillman — Internet, Phone, Mail, and Mixed-Mode Surveys</u>
A3.10	<u>Wang & Burris — Photovoice</u>

the cycle continues –

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The Resonance Method – Method Toolkit

Extracted from The Score – 2026

Grounded in Pugh, Total Design (decision-matrix method); multi-criteria decision analysis (MCDA); instrument characteristics drawn from Kvale & Brinkmann, Krueger & Casey, Spradley, and Wang & Burris. Full criteria definitions and scoring guide: A3.0.

Full sources: Bibliography, previous page. Term definitions: Glossary.

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