Reflective Blog Summary

Key ideas from your blog so far:

I have thought about “How can adults make ‘better’ choices or actions?” so far. Although the definition of ‘better’ needs to be defined, I have strongly focused on the process/background of adults in higher education and beyond to ‘(1)find the learning they want to learn’ and ‘(2)actively participate in society and politics.’ I would like to explore both individuals’ decision-making processes and external influences while detecting factors and hurdles to reaching the ideals. The themes (1) and (2) appear to be different, but the reasons why I would like to dig into them are almost the same. I am concerned about the situation where individuals cannot focus on what they really need to take care of, such as their interests and surrounding communities. In modern society, we tend to focus on individual profits rather than contributing to society?
Perhaps ‘successful’ people with prestigious academic backgrounds and high-paid jobs would be who I want to know more about through my final project. Both (1) and (2) still attract me, I am rather interested in (2) because I idealise a society in which each individual is a creator of community.

Key methods explored so far:

I am considering adopting life story interviews if I pursue theme (1). The interview subjects are postgraduate students who entered the University of Edinburgh in September 2023. I would gather students studying from as many different majors/parts of the world as possible. Through the interview, I would challenge them to detect their backgrounds, such as educational experience, culture, and parental situations, to decide to study their current major here. Because interviews using predetermined questions strongly include the interviewee’s intentions and assumptions in the questions, I would simultaneously obtain and analyse something created by the subjects separately from this project. For example, they

could be a personal statement submitted before entering the university or individual posts on social media.
Although I have not mentioned the idea of methods in the previous posts in my blog if I pursue theme (2), the participatory approach could be adopted. After exploring the literature on the process of people actively participating in politics, I would hypothesise how people get engaged with them. Then, I would plan interventions to enhance political participation, apply them to workshops or other appropriate approaches, and test their effectiveness. If (2) is to be taken forward, the target audience is assumed to be Japanese because I am sure that we are generally non-politically active from my research so far. However, if similar trends were found in other areas during the preliminary research stage, the target group may be broadened or changed.

Major points of uncertainty:

I am still determining which theme I should take for my final project. Also, I am unsure whether to target Japanese people/society or other areas. I desire to utilise the results of my final project in the life-long learning programme aiming individual development and promoting democracy I run in Japan. Also, I have a huge alumni community(more than 200 people) embracing people who are willing to contribute to my research, which seems a valuable resource for my project. On the other hand, considering that I would stay in Edinburgh only until graduation and currently have chances to connect with people from all over the world, that research could utilise the resources in the university.

My project as I currently understand it:

If I had to decide on my project today, I would tackle the following question:

“How does political participation be promoted among Japanese adults?”

I would explore literature about social structures that tend to pursue individual interests rather than politics and society and cultural backgrounds that make people avoid politics. Then, I would design workshops to encourage people to get interested in society and take political action. Targets would be young people, thinking about the future impact, or all generations in order to identify overall trends.

Through Andrea's class, I learned that sharing realities (Osman, 2017) and listening carefully to opinions (Murdoch et al., 2020) can potentially change individual attitudes and behaviour. In Jen's class, I also learned how important the existence of friends is to activists (Campos & Martins, 2023) . These could be the basis for thinking about participatory approaches. Since I have already conducted a workshop with several Japanese (its critical reflection) as an assignment for the 'Relationality, Creative Practice and Education' class, aimed at creating awareness and behaviour change towards Palestinians, it could be the foundation of my project.

Next steps:

For both themes (1) and (2), I will search other research methods, read articles dealing with similar themes and explore what methodologies are used. Also, I would like to improve the accuracy of my hypothesis under the above themes : (1) People tend to have money/social status rather than interests. (2) People(especially Japanese) are not so much interested in what happens in society and politics.
In addition to the individual research(reading literature), I would also like to have conversations with friends from different and similar backgrounds about the themes, brainstorm and ask them to come up with questions to improve my project.

Reference:

Osman, W. (2017). 15. Jamming the Simulacrum. *Culture Jamming*, 348–364. https://doi.org/10.18574/nyu/9781479850815.003.0020

Murdoch, D., English, A. R., Hintz, A., & Tyson, K. (2020). Feeling Heard : Inclusive Education, Transformative Learning, and Productive Struggle. *Educational Theory*, *70*(5), 653–679. https://doi.org/10.1111/edth.12449

Campos, R., & Martins, J. (2023). Political socialisation narratives of young activists. Contexts, settings, and actors. *Journal of Youth Studies*, 1–17. https://doi.org/10.1080/13676261.2023.2224742

The photo of the header was taken by me.