

GLP Innovation Fund:

Guide to carrying out a school-based research study¹

¹ Adapted from Blum N and Bentall C *Guide to Completing an MA dissertation*. Unpublished document. London: Institute of Education.

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1 Introduction

This handbook is intended to be a support document for the Innovation Fund. It aims to provide applicants to the Innovation Fund with guidance on how to design a research study and how to write a research report. If you have not previously carried out research, it would be advisable to read before starting. The handbook also includes some self-guided activities which are designed to help develop your study, including: developing good research questions; choosing a methodological approach and research methods; and making sure to consider any ethical issues that might arise.

This first section sets out basic information on the Innovation Fund.

2 The Innovation Fund: An introduction

The Innovation Fund is a Global Learning Programme (see: www.glp-e.org.uk) initiative to support research by school-based educators on a global learning theme. Its purpose is to encourage small-scale research to promote innovation in global learning, inform best practice and build capacity at school level. All Innovation Fund studies will be practitioner-led, with research support provided as necessary by the Institute of Education (IOE). The studies should respond to a set of research questions, use recognised research methodologies, and have a clear global learning focus.

Why should I get involved?

You might apply for the Innovation Fund for a number of reasons, for example:

- carrying out a research project could be a personal challenge or it might support your professional development
- there may be an area of interest you wish to find out more about
- you might want to look at the impact of an global learning initiative on pupils' learning
- you can add to the global learning knowledge base
- it might tie into another programme of study (e.g. M-level).

What do I have to do?

Produce an original piece of school-based research on a global learning theme. This will involve designing a research project, collecting and analysing data and writing up findings into a report.

What will the final report look like?

The final report should be between 3000–5000 words long. It will include a written account of the study and its findings. It should provide detail on the study's aim, research questions, rationale, methods used, the findings (in relation to research questions and study aim) and conclusions. It should look at the implications of the research for future studies. In addition, a one page summary of the report's findings should be produced.

What can you research?

Your research focus is up to you, however, a number of possible ideas are suggested below.

- Explore the impact of a global learning initiative on pupils' learning.
- Look at the relationship between global learning and a particular subject area or topic.

- Study global learning in a special school.
- Look at how global learning can support pupils' literacy and numeracy.
- Explore how IT can be used with global learning.
- Look at the impact global learning has on the local community (including families).

What support can you receive?

IOE researchers will provide support to commissioned Innovation Fund studies. IOE researchers will also provide guidance and feedback at the design stage in terms of proposal development and the development of data collection tools. They will provide feedback and comments on at least one draft of the research report.

What happens to the research?

Most Innovation Fund studies will be made freely available on the GLP website to anyone interested in global learning. They could be used to support the GLP in terms of CPD, programme development and resource development. They will be used to support teachers' practice at school level. Some research studies could be developed into more formal publications.

What kind of funding would you be eligible for?

The GLP has a small amount of money available for Innovation Fund studies. Each study can be funded to a value of £1,000, with exceptional cases possibly getting higher amounts. Reworking masters dissertations can be funded up to £500. Successful applicants would be expected to sign a contract for the work, with final payments being made once the research has been finalised. In most cases payments will be made to the applicant's school.

How many studies will be funded?

The GLP will support up to 20 studies during the lifetime of the programme.

Who can apply?

Educators working in state-funded schools in England that have signed up to the GLP (this would most likely include teachers and SLT members) can apply. Some educators may already have formal research skills training such as that gained through a Masters' programme, but this is not a pre-requisite for applying. An interest in research and a well-thought through research proposal is more important.

What is the application process?

The Innovation Fund currently has an open call for applications.

For further information on the research aspects of the Innovation Fund, contact us at glp@pearson.com. Or to make an application, complete the [Innovation Fund application form](#) and send this to glp@pearson.com. Applications will be reviewed by a panel of researchers. Those considered most relevant to the aims of the GLP with a clear focus and methodology will be supported.

3 Initial steps in designing a research project

There are certain things you need to consider when planning a research project. Have a think about the topic you are thinking of researching and think about / write down the answers to the following questions. If you cannot answer them all straightaway, try coming back to them later.

Key questions underpinning any research project.

- What is the topic under investigation, and what are your aims and objectives?
- What do we already know about this topic (i.e. what has been explored in the existing literature)?
- What are the questions you are trying to answer in relation to this topic?
- What methods will you employ to answer those questions?
- When and where will you be undertaking the investigation?
- How will your project progress, stage by stage, from start to finish?
- Why is this research important?

4 Research questions

Your research questions are key to a research project. The focus of the study revolves around the questions you ask so getting these right is a very important part of the process. It is worth spending time refining these, before you get heavily involved in the project.

You may ask: **What is a research question?** A research question is a question that you do not yet know the answer to. It is what you want to find out.

Look at the following examples.

- What do secondary geography teachers understand about the 'global dimension'?
- How do they apply their understanding in their approach to their teaching?

These are questions which require researching, such as talking to and observing teachers to find out what their views are, and you cannot predict the answers.

There are other questions that you will need to answer in the course of doing the research which will be questions for you to clarify for yourself. For example, before you talk to the teachers you might need to decide for yourself what you think the 'global dimension' is. So you would spend some time defining it using the literature. When it is just a question for you, it is not a research question.

However, if you really wanted to find out what different groups think the global dimension is, how it is defined in government documents, etc. then you could make that the focus of your research. Then you would have a series of questions, such as:

- How does the UK government define the 'global dimension'?
- How does their definition compare with those of other European governments and NGOs?

This would require talking to people who made the policy and searching through policy documents, websites, materials for schools, etc.

4.1 Self-Guided Activity 1: Developing your research questions

Try to develop some research questions for your topic. For this activity you can think of as many as five. Try to identify what it is that you really want to ask. Most research studies have somewhere between two to four research questions. They should be related and together provide a full picture of what it is that you want to find out.

Once you have tried to come up with a few possible questions, look at the list below in 4.2 and use it to evaluate whether you have created good questions or not. For example, look to see whether you have genuine questions, whether your questions

just have yes/ no answers, etc. Re-draft your research questions as needed, in light of the points you see below.

4.2 What makes a good research question?

Good research questions:

- are real questions that do not pre-determine the answers
- are genuinely exploratory – allow for unexpected answers
- are specific
- are worded in a positive way
- relate to each other – can have main and sub-questions
- are based on understanding of existing literature
- are grammatically accurate and concise
- are realistic for the time and resources available to do the research
- have not already been answered elsewhere
- are possible to answer through research
- use concepts which are clearly defined within the research.

Methodological approach

Having identified your research questions you will then have to consider what methodological approach you are going to use. Most Innovation Fund studies will be **empirical: which means a study involving the collection of data.**

Discussions of **methodology** may involve a number of terms:

1) Methodology / methodological approach

This can be described as the overall theoretical approach to the issue being studied. You may be more familiar with this if you have previously studied to Masters level, but do not be put off if you haven't.

2) Research design

Sometimes within a particular paradigm researchers use a particular research design to frame their research. Examples include:

- ethnography
- case study
- action research.

3) Data collection methods

A data collection method is the specific way in which you collect data. A variety can be used, for example:

- interview
- focus group
- questionnaire
- observation
- analysing documents
- participatory activities.

Some of these data collection methods can be used in different ways.

- Questionnaires can have closed questions producing quantitative information for surveys, or they can have open questions, generating more qualitative data.
- Interviews can be unstructured, semi-structured or structured producing different types of data.
- Observation can be highly structured (for example, noting what happens every 3 minutes in a lesson being observed) or can be more open.

Also, within a development education context the use of participatory methods and activities is particularly useful, as they are designed to allow maximum participation by different people and are good at highlighting multiple perspectives.

4) Qualitative and quantitative

There is much debate about qualitative vs. quantitative. It refers to the type of data collected, with qualitative being more concerned with words and people's ideas and quantitative more concerned with numbers, things that can be quantified. However, many researchers use quantitative data within a broadly qualitative study. The important thing to remember is that your data collection methods must match your research questions. For example, a research question might be: 'What do secondary geography teachers understand about the 'global dimension?'

This question focuses on understandings and perceptions so data collection would probably involve interviews and some observation of classes. The question asks about what people think; which is more of a qualitative question than a quantitative one. However, you might also count how many teachers have the same understanding. This might be relevant, in which case you might quantify your results. This might lead to further questions as to why some teachers have different understandings than others.

4.3 Choosing your methodological approach

You will need to decide what kind of approach you think fits best within your research, e.g. qualitative, quantitative or a mixture of the two.

When you have thought about these issues, you also need to think about the following questions.

- What data collection methods will I use?
- How will I collect the data, e.g. digital recording, observation schedules, notes, etc.?
- How many respondents (people) do I speak to/ observe, etc.?
- How long will I spend collecting data?
- How will I get permission to collect data and from whom?
- How do I store the data?
- Will I transcribe interviews?
- How do I protect the confidentiality of people who speak to me?

These are methodological issues that you need to think about. For example, imagine you are doing research around the two questions covered in the previous section.

- What do secondary geography teachers understand about the 'global dimension?'
- How do they apply their understanding in their approach to their teaching?

You could interview teachers to find out what they think. You could then watch them teach to see whether what they say is what they actually do in the classroom. You could talk to the head teacher or head of department to find out what their

perspective is. You could talk to pupils or look at pupils' work to find out how teachers deal with the global dimension. You could look at the school textbooks that are used and see how the teachers follow them.

Before collecting data from pupils and/or carrying out any interviews you will need to seek permission from the head teacher.

If you are observing you have to think about what you are looking for and how you will write that down. Also for interviews you would have to decide which questions to ask, whether to record them and whether you will type them up later. You will have to think about how you promise not to expose individual teachers and what they say to others. For example, a teacher might want to be critical of the school and you need to provide a safe space for them to do that.

4.4 Self-guided activity 2: Methodological approach

Have a go with your own research questions. Think about all the questions listed in 5.1 and come up with suggested methodological approaches that might help answer them.

Research ethics

A major consideration for any researcher is ensuring that the conduct of research and the dissemination of the results of research are both truthful and fair. The great majority of research involves human participants, and it is important to protect their interests and protect them from any potential risks associated with their participation in the research.

This includes:

- respecting the autonomy of individuals
- ensuring that participants have provided informed consent
- avoiding causing harm
- protecting participants' privacy/ confidentiality/ anonymity
- giving particular consideration to potentially vulnerable participants
- maintaining and protecting data appropriately
- considering the appropriate dissemination/ use of findings
- treating people fairly
- acting with integrity.

4.5 Professional Codes of Ethics

Researchers are expected to abide by a Code of Ethics. These codes usually clearly set out researchers' responsibilities to research participants, to funders, to governments, and to fellow researchers. You will find it useful to review these codes before beginning your own research, in order to get an overview of how different disciplines approach these important issues.

British Educational Research Association (BERA) *Revised Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research* (2011)

<http://www.bera.ac.uk/publications/Ethical%20Guidelines>

4.6 Ethics review process

In addition to making an individual commitment to conducting ethical research, **all Innovative Fund participants are required to detail ethical issues in their**

proposal and have a clear strategy to respond to these. This helps to ensure that the research conforms to ethical standards.

Getting ethical approval is normally a simple process, but reviewers may ask you to provide more information about your project.

4.7 Helpful readings about research ethics

Alderson P and Morrow V (2004) *Ethics, social research and consulting with children and young people*. Barking: Barnardo's.

Cohen L, Manion L and Morrison, K (2011) The ethics of educational and social research, pp75–104 in *Research methods in education* (7th edition). New York: Routledge.

Denzin N K and Lincoln Y S (eds) (2008) *The Sage handbook of qualitative research*. London: Sage.

Denzin N K, Lincoln Y S, Tuhiwai Smith L (eds) (2008) *Handbook of critical and indigenous methodologies*. London: Sage.

Robson C (2002) *Real world research: A resource for social scientists and practitioner researchers* (2nd edition). Oxford: Blackwell. [Includes a helpful section on ethical considerations.]

4.8 Self-guided activity 3: Ethics and reporting of data

Once you have read some of the readings on research ethics, read and consider the examples below, which are quotes from research interviews. As you do so think about the following questions:

- If you were told these comments in an interview situation what ethical issues would they raise?
- How would you deal with these quotes as part of your research, e.g. would you choose to use them in your research study or not? Why? How would you ensure that the participants were protected against any potential harm?

Example 1:

The following quote is from a Travel and Tourism student learning about sustainability and involving rather than exploiting the local population through responsible tourism. It was an exchange between two students – the first comment then prompted the second.

J: 'I tried to interact with the locals in Jamaica but they just tried to sell me drugs.'

C: 'They all do – they just take drug. But apart from that – yeah when I go away I try and talk to the...it all depends on where I go. Places like Gran Canaria and that – I wouldn't really go and chat to the locals cos they're all dirty and that but other places – yeah I would go chat to the locals and interact but some of them look scary you know – they could like mug you or anything cos at the end of the day – okay sustainable tourism but you've got to look after your own safety as well. Cos they say don't go off the beaten

track but then sometimes you want to because you want to have a look but sometimes you get mugged.'

Example 2:

This quote is from a story related by a businessman in Costa Rica about the controversy surrounding the opening of his business – an exhibition of endemic frog species. The project was opposed by some local residents and a source of intense negotiations with the ministry of environment.

'We told the lawyers the whole story...and they asked us "what was the date they told you?" [by which the Ministry of Environment would give a decision] I told them that MINAE had said we would know by 7 July [2000]... Then the lawyers asked if we knew what MINAE's decision would be. I told them that we thought it would be "no"... without any justification, just a "no". I told them, we've already made a huge, huge investment, because they [the Ministry] have told us all along that we should go ahead, that they would probably ask us to do some things, but that eventually we would get official permission... According to the law of this country, they [the Ministry] couldn't deny us permission to open. There are already butterfly gardens and snake exhibits... there are zoos too. So, the only thing that they could do was ask us for more documentation or to make specific preparations for the frogs. Really they had no legal reason to stop the project. So with that in mind, we went ahead with the construction and the investment and everything else.... The lawyers told us, "Listen, if you wait until the 7th, you have to accept whatever decision happens on that day. If the answer is no, you have to accept it. There won't be anything you can do about it".'

Example 3:

The following is from an interview with an educator working for a conservation organisation in Costa Rica. It provides some insight into his perspective on conservation and education.

'I don't agree with people who treat tropical forests like gardens to be protected and left alone without any human intervention. The garden approach just doesn't work here, there isn't enough land to just leave half of it sitting and to tell people that they can't use it to make a living. Environmental education programmes have to deal with the realities of a place... there is no point in trying to deny the links between humankind and the rest of the natural world.'

5 Criteria for judging research

There are sets of criteria by which research is judged. For example, during the process of data collection and analysis you might think about issues of:

- **validity** – Are the questions and data accurate? Are the explanations of the data accurate?
- **generalisability** – Can the findings be generalised to a wider population sample?
- **reliability** – Are the methods used to collect data reliable so that findings can be replicated?
- **credibility** – Is the account of the research credible to those involved and presented adequately?
- **positionality** – Is there openness about the views of the researcher and participants?

- **voice** – Does the text reflect multiple voices / interpretations?
- **critical subjectivity** – Is there evidence of self-reflection from researcher and participants?

In order to ensure these criteria are met researchers use a range of techniques.

- **Triangulation** – collecting data from a variety of sources using a number of methods and comparing / contrasting the data.
- Being **systematic** in collecting data and in analysing it, e.g. reading each interview many times for different themes or putting the same statistics through different types of analysis.
- **Analysing during data collection** to inform the process.
- **Respondent validation** – asking those who participated in the research to review the findings and comment on them, before they are published.
- Detailed **description of the context** of research – providing enough detail of the situation being researched so that other researchers can see how to replicate or transfer the research.
- **Description of the methodology** and explanation for the decisions made during the research.
- Discussion of the **ethical considerations** and actions taken.

6 Analysing qualitative data

The analysis of your data is clearly an important part of the process as it is through this analysis that you find the answers to your research questions.

Basically, analysis of data is the process of looking at what you have collected from as many different angles as possible, so that you get a full picture in answer to your questions. It is a process of categorisation of the data into groups (themes), comparing the themes, cross checking, trying different categorisations, looking for things that don't fit, etc.

For example, imagine you have interviewed five people, observed two people teach, and looked at a couple of documents. You need to go through each interview, each set of observation notes, and each document looking for themes in the data. These themes might come from your research questions. For example, if you are looking at teachers' understanding of the global dimension and you have defined this as having a number of components, then any mention of one of the components could be a bit of data belonging to that theme.

You then need to look in the data for what other themes are emerging. This might include themes that you did not expect to find. Again, you will need to compare what each person said in the interviews with what you observed and with what is written in the documents.

To illustrate this have a go at the activity below which shows the process of analysing data. You can do this on your own or better still with a friend / colleague / member of your family. They do not need to know about research.

6.1 Self-guided activity 4: Analysing data

Collect a pile of objects. Choose a big theme, for example, they could be objects from the work stationery cupboard, or things from the kitchen or your office at home. Within that theme collect a range of different objects (e.g. pens, paper, staplers, paperclips, pencils, labels etc.) and if you are working with a friend then make two collections under the same theme. Make the two collections similar but they don't have to be exactly the same. For example, each collection might have pens but one might have four pens and the other five, or one might have different makes or different coloured pens.

Put the objects in a pile on the table in front of you (and ask your friend to do the same thing). Imagine the objects represent data that you have collected. If you are working with a friend, do the following tasks separately and then compare your results in between each stage. If you are working on your own then make notes of your results.

Step 1: Organise the items into groups according to a theme of your choice (e.g. size, weight, colour). If you are working with a friend, compare your results.

Step 2: Now group the items according to what they are made of (e.g. metal, paper, plastic). If you are working with a friend, compare your results.

Step 3: Now group the items according to their shape (e.g. square, circular). If you are working with a friend, compare your results.

Consider how all these different ways of arranging items are similar to how researchers organise their data. Is any one way of arranging them 'right' or 'wrong'? How might diverse perspectives on data impact on the process of analysis?

6.2 Self-guided activity 5: Working with qualitative data

Below are three examples of qualitative data about teachers' understandings of English language teaching, collected as part of a PhD research project called 'Communication and Teachers' Learning During Training : A case study of the Secondary and Technical English Project, Mozambique' by Clare Bentall (2003).
[Please note: These extracts are not to be quoted or used in anyway, other than for this activity.]

Follow the directions below to complete the activity:

Read the extracts below (Observation data; Interview data; Reflective diary data) and get a feel for the data.

- 1) Take Extract 1 and make a note of any themes around teachers' understandings that you can find.
- 2) Mark at the side of the extract where you think the themes are shown.
- 3) Go through Extract 2 looking for the same themes. Again mark them at the side of the extract.
- 4) Now repeat this for Extract 3.
- 5) Now go to Extract 2 and look for any other themes not in the first one. List them and mark them at the side of the extract.
- 6) Now look for those themes in Extracts 1 and 3.
- 7) Now go to Extract 3 and see if there are any other themes. List them, mark them on the text, and look in Extracts 1 and 2 for those themes.
- 8) Now go through all the data looking for things that don't fit the themes and maybe even contradicts them.

- 9) Now look in all the extracts for what individual teachers say (use the labels to help you: e.g. Teacher M). Write notes on what themes that individual teacher follows. If you have this for more than one teacher then compare them.
- 10) Write down your conclusions from the above process as to what the key themes are in the teachers' understandings and how those themes relate, what contradicts those conclusions and also how these conclusions are illustrated in the individual teachers' ideas.

As this is not your data it does not entirely matter what your themes are in the end, but spend some time reflecting what going through this process has taught you about the nature of qualitative data and the challenges and issues around analysing it.

**Extract 1: Observation data – Observation of the teachers in a training session
Part of session June: 8 pair work and group work (16.6.98)**

In the first part of the session the teachers discuss what they remember about a text they read before the course, including problems they found. Teacher M mentions difficulties with large classes, Teacher P says having odd numbers of learners is problematic and Teacher B mentions learners not paying attention. The concepts of 'student talking time' (STT) and 'teacher talking time' (TTT) are then introduced by Trainer 6(M), who reads out a text from a handout on the subject (see Appendix 6). When asked what STT and TTT are referring to Teacher M says 'The main idea here is to transfer more time to the student'.

4.30

Trainer 6(M) puts them in groups and asks them to discuss the disadvantages and advantages of pair / group work for 15 minutes.

Discussion from one group of teachers:

Teacher L: 'Students talk about something different than what they are supposed to do.'

Teacher D: 'Noise.'

Teacher A2: 'It also spends time.'

Teacher L: 'The students instead of working do something different.'

Teacher S: 'The students talk over things instead of working.'

Teacher A2: something about jokes.

4.45

Trainer 6(M) asks for plenary feedback first on disadvantages and then advantages of pair/ groupwork. Teachers give feedback from their individual group discussions.

Disadvantages

'It's always noise in the class.'

'Time consuming.'

'Some students don't participate in groupwork ...especially the weaker students.'

Teacher L: 'The students speak other languages.'

Teacher A2: 'Students talking about other issues which are not related to the lesson.'

Teacher E: 'It is not easy for the teacher to control the pairwork, especially large class.'

Teacher M: 'The teacher became lazy ...too much pairwork.'

Teacher A: 'Other languages.'

Teacher O: 'Students are...overworked.'
 Teacher H: 'Teacher doesn't know individual problems. You are leaving some students without listening.'
 Teacher A2: 'We find a lot of absent minded students.'
 Teacher G: 'Some students can be joking during the lessons.'
 Teacher A2: 'But they can be joking without making noise.'

4.50

Trainer 6(M) asks for feedback on advantages.

Advantages

Teacher W: 'It's the only way to push everybody to participate in the class. It gives time for the students to practise.'
 Teacher A: 'It provides variety for the students.'
 Teacher S: 'Students are encouraged to work hard.'
 Teacher H: 'It gives chance to students to use real things.'

Trainer 6(M) asks, 'How do students feel in group work?'

Teacher M: 'They feel like they are playing. It's not good.'
 Teacher E: 'It depends on the activity.'
 Teacher A2: 'It also helps students to use their thinking to discuss issues and topics.'
 Teacher A1: 'He and she could feel something but in group...'
 Teacher H: 'I discovered something. You ask other students, please work in pairs. The students go to another corner because it is their friend.'
 Teacher C: 'Chance to get to know each other. Good to mix students.'

Extract 2: Interview data – Individual semi-structured interview after watching the teacher teach

Teacher M

'I was relying very much on me talking a lot and giving a load of notes to the student. Now with the introduction of pair work, and this and that, I find out that these things are important.

'But from my teaching I noted that there was need to introduce pair work on step five that one student would give a sentence in the singular and the other put it into plural.

'Depending on the lesson...because there may be an activity of which you think two people could do it. Somebody is there and does something and somebody there does something. That is depending on you. So if you think that is the way then that is how I think I...take it as pairwork. But when I see that...I don't find two different things working together then it is better to make them work as a group or work as a whole class.'

Teacher C

'Before I was not very much used to promote the interaction in the classroom. Because I thought I was doing better by just delivering the lesson without using much discussion in the class. Now he says if you just go there and stand at the board at the front and start teaching, most of them may not say a word even. So you find that the better way is to dialogue it with them and let them dialogue amongst themselves.'

Teacher E

'I think I can't teach without pair or group work. It is impossible.'

Extract 3: Reflective diary data – From diaries written by teachers during the training programme

Teacher H

'I have to make sure that the new ideas are working properly and making sure that each and every student is participating and contributing, whether in pair work or group work.'

7 Readings on research

Because the topics for research are diverse, it is not possible to give a comprehensive reading list for all possible topics. However, the following key readings provide an introduction to research methods and approaches.

Agee J (2009) Developing qualitative research questions: a reflective process. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*. 22 (4), 431–448.

Cohen L, Manion L and Morrison K (2011) *Research methods in education* (7th edition). New York: Routledge.

Chadderton C (2012) Problematizing the role of the white researcher in social justice research. *Ethnography and Education* 7(3), 363–380.

Cresswell J (2009) The selection of research design, pp3-21 *Research Design: qualitative, quantitative, and mixed method approaches*. London: Sage.

Guba E G and Lincoln Y S (2005) Paradigmatic controversies, contradictions and emerging confluences, pp191–215 in Denzin, Norman K and Lincoln, Yvonna S (eds) *The Sage handbook of qualitative research*. London: Sage.

Locke L F, Waneen Wyrick Spirduso and Silverman S J (2007) Preparation of proposals for qualitative research, pp91–123 in *Proposals that work: a guide for planning dissertations and grant proposals*. London: Sage.

Smithson J (2008) Focus groups, pp357–370 in Alasuutari P, Bickman L and Brannen J (eds) *Sage handbook of social research methods*. London: Sage.

Thomas G (2009) The literature review, pp30–59 in *How to do your research project: a guide for students in education and applied social sciences*. London: Sage.

The following readings may also be helpful to you in planning and carrying out your research:

Alderson P and Morrow V (2004) *Ethics, social research and consulting with children and young people*. Barking: Barnardo's.

Bell J (2010) *Doing your research project: A guide for first-time researchers in education and social science* (5th edition). Milton Keynes: Open University Press. [Available via the IOE library catalogue as an e-book.]

- Brown A J and Dowling P C (1998) *Doing research, reading research: A mode of interrogation for education*. London: Falmer Press.
- Bryman A (2008) Interviewing in qualitative research, pp435–471 in *Social research methods*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Cohen L and Manion L (2011) *Research methods in education* (7th edition). New York: Routledge, Chapman and Hall. [Available via the IOE library catalogue as an e-book.]
- Cresswell J (2009) *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed method approaches*. London: Sage.
- Denzin N K and Lincoln Y S (eds) (2011) *The Sage handbook of qualitative research* (4th edition). London: Sage.
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7.1 Finding academic literature

It is hoped you may refer to some relevant academic literature in your report. This is easier if you have access to a university library (or possibly a local library in some instances), however, if this is not the case there are a number of ways that you can access relevant literature.

- Look at research papers on the Development Education Research Centre web pages: <http://www.ioe.ac.uk/research/4502.html>
- You can use Google Scholar to search for materials available online. However, be aware that anyone can upload materials onto Google Scholar and you need to be aware of quality control. Follow the citations of key texts.
- Start with a key text written by a key thinker in the field, and follow up the sources and ideas, by reading the texts that they cite.
- Search library catalogues for relevant books and e-resources. You may find searching for key authors can be helpful.
- The British Education Index (<http://www.leeds.ac.uk/educol>) provides access to a free collection of educational research published in the UK. Similarly, the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) (<http://www.eric.ed.gov/ERICWebPortal/Home.portal>) is a huge resource for US and international education research. ERIC will provide you with the title, author information, year of publication, etc. as well as an article abstract. Where available, they will also provide direct links to electronic copies of articles.

- You can find copies of UK theses through the British Library's new EThoS (Electronic Theses Online Service; <http://ethos.bl.uk/Home.do>) which provides free access to electronic copies of many doctoral theses completed at universities throughout the UK.
- Search uploaded papers on www.academia.edu – for example, search under development education: http://academia.edu/Documents/in/Development_Education and global education: http://academia.edu/Documents/in/Global_education.

8 Structure and elements of a research report

Having considered all the different elements involved in a research project, read the following as a guideline as to what you should include in your final written document. You do not need to use the headings below as headings for your chapters and you do not necessarily need to follow the exact order either.

Introduction

Purpose: to tell reader briefly / clearly what the report is aiming to do and how it does it. Usual elements (not necessarily in this order):

- overall aim
- guiding research question(s)
- methodology
- background information to set the scene / describe the 'gap' in what is known about the research area that the report is aiming to contribute to
- structure of the work.

Literature review

Purpose: discussion of different relevant groups of literature that helps the reader be prepared for the rest of the report.

Note – You may review literature in many places in the report, and not just in a single section or chapter.

Methodological approach

Purpose: to show the reader how you conducted the research in order to answer the research questions and help achieve your overall aim.

Usual elements: (not necessarily in this order):

- overall statement of broad approach, e.g. qualitative vs. quantitative research
- description of type of study (case study, action research etc.)
- discussion of methods used within the study (interviews, documents etc.)
- timetable of data collection
- ethical considerations
- analysis process
- limitations of the research.

Presentation of findings

Purpose: to show the reader what you have found in relation to the research questions – to present the **results** of your analysis.

Usual elements are examples of data, sorted and presented systematically in relation to categories (often research questions) that tell a story.

Discussion/ recommendations

Purpose: to talk about the implications of your findings in relation to the literature and the overall aim of the report.

Usual elements: (not necessarily in this order)

- conclusions in relation to the research questions
- possibly some discussion reflecting on the research carried out and what you have learned
- implications for practice / policy / research
- recommendations for practice / policy / research.

8.1 Formatting guidelines

Most reports will be made available to the public via the GLP website. The report should include the following statement:

'This report may be made available to the general public without the prior consent of the author.'

After the title page, you should have an abstract of not more than 300 words and a table of contents giving chapter headings and page numbers. Generally, your report should include the following:

- an abstract
- an introduction outlining the aims, research questions, rationale and structure
- chapters
- conclusion, summarising key arguments, research findings and recommendations related to aims and reassert questions
- references to literature, research studies, reports etc.

Your pages should be numbered in one continuous sequence.

For guidance on academic referencing, see university guides to Harvard referencing, for example: [click here](#).

There is also information available to avoid plagiarism: [click here](#).