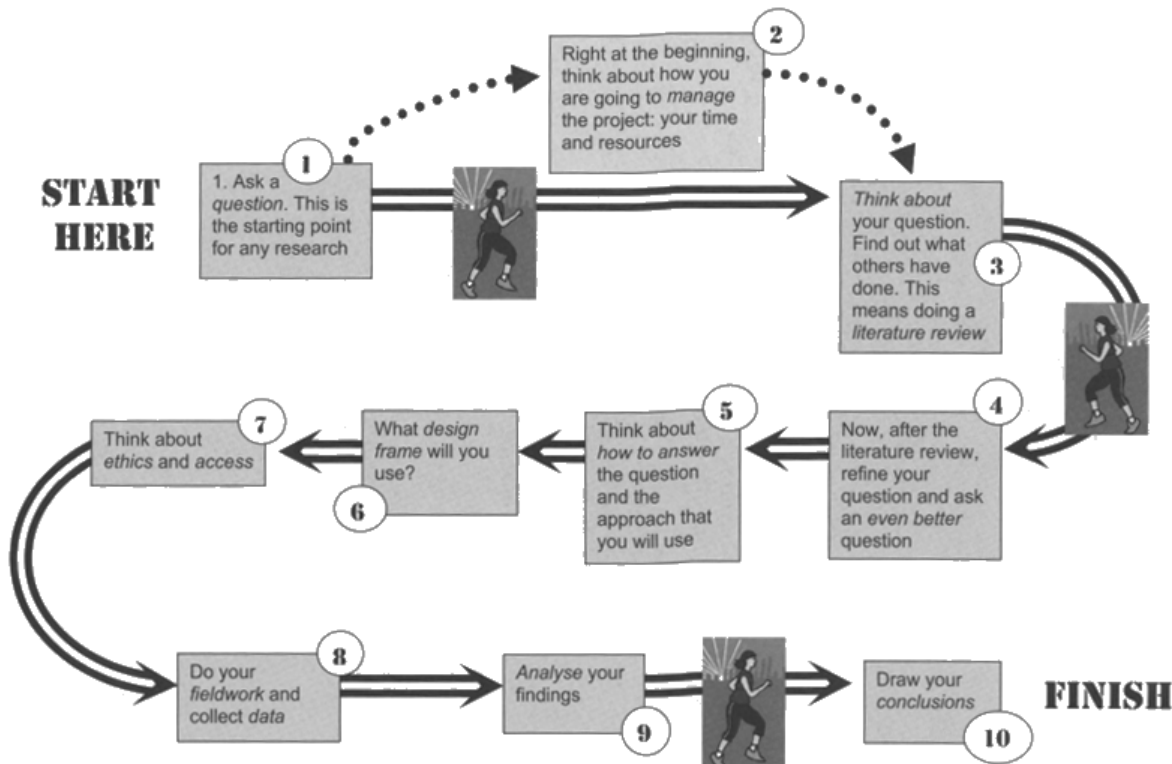


The Research Process

A road map for your research project



(Thomas, 2009, p. xiv)

1. Introduction

Decide on your purposes, ideas and questions

- What takes you to this research area? Is it personal interest? Or is it your reading of the literature, which makes you feel that there are unanswered questions?
- Get your research question right. This is the foundation stone for the whole project.
- Make a rough plan of how you want to proceed. Use the guide here to help you plan in this first stage.

2 How are you going to manage the project?

Project management

- Make a rough plan of how you want to proceed.
- Managing the project.
- Managing your time.

3 Think about your question

What have other people done about this or similar question(s)? — the literature review

- Finding out how - the easy way (Google, Web of Science, Amazon).
- Finding out how – the better way (journals, abstracts) EBSCO, Emerald
- Keeping records of your searches.
- Drawing a storyboard.
- Writing a coherent story - not a list.

4 Ask an even better question

Decide on your question - again

- In the light of your search in Stage 2, how does your question from Stage1 look now?
 - Have you in fact found out that many other people have already done what you were going to do?
 - Is the question more complicated than you had thought?
 - Will you be able to get hold of the information you need?
 - Will there be ethical problems in getting the information you need?
- Refine your question, making sure that it is not too broad, not too difficult, in the context of your literature search.
- Establish a storyline - this will form the clear plan for your research.

- Think about how you will develop theory.

5 Think about how to answer the question

Decide on an approach: methodology and research design.

- How are you going to answer your research question? Approaches to research.
- The chapter in your dissertation where you consider this is often called 'Methodology' but may be called 'Research design'.
- Different ways of viewing the world and different understandings about how knowledge is sought and gained in social inquiry: positivism and interpretivism.
- Thinking critically.
- Tying up your purposes and your questions with these considerations about knowledge and 'ways of finding out'.

6 How will your research design be framed?

Decide on a design frame

- Some general considerations in designing a piece of research.
- Which of the main 'frames' for research will guide the way that you do it?

7 Ethics and access

Practical matters

- Being ethical.
- Getting access.

8 Doing the research

• questionnaires • observation – structured observation – unstructured observation – participant observation	} using words and/or numbers
• interviews – structured – semi-structured – unstructured • accounts • diaries • group interviews • focus groups • document interrogation	} mainly using words
• tests • official statistics • other numerical data	} mainly using numbers

9 Analysing your findings

How are you going to analyse the information you gather?

- Analysing words — constant comparative method: coding, sorting and patterns.
- Analysing numbers — how to analyse your results in Excel or SPSS.
- Developing theory and discussing your findings.

10 Drawing your conclusions

Completing your analysis and drawing conclusions

Drawing conclusions:

- synthesising your findings;
- reconciling your findings with those of others.
- Writing an abstract.
- Presentation and writing