CONTENTS

Acknowledgements xi

Introduction 1

PART I Preparing the ground 3

1 Approaches to research 5

Action research and the role of practitioner researchers 6
Case study 8
Critics of case study 9
Survey 11
The experimental style 12
Ethnography and the ethnographic style of research 14
The grounded theory approach 15
Narrative inquiry and stories 18
Which approach? 22
Further reading 22

2 Planning the project 27

Selecting a topic 27
Getting started 28
The purpose of the study 30
Hypotheses, objectives and researchable questions 31
Working title and the project outline 33
Timing 34
Supervision 35
Student–supervisor relationships 35
Codes of practice for supervision 36
Change of supervisor 37
Keeping records of supervisory tutorials 38
The research experience 38
Writing as you go along and the research diary 39
Planning the project checklist 40
Further reading 42

3 Ethics and integrity in research 44

Research contracts, codes of practice, protocols and the principle of informed consent 45
Ethics committees 47
Confidentiality and anonymity 49
Safeguarding confidentiality and anonymity if disseminating information by computer 50
Ethical research in practice, the problems of 'inside' research and personal codes of practice 53
Codes of ethical practice relating to intellectual ownership/property 57
The ethics and integrity in research checklist 59
Further reading 61

4 Reading, referencing and the management of information 63

Reading 63

Note-taking and guarding against plagiarism 64
Referencing 67
Creating, editing and storing references electronically 71
The card index 74
The management of information 74
A lot of fuss about nothing? 76
Reading, note-taking, guarding against plagiarism, referencing and the management of information checklist 78
Further reading 80

5 Literature searching 82

Defining the parameters of your search (search limiters) and keywords 83
Focusing, refining and grouping your keywords 84
Passwords, usernames and working from home 86
Libraries, librarians – and books 87
Scanning books into digital format 88
Journals 91
Citing sources from the Internet 92
Evaluating sources 93
Copyright and licensing restrictions when downloading items from web pages 95
Time to move on 96
The top ten guide to searching the Internet 96
Further reading 98
Appendix: Search engines and Internet Gateways 99

6 The review of the literature 103

The 'critical review' of the literature 104
Theory and theoretical (or conceptual) frameworks 105
The 'critical review' in practice 107
Reviewing the reviews 111
The review of the literature checklist 112
Further reading 114

PART II Selecting methods of data collection 115

Introduction 117
Constraints 118
Reliability and validity 119
Thinking about computer data analysis? 120
Not thinking about computer data analysis? 121
A reminder 122
Further reading 122

7 The analysis of documentary evidence 124

Brendan Duffy

The nature of documentary evidence 125
Approaches to documents 125
The location of documents 126
The selection of documents 131
The critical analysis of documents 134
The analysis of documentary evidence checklist 138

8 Designing and administering questionnaires 140

Exactly what do you need to find out? 141
Question types 141
Question wording 142
Appearance and layout 148
Drawing a sample 149
Piloting the questionnaire 151
Distribution and return of questionnaires 152
Respondents' and your rights and responsibilities 152
Non-response 153
Analysis of data 154
Designing and administering questionnaires checklist 154
Further reading 157

9 Planning and conducting interviews 160

The ethics of conducting interviews 160
Advantages and disadvantages of the interview 161
Question wording 162
The interview schedule 162
Group interviews and focus groups 165
Recording interviews 167
Bias – the old enemy 169
Remember! 170
Planning and conducting interviews checklist 172
Further reading 175

10 Diaries, logs and critical incidents 177

Representativeness 178
The diary-interview method 179
Piloting returns forms and instructions to participants 180
The primary pupils' food diary 182
The supply teachers' diary and time log 182
The general practitioners' time log 183
The asthma treatment diary 184
The heads of department critical incidents and problem-portfolio logs 184
The ethics of diary use 186
A final word of warning 186
Diaries, logs and critical incidents checklist 187
Further reading 189

11 Observation 191

Unstructured observation 192
Participant observation 193
Structured observation and keeping records 195
Recording behaviour 197
Content 199

A few words of warning – again 201
After the event 202
Observation checklist 203
Further reading 204

PART III Interpreting the evidence and reporting the findings 207

Introduction 209

12 Interpreting the evidence and reporting the findings 211

List questions 212
Quantity and category questions 214
Measures of central tendency 215
Coding 221
Grids 224
Scales 225
Verbal questions 233
Conclusions 233
Interpreting the evidence and reporting the findings checklist 234
Further reading 235

13 Writing the report 238

Getting started 238
The final writing task 239
Structuring the report 241
The need for revision 248
Any possibility of plagiarism? 250
Evaluating your own research 251
Writing the report checklist 252
Further reading 255

References 258
Index 271