

## CHAPTER 2

# DEVELOPING RESEARCH SKILLS

### LEARNING OBJECTIVES

At the end of this chapter the student should be able to:

- Recognize their existing level of research skills and identify areas for improvement and the accompanying relevant chapter sections.
- Create a conceptual framework, the first of the four frameworks.
- Develop a research statement or question for a research project, and outline appropriate aims and objectives for the project.
- Identify and source appropriate literature.
- Compile a bibliography and properly use appendices.

### RESEARCH SKILLS

At the end of this chapter the student should, using the exercises on the accompanying online platform, be able to:

- Generate ideas for research projects.
- Identify, source and use appropriate literature.

The aim of this chapter is to help the reader assess the standard of their basic research skills (using a short review test on the online platform) before setting out these skills in detail throughout the chapter. The chapter covers issues such as how to formulate an argument, how to develop a research statement or question, how to outline a research aim and a series of objectives, how to source literature, how to keep a research diary, how to identify plagiarism and the offence that plagiarism constitutes, how to compile a bibliography and the proper use of appendices. There is a focus in the chapter on writing skills and on note keeping. As in all of the chapters in this textbook, key words and terms are explained, and they are listed for convenience in a glossary of terms at the end of the chapter.

# RESEARCH DIARY ACTIVITIES

## ACTIVITY 2.1

Using your research diary record, briefly or at length, the key decisions you made while you were in the process of developing your research project. Record the rationale for those decisions, i.e. the reasons why you made those decisions

**ANSWER:**

## ACTIVITY 2.2

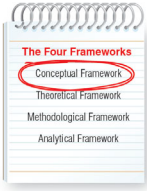
Make a note in your research diary of any documents or artefacts, any lists, models or figures, or anything else, you think you will want to place in the appendices of your research project.

**ANSWER:**

## ACTIVITY 2.3

In your research diary, draw a conceptual map (such as a spidergram, see pages 56-57 in the chapter for examples of spidergrams) of your idea for your research project. Using the map, record your research idea, your research statement/question, the proposed population, proposed research methodology, and proposed data gathering methods. As you study the conceptual map and reflect on it, record in the research diary any thoughts and ideas that come to you.

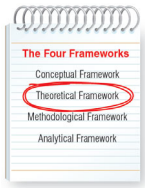
**ANSWER:**



## ACTIVITY 2.4

Open up a journal article related to your idea for your research project, or one that deals with a subject in which you have a particular interest. Read through the journal article and as you do record in your research diary ideas that come to you for research projects. Try to list in your research diary ideas for five different research projects that come to you as you read the journal article.

**ANSWER:**



## ACTIVITY 2.5

In your research diary, make a note of the literature you will need to review for your research project. This exercise in reflection will help you begin to think about and to work on your literature review. In the research diary begin to sketch out a search strategy for this literature, i.e. where will you look for the literature, how will you search for the literature, where might you look for help with the literature review (perhaps there is a subject librarian who might help you, perhaps you can get some help and direction from your research supervisor and/or from your lecturer in research methods).

**ANSWER:**

## Your Research Diary

*Please use this section to start your own Research Diary and keep accurate records of your research as it progresses*

**Date:**

**Research Element/Aspect:**

*Detail the topic or section of research being undertaken*

**Source:**

*Record website addresses, book citations, library references, contact details etc.*

**SUMMARY:**

*Reflect on your experiences, thoughts, ideas and developments*

**NOTES:**

*Make general notes on your research, for example questions for further reflection and/or investigation, your thoughts, your observations and plans for future research.*