

# Conceptualising the Review of Literature

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# *A Literature Review*

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**Is a classification  
And evaluation of  
Scholarly works organised  
Around guiding  
principle/s**

# Rationale for literature review

- Delimit research problem
  - Seek new lines of inquiry
  - Avoid fruitless approaches
  - Gaining methodological insights
  - Identifying recommendations for further research
  - Seeking support for grounded theory
- (Gall, Borg and Gall, 1996)

# Rationale continued

- Distinguishing what has been done to what needs to be done
- Discovering new variables
- Identifying relationships between ideas and practices
- Establishing the context/topic/problem
- Relating ideas and theory to application

(Hart 1998)

# Two Meta-Skills

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FINDING LITERATURE

WORKING WITH LITERATURE

# five Sub-Skills

**IDENTIFYING** (finding literature)

**SELECTING** (choosing relevant literature)

**CLASSIFYING** (organising relevant literature)

**EVALUATING** (analysing relevant literature)

**CONCEPTUALISING** (synthesising the selected  
and analysed literature)

# *Finding Literature*

- SCHOLARLY JOURNALS/BOOKS
- ON-LINE JOURNALS AND TEXTS
- DATA BASES
- SCHOLARLY REVIEWS
- BIBLIOGRAPHIES
- SEARCH ENGINES
- MEDIA (NEWSPAPERS/MAGAZINES/VIDEOS)

# Classifying Literature

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**Examples:**

**Historical development**

**Paradigmatic understanding**

**Contextual differences**

**Theoretical expositions**

**Development of an argument**



# Evaluating Literature

- Identify principal and subsidiary arguments
- Author's assumptions?
- What kinds of evidence is offered?
- Important conceptual terms?
- Strengths or weaknesses of arguments presented
- What is the author's purpose/motivation?
- Who is the author? To whom is s/he speaking?
- What seems to be the context for the work's origins?
- Can you dissect its politics?
- How does purpose influence research questions, methods or interpretations?

# Evaluating Literature

- What are your purposes for reading this text?
- What connection between text and your interests / experiences / purposes?
- How do your own values and experiences shape your responses to the text?
- How do the author's arguments fit within various communities of discourse?
- In what community/communities does the author locate her/himself?

# **Conceptualising *Literature***

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- What will this section or chapter look like?
- What is its principal argument or thesis?
- How will the reader be educated through your synthesis?
- What new understanding has your synthesis generated?
- Is it worthy of a stand-alone publication?
- Is it a substantial, coherent, and rigorous engagement with relevant texts?