Conceptualising the Review of Literature

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A Literature Review

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

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

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

- 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?