



Prifysgol Cymru
Y Drindod Dewi Sant
University of Wales
Trinity Saint David

Using a Research Approach in HR Session 2

Julie Thomas: September
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Trawsnewid Addysg; Trawsnewid Bywydau
Transforming Education; Transforming Lives



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Session Overview

The aim of session is to deepen your knowledge of the research process.
The session will cover:

1

Aim and objectives

2

Sources of Information

3

Writing the Literature Review

The Research Report

- Introduction
- Literature Review
- Methodology
- Findings and analysis
- Conclusion
- Recommendations

Report Introduction

- Provides a clear overview of the topic
- Should contain the **aim and objectives** of the research report
- Covers any necessary background information – company information/history, reasons why research was necessary

Aim and Objectives

Aim – broad statement of the general intention of your research – what you hope to achieve

Example – The aim of this research is to critically analyse strategies to retain childcare social workers.

Objectives – 2 to 4 statements that express what you need to do to achieve your aim; start with a verb.

Example –

- *To identify and critically analyse the factors specifically affecting the retention of childcare social workers.*
- *To critically analyse the strategies that positively influence the retention of childcare social workers.*
- *To identify and analyse the factors specifically influencing retention of childcare social workers at X Council.*
- *To make recommendations for a retention strategy for possible implementation at X Council.*

Secondary data starting point: Sources

The review of the literature provides the basis of further inquiry and data collection

Professional Associations
CIPD, CIM, ILM (& their libraries and associated publications – People Management)

Academic literature

University/public libraries – Books, Journals

e.g. British Journal of Industrial Relations, Employee Relations, The Human Resource Management Journal

Online databases/research institutes:

- EBSCO, Emerald, Science Direct (accessible via on-line Library)
- Google Scholar
- XpertHR, Science for Work
- Roffey Park Institute, McKinsey, RBL Group, World Economic Forum, Center for Creative Leadership

Media Sources:

Credible Newspapers, magazines, periodicals – The Telegraph, Harvard Business Review, The Economist, HR Magazine

Government Information – Office of National Statistics, Companies House

Video

Using Different Sources of Data

- https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLxgZABW7qme_XmdIM_8jECeD_LgH82ftd

What is a literature review (for)?

- When thinking about what a literature review *is*, we need to think about what it is *for*. What is the purpose of a literature review?

In pairs, discuss what you think a literature review is for. Jot your ideas down on paper.

What is a literature review (for)?

- **Establishes the terms and context.** *How else will you define exactly what you're looking at and where its limits are?*
- **Presents a survey of preceding literature on the topic.** *How else will you know what's been done already?*
- **Explores ways that others have solved similar questions/problems.** *How else will you select an appropriate methodology and approach?*
- **Outlines the relationship of these texts to each other.** *How else will you know what the different perspectives and debates are, and where you are coming from?*
- **Evaluates the quality and relevance of the literature.** *How else will you be able to build on or reject it?*
- **Establishes the gaps or inadequacies.** *How else will you justify your own contribution?*
- **Demonstrates your scholarly rigour.** *How else can I have faith in your conclusions?*

Literature Review

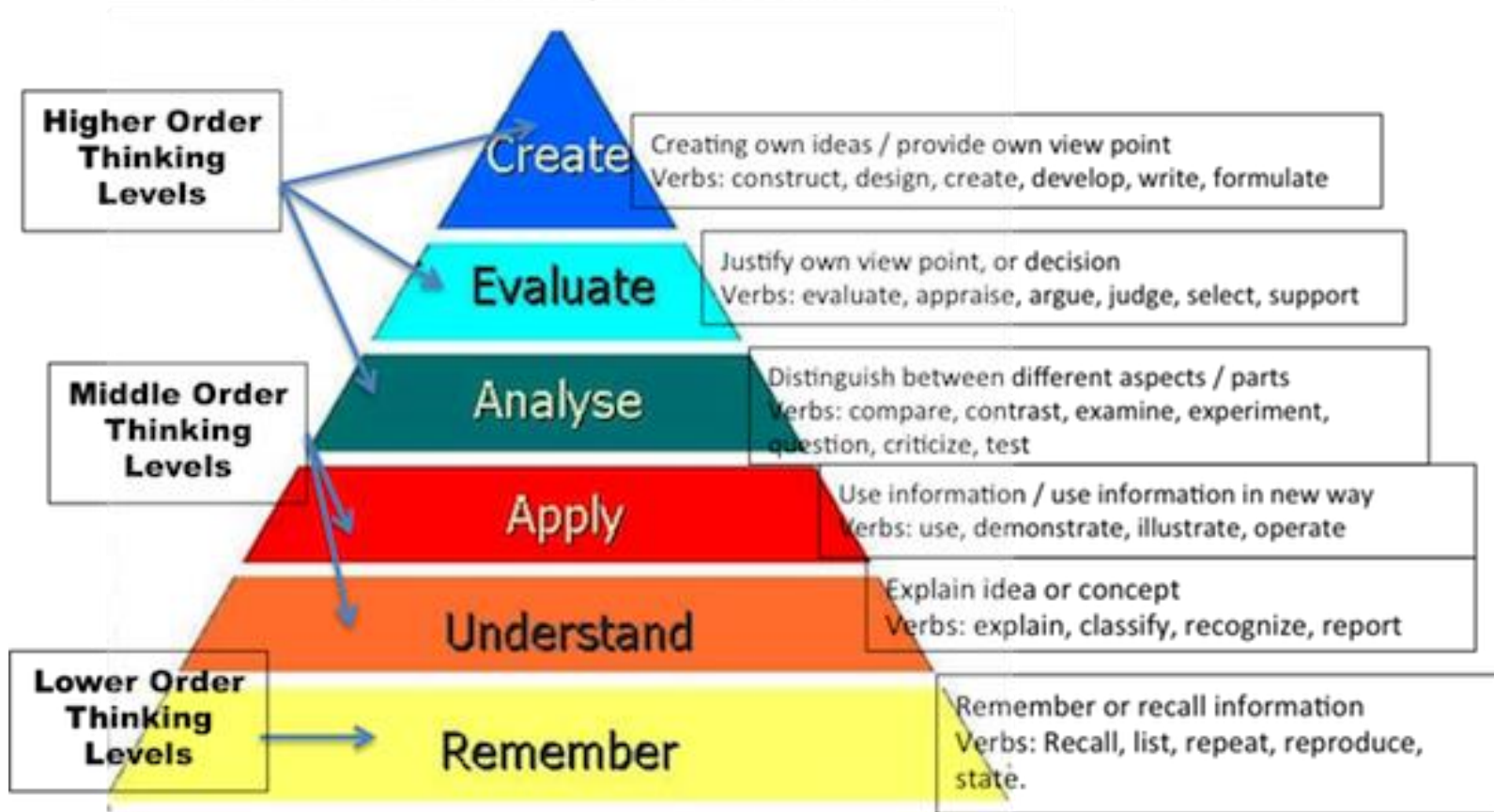
- A critical analysis of existing research in your field; it highlights both the strengths and weaknesses of existing research
- Allows you to gain a critical understanding of your field
- Opportunity to think about what has been done in your field; opportunity to think about the similarities, patterns, trends and also differences across the existing research
- By identifying strengths and weakness, you will be able to think about what has not/needs to be done in your field
- The gap in the literature is your justification for your research

Critical Thinking as a Student

Undergraduate level: backing your points up with appropriate, authoritative sources

Why is it so important to write critically? Bloom's Taxonomy: Cognitive Domain (1956) as revised by Anderson & Krathwohl (2001)

Anderson's Revised Taxonomy Levels and Definitions



What critical thinking can mean in terms of the literature review

- Understanding research on its own terms – testing its viability
- Understanding research in relation to other arguments
- Critiquing research in relation to what you want to do

Main ideas/debates

- Once you have the relevant sources you can begin to think about what the key ideas, debates, methodologies etc. are in your field.
- You can also think about how these ideas have changed over time.

Ask yourself:

- ☐ How has the topic or problem been defined?
- ☐ Are there any trends and patterns across the literature?
- ☐ What methodological assumptions and approaches have been used?
- ☐ What are the agreements and disagreements between theorists on my topic?

Organising your material: Identifying a debate



- **disagrees with**
- **agrees with (school of thought?)**
- **builds on the conclusions**
- **confirms the findings of**
- **has reservations about**



Thinking about your literature review

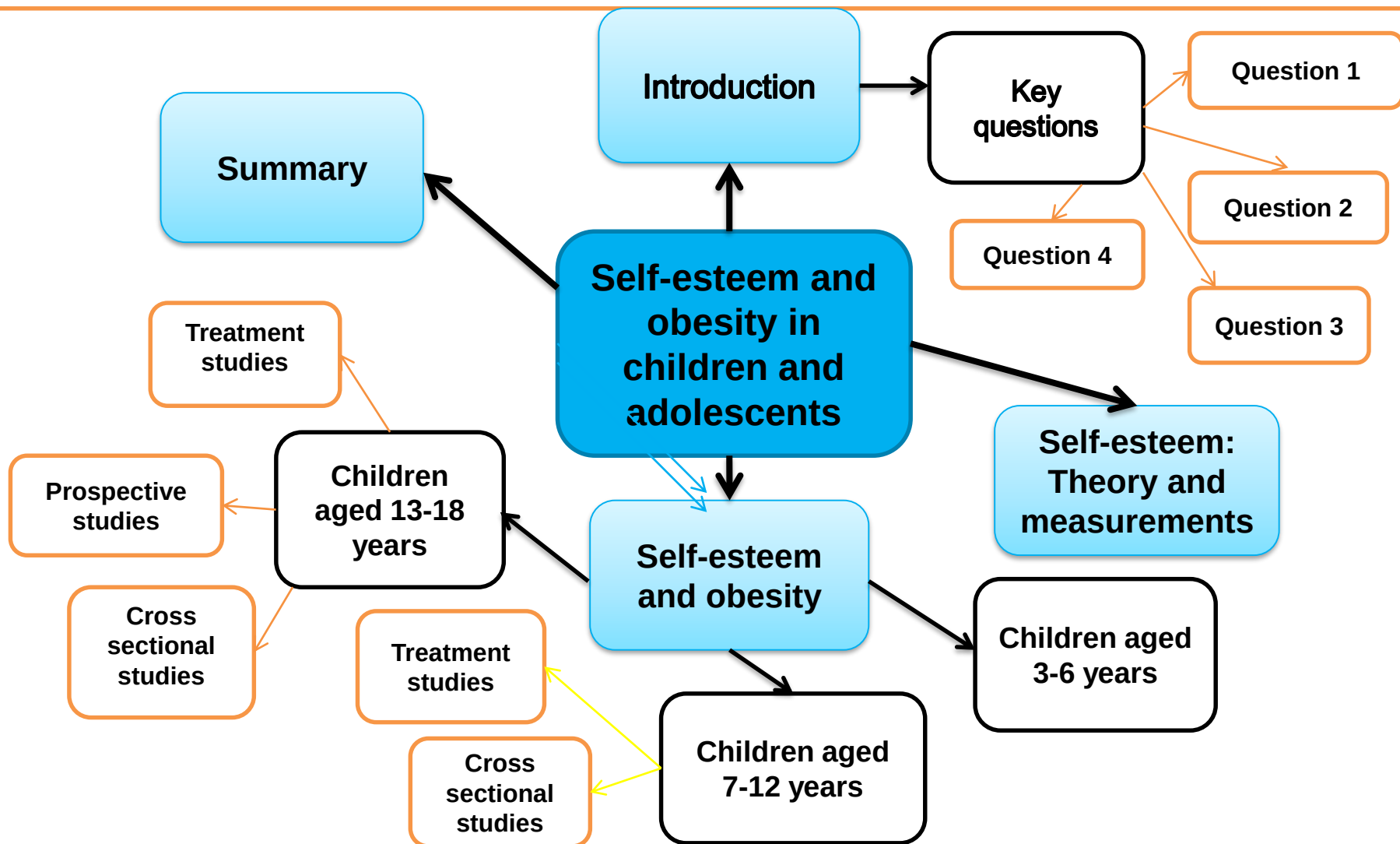
Map your story (literature review):

- What is your topic?
- Who are the key people in your field? What are the key resources?
- What are the key ideas in your field? What methodologies have been used?
- What are some of the strengths and weaknesses of existing research?
- What will your contribution be? How will it be different?

Mind-mapping

- You can:
 - Jot down ideas
 - Move them around
 - Create links
 - Put text on nodes
 - Swap between 'Diagram' and 'Outline'
 - Transfer to Word

‘Self-esteem and obesity in children and adolescents’ mindmap (based on French, Storey and Perry, 1995)



Writing the review

- Start with an overview
- Decide on organising principles (themes, trends, methodology, chronology, controversies – usually a combination of some of these)
- Use headings for the different sections of the review
- Summarise your review/highlight ‘gap’ in research

Clarity

Tips for clear writing:

- Clear introduction: overview of topic, aim of review and structure
- Clear paragraph structure
- Make sure the subject of your sentence is clear
- Don't assume knowledge
- Make sure key terminology and difficult ideas are always explained thoroughly (ask your yourself: does it make sense?)
- Be objective and balanced
- Use signposts to orientate the reader

Your critical voice: signposting

- Where appropriate, begin sections and paragraphs with a statement which synthesises or analyses, rather than just describes
- Use signposting words to demonstrate how texts relate to each other and also what you think of them

Eg. However, yet, moreover, indeed, similarly etc

Illustrating trends: synthesising literature

- Avoid list-like structure by illustrating trends and patterns

For example:

Research into thesis titles has emphasised the use of the colon to distinguish the thematic focus from the precise focus of the work (Smith, 1999; James, 2002; Webster, 2007; Helgesen, 2008).

Use of citations in the literature review

Two types of citations:

- **Integral:** The author's name appears in the sentence.
 - Example (author-date system): Lillis (2001) argues that both tutors and students often lack explicit knowledge of the conventions governing the construction of academic texts.
- **Non-integral:** The author's name appears outside sentence.
 - Example: Both tutors and students often lack explicit knowledge of the conventions governing the construction of academic texts (Lillis, 2001).

Citation and writer's voice

Whose voice is dominant - the writer's or the original author's?

- The moon is made of cheese (Brie 1999).
- Brie (1999) argues that the moon is made of cheese.
- As Brie (1999) points out, the moon is made of cheese.
- According to Brie (1999), the moon is made of cheese. However, ...
- Brie (1999) argues out that the moon is made of cheese. However, ...