



Literature Review

BMMB7009 Critical Literature Review for Doctoral Students

Week 1 – Module Overview and Introduction to Literature Review

Agenda

- Module Overview
- Introduction to Literature Review
- In-class activity



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

LCDB7009 Critical Literature Review for Doctoral Students

Items	Description
Schedule	02/06/2026 – 15/09/2025 (Tue)
Time	09:00 - 14:00
Venue	IQ107, Waterfront IQ Campus

Summer Break 1st - 31st August 2026



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30th September 2026

Student name:		Student ID number:	
Programme:	Doctor of Business Administration		
Module:	Critical Literature Review for Doctoral Research		
Module code:	LCDB7009	Contribution to Overall Module Assessment (%):	50%
Lecturer:	Helen Lee	Internal Verifier:	Caroline Jawad
Assignment Title:	Portfolio of three elements	Word count (or equivalent):	7,500 words
Submission deadline:	30 th September 2026	Return date of provisional marks & written feedback:	November 2026 (To be confirmed)
Submission method:	All written assessments, where practical and possible, must be submitted via Turnitin unless otherwise instructed by the Lecturer. (Please DO NOT put this assessment specification into Turnitin or it will match many similarities with other students' submissions.) Alternative submission method (if applicable): Late submission of the assessment will result in a late penalty mark. Penalties for late submission: Up to one week late, maximum mark of 50%. Over one week late, 0%. Only the Extenuating Circumstances Panel may approve a change to submission dates.		
Academic honesty / referencing:	Academic honesty is required. In the main body of your submission you must give credit to authors on whose research and ideas your work is based. Append to your submission a reference list that indicates the books, articles, etc. that you have used, cited or quoted in order to complete this assessment.		
Work over and word limit	Different assessments have varying word lengths specified for them; it is important that the student keeps to the word length specified for each assessment at all times on the following grounds: • To encourage succinct and clear writing by students. • To ensure equity between all the students doing that particular assessment.		

Module Overview

- **AIM(S)**
- Undertake an advanced search and critically analyse literature on a specific topic in the discipline and assess its contribution to knowledge;
- Identify gaps in extant knowledge about specific academic and practitioner issues and explain how the doctoral research will contribute to both theory and organisational/management practice

Module Overview

- **LEARNING OUTCOMES**

- Upon the successful completion of this module, the student should be able to:
 - Undertake an advanced and systematic search and review of literature on a specific topic in business, administration and management studies;
 - Engage in comprehensive critiques and understanding of trends in the analysis of literature related to your research;
 - Critically engage in current debates relates to business, administration and management theory;
 - Synthesise extant literature to form conclusions about the current state of knowledge and research in a field; Identifying gaps in knowledge and using this to generate and hone your own research aims and objectives.



How did you do
your literature
review ?



One In-class
activity (Only one
class activity today)

- Please prepare a diagram or flowchart to visualise your literature review process



The background of the slide is a soft-focus photograph of a person sitting and reading a book. A white mug is visible on a table to the left of the person. The person's hands are visible, holding the open book. The overall tone is warm and intellectual.

What is Literature Review ?



What is a Literature Review?

A literature review is a written overview of the existing research on a topic. A literature review is a critical component of a dissertation, thesis, or journal article. It can be used to:

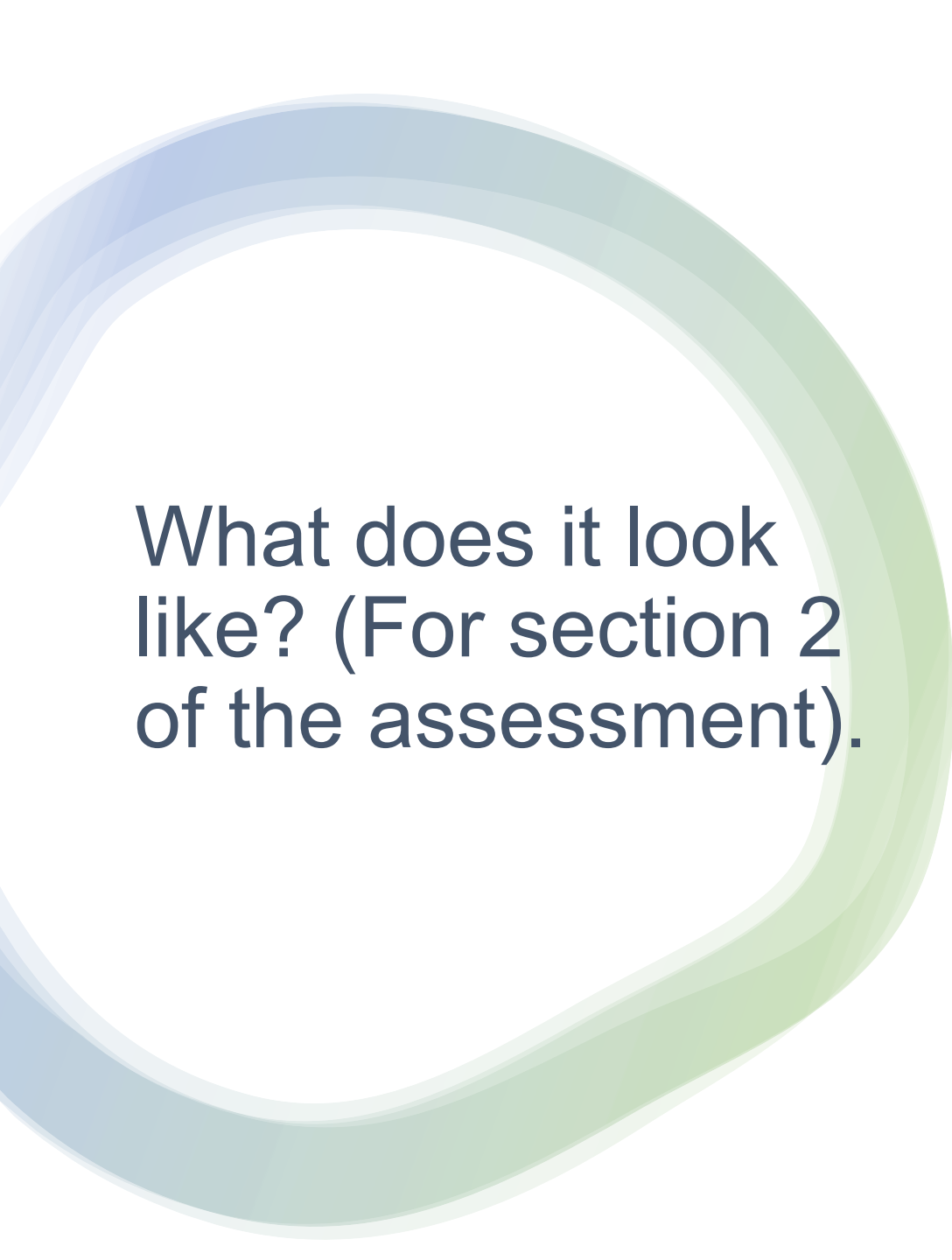
- Assess the current state of knowledge on a topic
- Identify gaps in the existing research
- Inform future research directions

The best structure for a literature review depends on the purpose of the review and the audience. Ultimately, it is up to the researcher to decide which type of literature review is best suited for their needs.

Why write a literature review?
(This answer covers Part 1 of
the assessment).

New discoveries don't happen
from nowhere; they build upon
the findings of previous
experiments and investigations.
A literature review shows how the
investigation you are conducting
fits with what has gone before
and puts it into context.

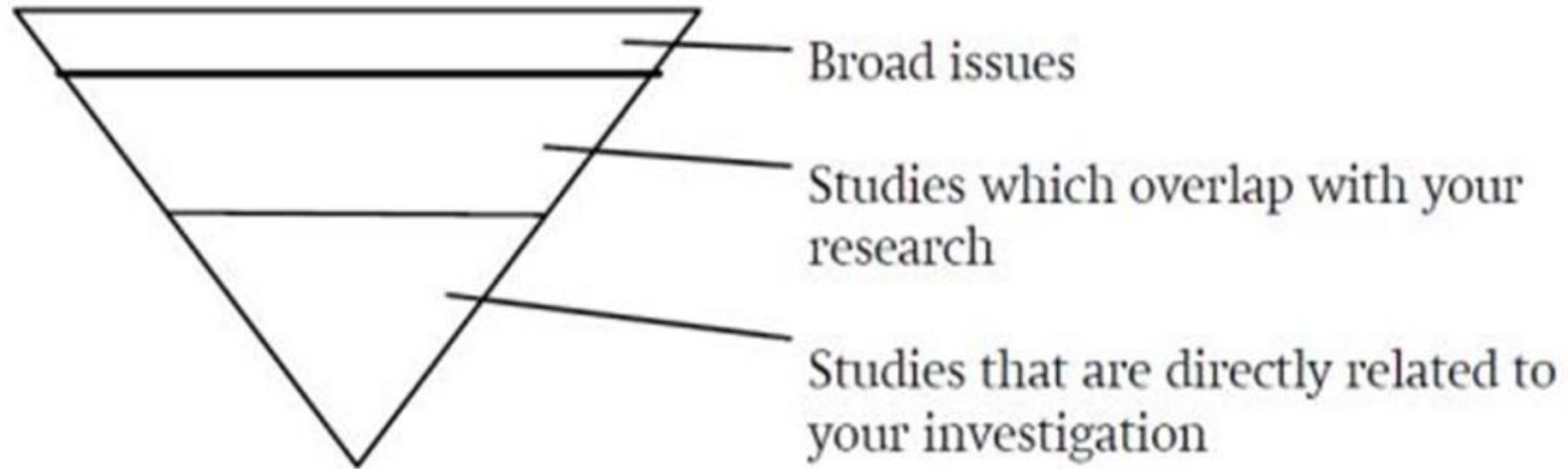




What does it look like? (For section 2 of the assessment).

- A literature review is a select analysis of existing research which is relevant to your topic, showing how it relates to your investigation. It explains and justifies how your investigation may help answer some of the questions or gaps in this area of research.
- A literature review is not a straightforward summary of everything you have read on the topic and it is not a chronological description of what was discovered in your field.
- A longer literature review may **have headings** to help group the relevant research into themes or topics. This gives a focus to your analysis, as you can group similar studies together and compare and contrast their approaches, any weaknesses or strengths in their methods, and their findings.

Start broad (wide angle) then get more specific
(narrow down on what you are really interested in).



Narrowing down:

- * First briefly explain the broad issues related to your investigation; you don't need to write much about this, just demonstrate that you are aware of the breadth of your subject.
- * Then narrow your focus to deal with the studies that overlap with your research.
- * Finally, focus on any research which is directly related to your specific investigation. Proportionally you spend most time discussing those studies which have most direct relevance to your research.

A literature review demonstrates to your reader that you are able to:



Understand and critically analyse the background research



Select and source the information that is necessary to develop a context for your research



Shows how your investigation relates to previous research



Reveals the contribution that your investigation makes to this field (fills a gap, or builds on existing research, for instance)



Provides evidence that may help explain your findings later

Why literature review is needed ?

- Literature reviews are becoming **increasingly diverse in format** and in the purposes for which they have been used
- Developments in research synthesis have been taking place across numerous disciplines, probably including your own
- Conducting any review systematically increases confidence in your review and **protects against known biases** and threats to rigour
- You can conduct your review in a systematic way by thinking about the four **Search, Appraisal, Synthesis and Analysis (SALSA)** stages of the review process



Literature Review as a research Methodology



Reaching saturation point
in qualitative research



REPRODUCIBILITY

Literature Review as a research Methodology

- **Reproducibility** is the same way of obtaining consistent results using the same input data
- **Transparency** is an openness of the analytical process
- **Theoretical Saturation** is a point where further data collection about a theoretical structure does not reveal any new features or provide additional theoretical insight into the emerging theory

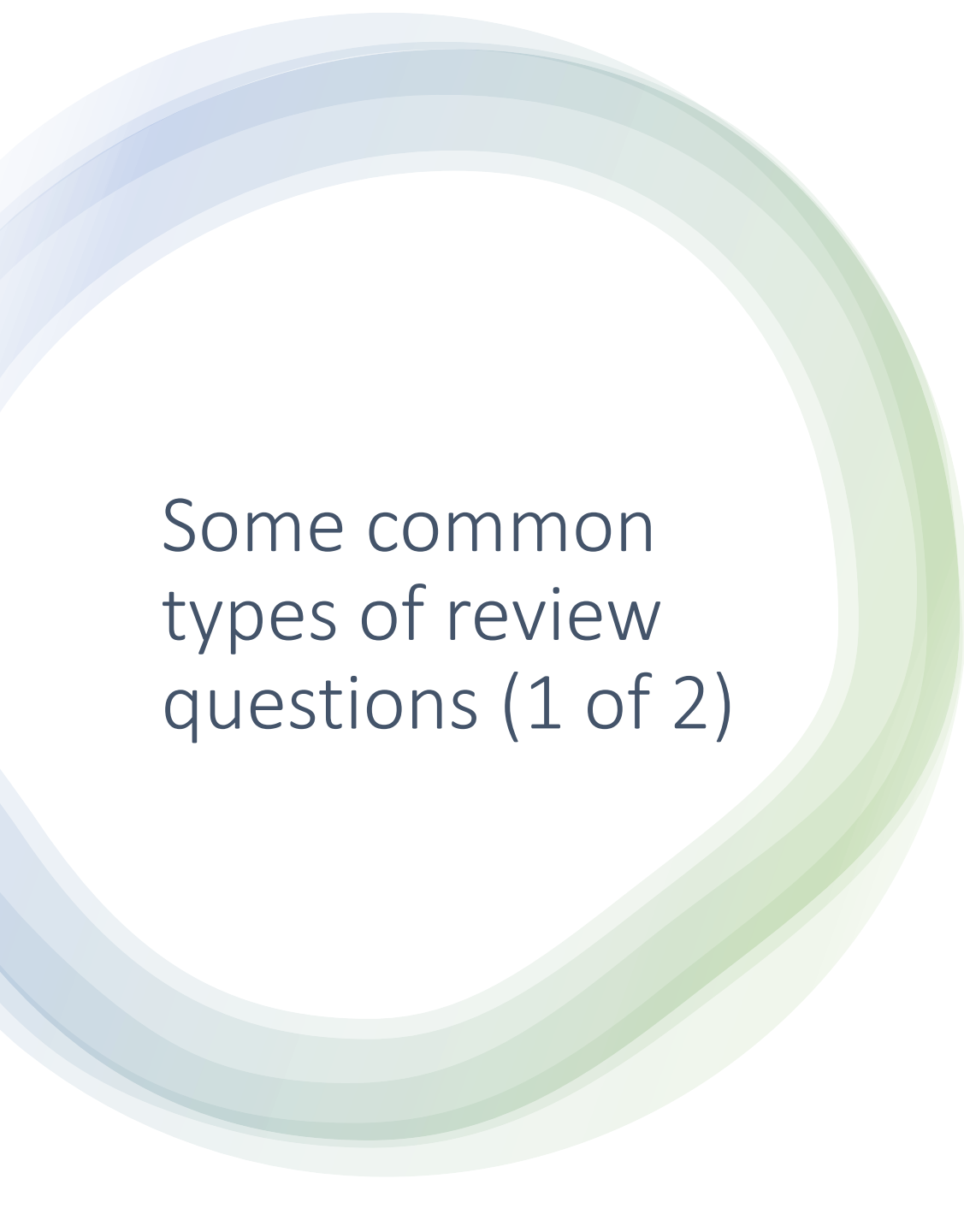


**Here are things
you need to start
thinking about:**

1. Defining the research question
2. Determining inclusion/exclusion criteria
3. Choosing databases and conducting the search
4. Reviewing your results
5. Synthesising the information gathered
6. Analysing the information gathered
7. Writing the literature review

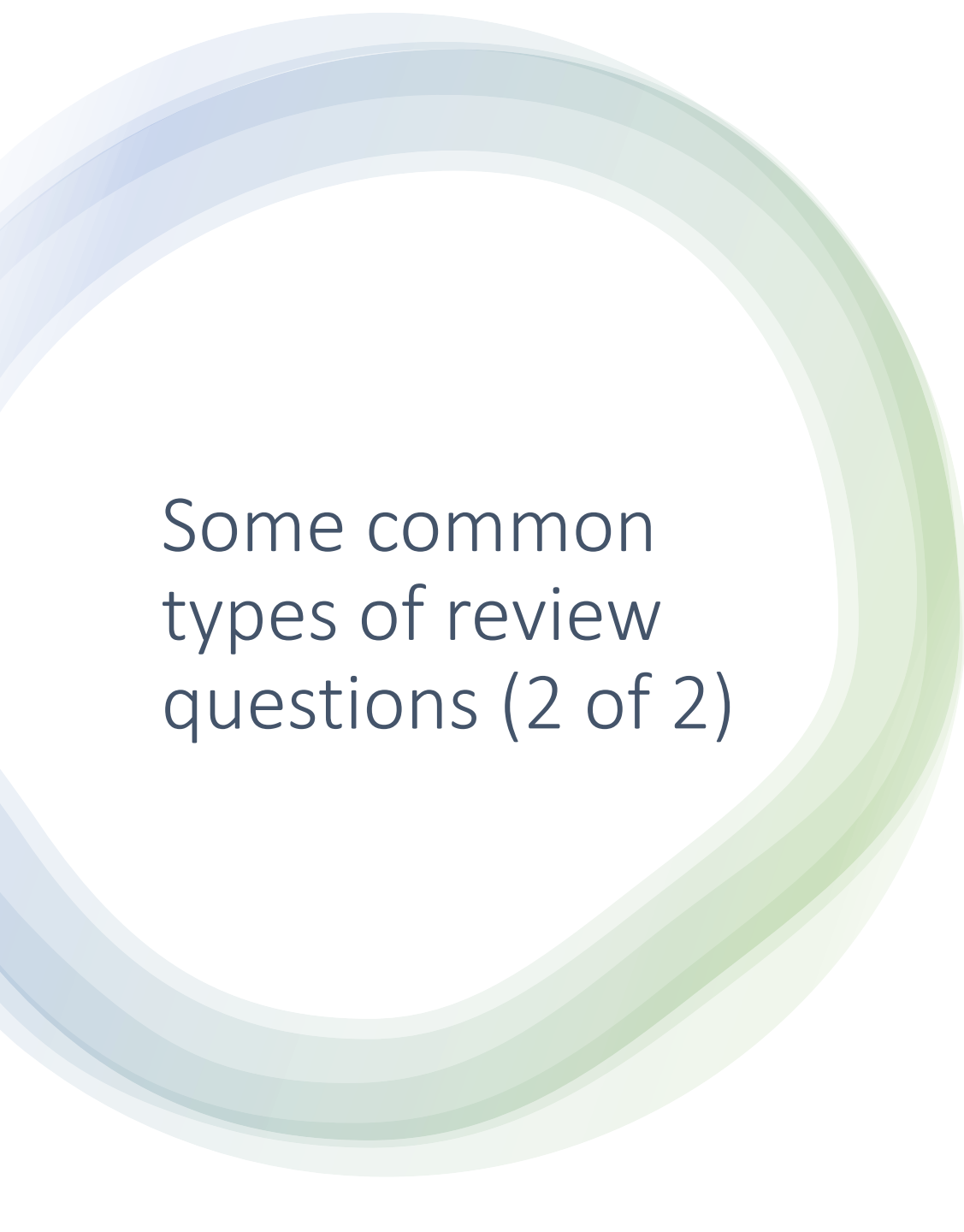
Issues to consider
before starting your
literature review

- 1 – Choose your Topic
- 2 – Think about your Intended Purpose
- 3 – Think about your Intended Audience
- 4 – Where will I find the Literature?
- 5 – What will the literature, and the data, look like?



Some common types of review questions (1 of 2)

- **Effect(iveness) questions:** What effect does <intervention X>, compared with <intervention y>, have on <outcome Z> in a real-world setting? What are the relative <cost-benefits of X versus Y>?
- **Methodology questions:** What research methods are used to investigate <focus of interest X>? What are the respective strengths and weaknesses of <research methods A and B>?



Some common types of review questions (2 of 2)

- **Conceptual questions:** How has <focus of interest X> been identified and defined? Which theories are used to explain <focus of interest X>? Does <theory A> or <theory B> provide the best fit to findings from research studies? What are the main unresolved controversies? What assumptions about knowledge and evidence underpin the topic/discipline?
- **Consider whether your review question is similar to the above.** Try replacing the items in <brackets> with concepts from your review.

Which of the following best captures your reason(s) for conducting a literature review?

- to place each work in the context of how it contributes an understanding of the subject under review;
- to describe how each work relates to the others under consideration;
- to identify new ways to interpret, and shed light on gaps in, previous research;
- to identify and resolve conflicts across seemingly contradictory previous studies;
- to integrate what others have done and said;
- to criticise previous studies;
- to make connections with related topics; and
- to identify research gaps.
- to identify what has been covered by previous scholars to prevent you needlessly duplicating their effort;
- to signpost the way forward for further research; and
- to locate your original work within the existing literature.

Milestones in the history of research synthesis

Date	Milestones
1753	James Lind published first 'systematic review'
1904	Pearson published landmark review on effects of vaccines against typhoid
1976	Glass coined term 'meta-analysis'
1984	Light and Pillemer <i>Summing Up</i>
1987	Mulrow The Medical Review Article: State of the Science
1992	Antman and colleagues illustrated value of cumulation of findings
1993	Launch of Cochrane Collaboration
1994	Establishment of the UK NHS Centre for Reviews and Dissemination
2000	Founding of Campbell Collaboration

The role of theory in the literature review

Type of review - purpose
Concept analysis - identifying definitions
Creation of meta-model - merging multiple models
Meta-ethnography - generating a line of argument from qualitative research studies
Realist review (to complement an effectiveness review) - explaining how interventions work
Review of theories - mapping concepts and constructs
Review of use of theory - documenting how theory has been applied
Scoping review - documenting conceptual coverage of a topic area
As precursor to conceptual work - exploring the theoretical legacy

What does 'systematic' look like?

- A priori specification of planned review methods/protocol
- A clearly focused question
- Clear explicit criteria for inclusion and exclusion
- Documentation of search process: sources and strategies
- Use of tables and boxes to make methods explicit
- Use of tables to summarise study characteristics
- An explicit mechanism to handle quality assessment
- Exploration of assumptions, limitations and areas of uncertainty
- Use of tables and graphics to support an interpretation of data
- Appendices including search strategies, data extraction and quality assessment tools
- Explicit Declarations of Interest

Three key
questions (TQM)
for planning your
review

- How much **Time** must I allocate to critical activities that must be done (and that cannot be abbreviated)?
- What **Quality** is required for the key stages of the review and what scope do these offer for flexibility or possible negotiation?
- Where can I save **Time** (and, by implication, **Money**) by efficiencies; either by one reviewer multitasking or by members of a review team dividing up the workload?



Stakeholder engagement

- Working interactively (knowledge brokering) on your protocol with stakeholders helps policymakers to better understand your review proposal. You will understand why they have commissioned the ...review and the relevant context for the questions, scope, methods, and report conclusions.
- Sharing your protocol will make you more confident that you are meeting policymaker needs. (Garritty et al., 2021)

Rapid reviews

‘A rapid review is a form of knowledge synthesis that accelerates the process of conducting a traditional systematic review through streamlining or omitting various methods to produce evidence for stakeholders in a resource-efficient manner.’ (Hamel et al., 2020)

Rapid reviews (RRs) are considered ‘an efficient tool to get evidence to decision-makers more quickly and are now considered part of the knowledge synthesis family’ (Garritty et al., 2020).

- More research is required on how different shortcuts impact the methodological quality of the resultant review (Schünemann & Moja, 2015; Polisena et al., 2015).

Four Common Literature Review Structures

1. *Theoretical*

A theoretical literature review is a comprehensive **survey of all the theories** that relate to a particular area of research. It includes both published and unpublished works and covers both classic and contemporary theory.

Theoretical literature reviews can be divided into two main types: those that focus on a specific theory, and those that adopt a more general approach. In the former case, the review will critically assess the chosen theory and evaluate its strengths and weaknesses. In the latter case, the review will survey all the major theories in the field and identify common themes and areas of disagreement.

Theoretical literature reviews can be conducted at any stage in a research project, but they are usually most helpful when **developing your research question and methodology**. A good theoretical literature review will help to situate your research within the wider field, and to identify the gaps in current knowledge that your research aims to fill.



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2. Thematic

A thematic literature review is an evaluation of existing research on a particular topic, with a focus on **themes or patterns** that emerge from the work as a whole. This type of review can be helpful in identifying gaps in the current body of knowledge, or in pointing out areas where future research may be needed. In order to write a successful thematic literature review, it is important to **select a manageable topic and to carefully read** and analyse the existing body of work on that topic. It is also crucial to identify and articulate the main theme or pattern that emerges from the literature; this will be the focus of your review.

3. Methodological

A methodological literature review is a detailed and comprehensive assessment of all the **research methods** used in a particular area of study. It involves critically evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of different research methods, and determining which method is best suited to answering a specific research question. A methodological literature review is an important tool for any researcher, as it helps to identify the most appropriate research methods for their particular area of inquiry.

Research methods can be broadly classified into two categories: qualitative and quantitative. Qualitative methods are those that aim to gather an in-depth understanding of a phenomenon, often through interviews, observations, or case studies. Quantitative methods, on the other hand, focus on collecting large amounts of data that can be analysed statistically. A methodological literature review might compare the findings of a single approach or compare the results that have emerged in both approaches.

4. Chronological

A chronological literature review is a type of review that looks at the development of a particular topic or idea over time. This can be helpful in understanding how an issue has evolved or changed over time and provide insights into current debates on the topic.

In order to write a chronological literature review, you will need to identify and locate relevant sources that cover the topic in question. Once you have gathered your sources, you will need to read and analyse them in order to identify key trends and developments. Finally, you will need to synthesize this information in a way that tells a coherent story about the evolution of the topic.

Factors to Consider When Choosing a Literature Review Structure

When choosing a literature review structure, there are several factors to consider.

1. Purpose of the literature review. Is it to provide an overview of the field, or is it to evaluate a specific theory or research methodology?
2. Audience for the literature review. Will it be read by scholars in the field, or is it intended for a general audience?
3. Scope of the literature review. What time period should the sources cover? What types of sources do you need to identify? Are you focusing on a specific research method or theory?
4. Resources available. What sources will be used, and how will they be accessed? Will you include grey literature? Will you evaluate the quality of the sources?

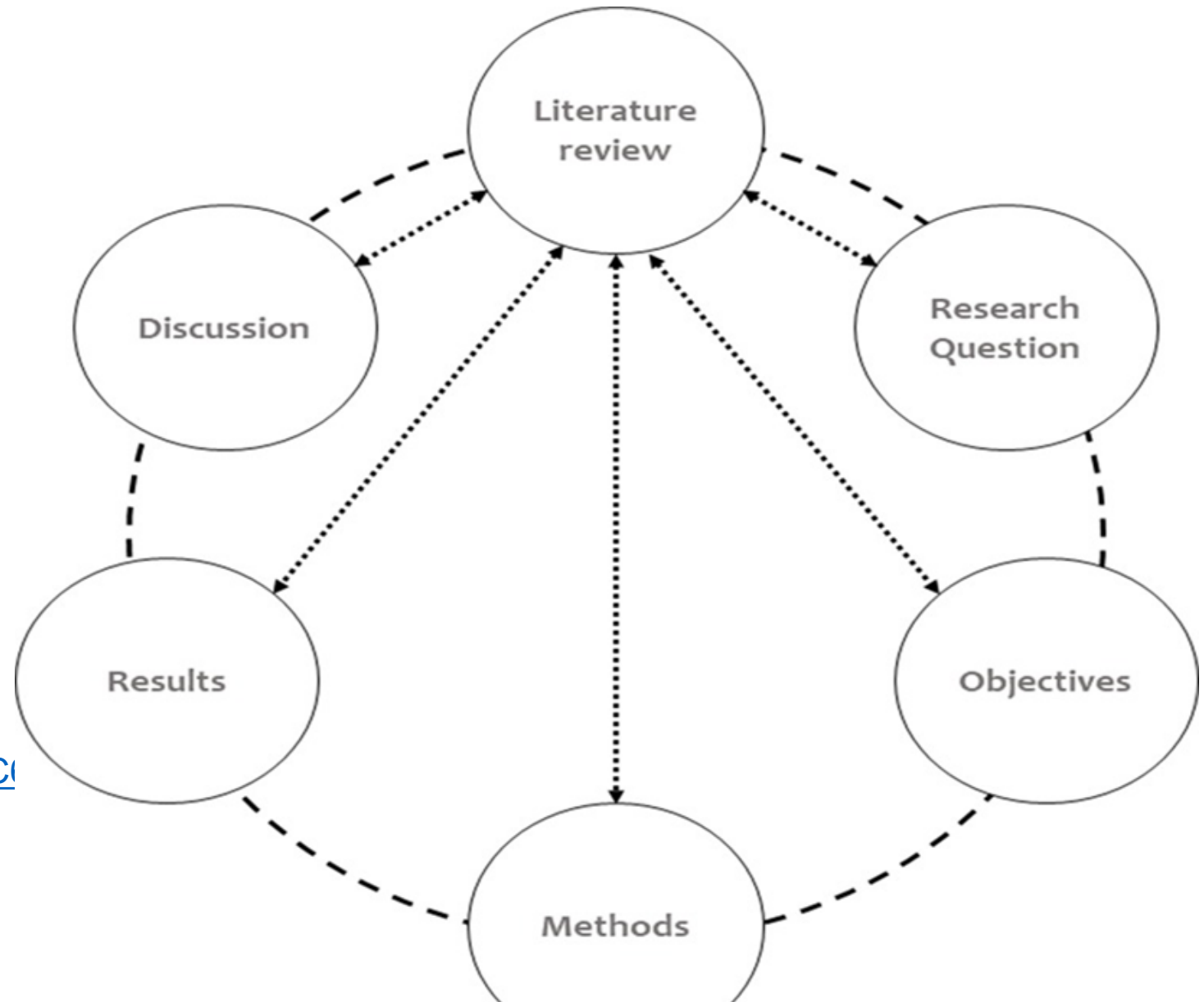
With these considerations in mind, you can choose a literature review structure that best suits your needs.



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Literature reviews are an essential part of any research project. Understanding the different types of structures and how to select the best structure for your specific project is key to ensuring that you create the most effective review possible.

Leite D.F.B., Padilha, M.A.S. & Cecatti J.G.
*(2019) Approaching literature review for academic purposes: The Literature Review Checklist. *Clinics* (Sao Paulo). 2019 Nov 25;74:e1403. doi: 10.6061/clinics/2019/e1403. PMID: 31778435; PMCID: PMC6862708.
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6862708/>



I quite like Dr Miguel's videos on research methods, particularly his advice on doing the literature review.
(14mins)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tfNctJuFV0k>

How to write a CRITICAL Literature Review: You MUST follow these 3 STEPS!

Dr. Miguel Moital explains the 'intellectual ladder' which an intuitive and effective way is to explain how to do a critical literature review.

<https://staffprofiles.bournemouth.ac.uk/display/mmoital>



The 6 Cs of academic writing excellence.

- Confined (to the aim and objectives of the study).
- Corroborated (*by evidence*).
- Critical (*Actively engages with, rather than passively accepts, information*).
- Coherent (*Logical and consistent*).
- Concise (*Written in a brief, but comprehensive way*).
- Captivating (*Able to capture and hold the attention of the reader*).

“Take homes”

- Systematic approaches to the literature attempt to offer greater clarity, internal validity, and audibility.
- You can identify different types of review from how they undertake the four steps of **Search, Appraisal, Synthesis and Analysis (SALSA)**.
- Planning a systematic review requires good project management skills.
- You should construct a project timetable around milestones and deliverables and **stakeholder engagement**

References

- Chapter 2 of the Sage Book: Getting Started on Your Literature Review
In: **Systematic Approaches to a Successful Literature Review**, 3rd ed,
2021.
- You might also find the following useful:

Byrne, J.A. Improving the peer review of narrative literature reviews. *Res Integr Peer Rev* 1, 12 (2016). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s41073-016-0019-2>

Baethge, C., Goldbeck-Wood, S. & Mertens, S. SANRA—a scale for the quality assessment of narrative review articles. *Res Integr Peer Rev* 4, 5 (2019). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s41073-019-0064-8>



References

Research Gap with litmaps

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rLsLsQr3VaA>



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Visualise your literature review

<https://app.litmaps.com/shared/8ed4f9ff-1044-4c28-95fd-8d7316b569af>



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In-class activity

Please select a theme and read 5 journals to summarise your findings on the excel list according to your chosen approach:

- i. Theme 1 - Food and culture
- ii. Theme 2 - Hybrid work and management
- iii. Theme 3 - Consumer behaviour and service
- iv. Theme 4 - Technology and digital well-being
- v. Others (Organisation Management; Leadership)

Literature Review as a research Methodology

- We have looked at the issues of Reproducibility, Transparency and Theoretical saturation within Literature Reviews, and here are some helpful readings for you on these themes.
- CRAM, W.A., TEMPLIER, M. and PARE, G., 2020. (Re)considering the Concept of Literature Review **Reproducibility**. *Journal of the Association for Information Systems*, 21(5), pp. 10.
- Rowlands, Waddell, N., & McKenna, B. (2016). Are We There Yet? A Technique to Determine **Theoretical Saturation**. *The Journal of Computer Information Systems*, 56(1), 40–47. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08874417.2015.11645799>
- Paré, Tate, M., Johnstone, D., & Kitsiou, S. (2016). Contextualizing the twin concepts of systematicity and **transparency** in information systems literature reviews. *European Journal of Information Systems*, 25(6), 493–508. <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41303-016-0020-3>