

Systematic approaches to a successful literature review, by Andrew Booth, Diana Papaioannou and Anthea Sutton, London, Sage Publications, 2012, 279 pp., £20.39 (paperback), ISBN 978-0-85702-135-9

The authors of this book provide a very detailed account of the necessity of and reasons for a literature review, applicable to a range of contexts.

The book is divided into the following chapters: The Literature Review: Its Role within Research; Systematic Approaches to the Literature; Planning and Writing a Literature Review; Defining the Scope; Searching the Literature; Assessing the Evidence Base; Synthesising Included Studies; Analysing the Studies; Writing up and Presenting the Data; and Managing the Literature Project, with each chapter having its own set of references. In addition, there is a Webography, Glossary, Index and Solutions to Exercises, via a web address.

It can be seen, or at least strongly suggested to the reader, from the chapter titles that there is more to a literature review than a collection of references to be discussed in relation to a given topic.

Each chapter starts with a set of learning objectives which is followed by an introduction to the chapter. In addition, throughout each chapter, there are a number of examples, worked and to be worked, reflection points, and further definitions and information related to sub-themes, by way of extending the main theme and discussion, as well as a summary of the chapter.

Although the reading and study of this book requires the reader to be focussed and alert, to gain the maximum benefit, the authors lead the reader through it. This is achieved by the use of a very clear and varied layout of prose, vocabulary, figures, tables and diagrams.

The key message throughout the book is the importance of systematic approach (es) to a literature review. The guidance and advice given to the reader by the authors not only enables, potentially, the reader to achieve this, but it also provides him or her with a firm basis for their intended research.

A comprehensive and sound literature review is of particular importance to one that is already in existence, or research that is designed to take place, as a consequence of the nature, of it over a long period of time (not necessarily of a longitudinal type *per se*), both of which may require an updated literature review. Examples of literature reviews of this type are referenced in the book.

The book addresses, I believe, all categories of literature review, from that required by the lone research student for a self contained project, dissertation or thesis, to that required by a research group, either at a university or as part of some corporate organisation, over a short or long time period. The authors also refer to the notion of the management of and a team approach to a literature review where the magnitude of the research project is large (the number of components and variables contained within it and associated within it), and to be administered over a long period of time.

Educational psychologists will find this book a substantial resource for individual research project work conducted within their “patch of schools”, and corporate research work within their Psychological Service or Children’s Service.

Recommended for: the service library, essential reading for EPs.

Style: practical, theoretical, complex and innovative.

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Concept system software, Developed and maintained by Concept Systems Incorporated (CSI), Ithica, NY, 2013, \$3000 (US dollars) per year for unlimited use (downloadable software)

Concept mapping is a technique for collecting, analysing, and presenting group perceptions. The technique may be a useful tool for educational psychologists (EPs), particularly in the consultative role, as it allows for the capture and analysis of group perceptions that can be represented in a meaningful visual display that may elucidate shared beliefs and stimulate productive discussion. Although concept mapping can be accomplished with statistical software that typically requires a requisite level of expertise in data collection and statistical analysis, Concept System Software, developed and maintained by Concept Systems Incorporated (CSI), is a dedicated concept mapping program that, although still requiring some level of training and expertise, greatly facilitates conducting concept mapping with groups, including analysing output and presenting results. According to information on CSI's Website at www.conceptsystems.com, the program can be used to examine the perceptions of groups ranging in size from 10 to the program's maximum of 100.

I have used Concept System Software (CSI, Concept Systems Incorporated (CSI), 2013) to examine perceptions of teacher groups as small as 10 and as large as 100. Similar to the recommended approach to concept mapping as outlined on the CSI Website, I have employed the following five steps in my work conducting concept mapping, which are summarised here:

- (1) Generating Statements – A group either brainstorms a list of statements regarding a topic in the form of questions, concerns, facts, ideas, etc. or produces individual narrative responses on a topic that is subsequently reduced to statements by the user of the program in cooperation with the group. Resulting statements are typically redistributed to the group as many times as necessary for refinement. A variation of this step that I have used is to cull statements from a valid source, such as the scientific literature. In my experience with concept mapping, the number of statements can range from 20 up to the program's maximum of 125.
- (2) Sorting Group Statements – Each individual statement is printed on a note card to form a *pile* of statements. Each group member receives a pile of

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