

ASSIGNMENT 2: CONSTRUCT A SYNTHESIS GRID FOR YOUR CONSULTANTS REPORT (6%)

1. BACKGROUND

This assignment is the first stage of your Consultants Report. Please read the document **Introduction to your Consultants Report** in the **Assessments Information Module on Canvas** for background to this stage and the following stages.

2. WHAT IS A SYNTHESIS GRID?

1. To 'synthesise' means to combine elements from different sources to form something new. The sources in this case are the sources of evidence you find to help meet the client's requirements. The something new will be your Consultants Report (Ass. 5) with its recommendations to Newtown Bank.
2. A synthesis grid is an organised way of taking notes that helps you to group your source material around the client's requirements.
3. It is a table in which:
 - the column headings are based on your client's requirements
 - each row represents a source of evidence you have selected relevant to any of those requirements for the IT strategy you have chosen as your specialisation
 - as you read, make notes in the appropriate columns of key ways the source material relates to the heading of that column, including quotes (with page numbers) that you may want to use in your written work later.
4. See **Appendix A** for an example of some synthesis grid entries.

3. WHY USE A SYNTHESIS GRID?

It increases your productivity (i.e. you spend **less time** to get a **better outcome** than by just writing notes) while researching and writing. This works in two ways.

1. It saves you time because it :
 - constructs your bibliography as you go
 - saves you having to revisit notes or original sources
 - accumulates quotes from your evidence to put into your report, with their page numbers
 - shows how the evidence from your sources helps you address each of requirements described in the Client Brief
 - enables you to can keep changing your headings or adding new columns to them: researching and writing is a cyclical process involving continual adjustments
 - helps you discard sources that are irrelevant or not relevant enough
2. It helps you to make **connections** among the different sources you have read and with your client's requirement, and to **organise** your final report using these connections, rather than looking for connections among a series of notes. This is because it:
 - gives an overview of your specialisation quickly - a mini-map
 - points to where you may want to research or present in more detail
 - shows significant differences and similarities between individual pieces of research
 - shows the major points of agreement or dispute in your sources

- shows that things which seem important initially may not seem important later and other things may become more important as you continue to read

4. HOW BIG SHOULD MY SYNTHESIS GRID BE?

Your synthesis grid can be as large or as small as you want it to be. It depends on how much reading you have done, and how much detail you include.

You will re-use the (corrected) work you do in this assignment in each of stage of the Consultants Report. So if you do it well and take notice of the feedback you get, you will save a lot of time at the end of semester when you complete the Consultants Report. This includes the glossary and bibliography, which you will continue to develop through each stage.

5. HOW TO CONSTRUCT YOUR SYNTHESIS GRID

INSTRUCTIONS AND MARKING CRITERIA		Max Mark
1.	Select at least four scholarly sources of evidence relevant to the client's requirements and to your chosen IT strategy. Follow the instructions in the slides Library pres INFO5991 March 2018 in the Assessment Information Module and ask at the SciTech Library if you need further help searching for sources. (Evaluate each source against the R.E.V.I.E.W. criteria video at https://library.sydney.edu.au/help/online-training/schvsnonSch/ or the print version at https://library.sydney.edu.au/help/online-training/downloads/iResearch_Print_SchVsNonSch.pdf) See Appendix B for help with how to quickly 'read' an article	1
2.	Present the results of your review in a table, or equivalent, showing specifically how each source met or did not meet the each of the R.E.V.I.E.W criteria	1
3.	Construct a synthesis grid from these sources of evidence using the column headings (or similar) shown in Appendix A. Make notes in the appropriate columns when a source has information relevant to any of those and add page nos. if you want to quote the information exactly as it is written.	2
	Using Endnote, cite each source in Column 1 using the American Psychological Association (APA 6th) To find out how to use endnote, see: http://libguides.library.usyd.edu.au/endnote	(.5 each source)
4.	Construct a glossary for Newtown Bank containing definitions and explanations of the terms in the synthesis grid which would not be familiar to a reader with a non-technical background; e.g. Enterprise architecture, governance, service management, , efficiency, distributed capability, flexibility, process improvement etc. Use endnote to cite (in-text) the source of each definition and explanation and it will automatically add these sources to your bibliography in the correct format.	1

5. Construct a bibliography of your sources using, Endnote, in APA 6th format. Endnote will produce this automatically. .5
6. Format your assignment (double sided and single spaced) with:
- A separate cover page showing the title from your client brief, the IT strategy in which you are specialising, SID and date
 - A table of contents
 - Page headings, section headings, headers and footers showing title/page numbers/date;
 - Sentences, paragraphs, spelling, grammar and punctuation according to Module 1 of the Write Site <http://writesite.elearn.usyd.edu.au/>
- (Any one of these items missing means a loss of .5 mark) .5
7. Reflect on your process of doing this stage of your report under the headings:
- Joys,
 - Frustrations,
 - Learnings,
 - Questions/comments
- *If this section is not completed, .5 mark is deducted* *

(Some material is adapted from <http://writesite.elearn.usyd.edu.au/> Module 3 Unit 1 Section 3: Grouping sources)

APPENDIX A: SAMPLES OF SYNTHESIS GRID ENTRIES

Citation of Source in APA 6 th format	Definition and explanation of characteristics of the IT strategy in which you are specialising (section 7 in Client Brief)	General benefits of the strategy	General challenges/risks & risk mitigation	Information relevant to Newtown Bank's IT problems & IT goals			
				TCO/ROI & inefficiency of IT investment	Legacy code & future development	Flexibility	Align IT investment with
(Blogs 2005)	External sourcing is defined as “...	External sourcing has 3 benefits: reduced cost,					
(Smith 2017)	Service-oriented Enterprise and IT architecture has 5 characteristics which are “IT architecture is a subset of enterprise architecture” (p53#	These characteristics enable SOA to deliver the following benefits: interoperability,	successful SOA needs well defined business processes within an enterprise architecture		Newtown Bank would need to implement an enterprise architecture first because	microservices can increase flexibility in IT infrastructure because.....	
(Liu 2012)	Services in the cloud have 5 characteristics, 3 service models, and 2 delivery models. These are as follows		Security and reliability of cloud services	These 2 challenges might be too risky as our client is a bank		.	
(Kumar 2019)	IT gov, is .. ITSM is DevOps is		this could help reduce TCO and solve capacity problem by		DevOps can increase flexibility of IT infrastructure because.....	IT gov. is essential to achieving strategic business value because

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Blogs, J. (2015), *When to outsource*. NY: Penguin
 Kumar, R. (2018), *DevOps for ITSM and governance*. Berlin: Springer
 Liu, X. (2012), *Services in the cloud*. NY: Random House
 Smith, A. (2017), *A service oriented approach to enterprise and IT architecture*. London: Wiley

Note: These are not real sources ☹

APPENDIX B

6. HOW TO DETERMINE QUICKLY IF A SOURCE RELATES TO YOUR SPECIALISATION AND THE CLIENT BRIEF

Read the abstract. If it seems as though the source might be relevant, then read the introduction and conclusion.

If you are still not sure of its relevance, read the first paragraph of each section. Then, if necessary, read the first sentence of paragraphs.

This is the top-down approach to efficient reading; it also indicates how a well-written source (and ultimately your Consultants Report) is structured.

How big should my synthesis grid be?

Your synthesis grid can be as large or as small as you want it to be. It depends on how much reading you have done, and how much detail you include.

7. HOW TO FIND INFORMATION QUICKLY IN A BOOK

Check the index for the topic you are looking for. If it's an eBook then there will usually be a search function.