# Literature review

## What is a literature review?

Literature review IS NOT literature search

Literature search means tracking down or getting your hands on the literature you want to read.

A literature review is

“… a systematic…method for identifying, evaluating and interpreting the …work produced by researchers, scholars and practitioners.”(Fink, 1998, p. 3)

## Why review the literature?

“…without it you will not acquire an **understanding** of your topic, of what has **already been done** on it, how it has been **researched**, and what the **key issues** are.”(Hart, 1998, p. 1)

It allows you to consider your topic from different angles so that you understand better what and who are important in your topic, and why.

## Keep record from start

You can create an excel/word file to organise the material you find.

**Activity:** Create the file with the following field:

* **Source** – where you got it from(e.g. book, magazine, website)
* **Year** (the year it was written)
* **Title** (title of book, article etc…)
* **Author(s)**
* **Type of material**: journal, conference,
* **Abstract/conclusion/summary** (can copy and paste to read later and rewrite it in your own words)
* **Additional Comments** (What is it talking about or what strikes you or idea came into your mind when reading it; precise notes to avoid wasting time)

## Keep the reading manageable

* Select to read just those parts of texts that you really need.
* Do not get distracted by other interesting material.
* You may need to read some articles in full so as to understand the context.
* Make note only of material that you intend to include.
* You could use bookmarks, social bookmark

## Two angles to evaluate the content of what you read

**Your topic:** Why, specifically, is the text relevant to your own topic?

**The area/field:** Why is the text you are reading considered significant/important in your area. You can know that from other text that refer to it.

## Your literature review section

* It should provide the reader with background on what has been already said or researched on your topic.
* Start writing the first draft of your literature review alongside your reading
* Include only information that is relevant to your topic.
* By the end of the review, it should be clear to the reader how your project :
  + **Has considered what has been said /done before *and***
  + **Your project is different from what has been done/said before**

## Literature review - checklist

* Read widely around the subject, selecting text that represents well various perspectives taken by expert in your topic.
* Note themes and issues that keep appearing in text that you read that might be relevant to your research.

**Ask yourself:**

* + What themes or issues keep appearing
  + What are the main points of disagreement between experts and why do they rise them? (if there are any)
  + What are the issues?
  + Which aspects are not yet fully researched?

HART, E., 1998. Doing a literature review: releasing the social science research imagination, by E. Hart and M. Bond. London: Sage., p.1.

FINK, A., 1998. Conducting literature research reviews: from paper to the internet. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage., p.3.