



Art and design research project examples

Literature / artefact reviews

What is a literature/artefact review?

- **Literature** = scholarly publications (e.g. journal articles, research reports, government reports or text books) which have been written on a particular topic, theme or idea
- **Artefact** = a man-made object, typically of historical or cultural significance (e.g. painting, sculpture, design piece or building structure)
- **The review** = the careful selection of literature relevant to your topic/artefact and the presentation, interpretation, classification and evaluation of this literature

Why do a literature/artefact review?

Your literature/artefact review becomes an essential link in your research project:

- The literature/artefact review provides the reader with all the important background information needed to understand your project
- It places your project as one link in a chain of research that is developing knowledge in your field
 - To understand where you are going, it is important to understand what came before you
- It demonstrates to the reader that you are aware of up-to-date and important knowledge on your topic
- It may also be used to justify or provide a rationale for your research question, your research framework or your methodology

A literature/artefact review is NOT ...

- **An annotated bibliography**
 - In an annotated bibliography the writer presents a summary and critical evaluation of each article, scholarly resource or artefact, one by one
 - There is little or no connection made between the various articles or resources
- **An essay**
 - In an essay you are given a topic to discuss or a question to answer and the writing is organised around responding to that topic or question
 - The essay progresses in a linear way, where you present your first point, followed by an explanation which is supported by the literature
 - You then move on to the second point and so on
 - In an essay the literature has a supporting role, whereas in a literature review it is the literature itself which is the subject of discussion



In the literature/artefact review you will:

- identify a gap in existing knowledge, that is, you will identify what we still need to know about this topic or issue
- pose a question related to this gap (this will be your research question)
- compare and contrast different authors' views on an issue
- note areas in which authors are in disagreement
- highlight gaps
- or identify any particular shortcomings of past research

In this way, your literature/artefact review becomes a critical discussion of the knowledge or ideas related to your research topic.

Structure of the literature/artefact review

The body of your literature/artefact review will be organised in a way that best suits your topic:

- **Historically/chronologically** - if you are looking at the evolution of a concept or practice overtime or evaluating whether a concept from 20 years ago holds up today, then a historical or chronological organization might be appropriate
- **Research questions** - some writers organise their literature/artefact review around the research questions
- **Themes** - a very common way to organise the literature/artefact review is according to key themes which emerge from the literature in relation to your topic/artefact

Organising your review

You must demonstrate that you went about your literature/artefact review in a systematic and rigorous way.

Using a table

You can include diagrams or tables to show how you have organised your literature. In the example table (Table 1):

- The authors have summarised the various literature on their topic into a table
- They categorised the literature according to land use characteristics discussed in the literature, such as distance of residence from the urban centre, settlement size and so on
- They further organised the literature according to different travel patterns such as distance, frequency, mode, time and energy consumption
- As the authors noted, this table allowed them to
 - identify areas the literature has focused on, and any gaps
 - examine similarities and differences in the literature
- Further, the table provided a structure for the presentation of the literature review

Table 1. Studies Classified According to Land Use Characteristics and Travel Patterns

Land use characteristics	Distance of residence from the urban centre	Settlement size	Mixing of land uses	Provision of local facilities	Density of development	Proximity to main transport networks	Availability of residential parking	Road network type	Neighbourhood type
→ Travel patterns ↓	Average journey distance	Gordon et al., 1989a Johnston-Anumonwo, 1992 Spence and Frost, 1995	Orfeuil and Salomon, 1993	Cervero and Landis, 1992 Hanson, 1982 Winter and Farthing, 1997	ECOTEC, 1993				
	Average journey distance by car	Hillman and Whalley, 1983		Cervero and Landis, 1992 Farthing et al., 1997	ECOTEC, 1993 Hillman and Whalley, 1983 Levinson and Kumar, 1997	Levinson and Kumar, 1997		Marshall and Banister, 2000	Crane and Crepeau, 1998
	Travel distance (all modes)	Næss et al., 1995 Curtis, 1995 Stead, 1999	Stead, 1999	Stead, 1999	Dunphy and Fisher, 1996 ECOTEC, 1993 Hillman and Whalley, 1983 Kenworthy and Laube, 1999 Stead, 1999	Headicar and Curtis, 1994 Stead, 1999	Stead, 1999		Crane and Crepeau, 1998 Rutherford et al., 1996
	Journey frequency	Curtis, 1995	Ewing et al., 1996	Hanson, 1982; ECOTEC, 1993 Ewing et al., 1996	Dunphy and Fisher, 1996 ECOTEC, 1993 Ewing et al., 1996				Berman, 1996 Cervero and Gorham, 1995 Crane and Crepeau, 1998 Friedman et al., 1994 McNally and Kulkarni, 1997

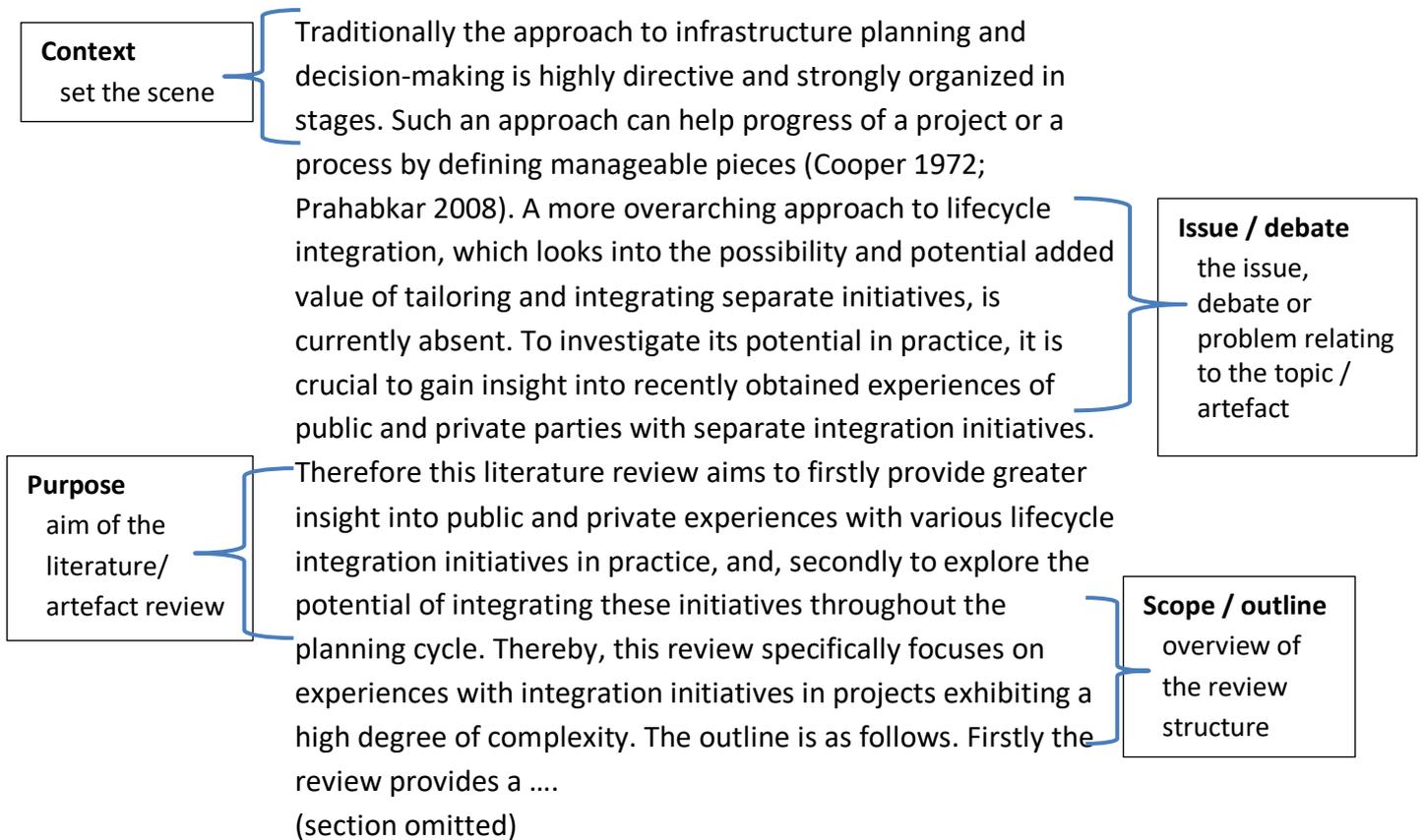
(Stead & Marshall 2001, p. 114)

Writing your literature/artefact review

A brief introduction:

- The decision to include a brief introduction to your literature/artefact review will depend on the topic area, length of the research project, and any instructions or templates provided by your lecturer
- The length of the introduction will depend on the word requirement for your research project report or paper (it could be just a couple of sentences or it could be several paragraphs)
- Set the context and inform the reader of the purpose or focus of the research project
- Sign post to the reader what will be covered
- You may want to also inform the reader of how you went about the process of conducting the literature review so that the reader can be assured of the rigor of your process

Sample introduction



(Adapted from Stead & Marshall 2001, p. 114)

The body sections:

- Lead the reader through your various ideas and understandings
- Have clear sections and subsections to your literature/artefact review
- Ensure that each paragraph has one clear idea
- Use sign posting, transitioning and linking language to connect ideas and to move from one paragraph to the next

Sample body section

2.1 Implications of higher urban density

Heading

indicates the focus of this section

A large body of research has been dedicated to testing and exploring the implications of higher urban densities for public transport use, land use efficiency and protection of the green belt, social diversity, social sustainability more broadly as well as cognitive and experiential factors such as the experience of privacy. Indeed, two significant studies, Arza Churchman's *Disentangling the Concept of Density* (1999) and Boyko and Cooper's *Clarifying and Re-conceptualising Density* (2011) have been dedicated solely to the task of investigating and summarising the breadth and variety of research surrounding the subject of urban density in an attempt to reach a more concise understanding of how density might be used by policy makers and planning practitioners. These studies provide a valuable resource for understanding the variety of ways that density has been thought about and the consequences that have been attributed with it. However, both studies are situated within an environmental-psychology field of study and therefore focus primarily on social science research that aims to test the impact of density ratios on different social and psychological conditions. They are not particularly useful for deciphering the implications of density for the design of the built environment.

Topic sentence

tells the reader what the focus of the paragraph is

Development / support

expands on the idea presented in the topic sentence

Interpretation

You as the writer interpret the literature and highlight the significance of the information as it relates to the topic / artefact

(Adapted from Harper 2013, pp. 5-6)

Cohesive language

Used to connect different literature and build discussion (e.g. 'Indeed', 'These studies', 'However', 'Therefore')

Concluding your literature/artefact review:

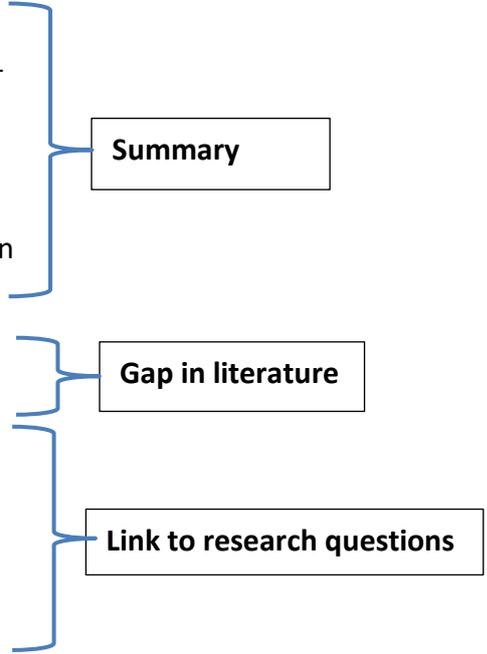
- Summarise the main focus of the literature/artefact review
- Highlight the gap in the literature
- Make a connection between your literature/artefact review and your research questions

Sample conclusion

3.5 Outcomes of the literature review

This review of relevant aspects of the literature points to the significance of the professional skills already possessed by part-time students in relation to the development that all engineering students must undergo in developing from students to engineers. It sets out the context in which students may act as mentors for fellow students. It provides confirmation that composition of groups can have an effect on aspects of group project work. No close equivalents of the initiatives involving part-time students carried out at Coventry have been found in the literature and this confirms the validity and interest of the research questions posed for this investigation:

- How do the full-time students learn from part-time students?
- What are the benefits and problems in creating this contact?



Summary

Gap in literature

Link to research questions

(Davies & Rutherford 2012, p. 358-359)

Artefact review



Edouard Manet's 1882 painting *A Bar at the Folies-Bergère* (Courtald Gallery, London)

Sample paragraph

Pointing to the impact of the invention of photography in the 19th century, the authors use the photographic notion of the 'snapshot' to explain the ways in which multiple temporalities are simultaneously juxtaposed in the Bar, thus preserving the 'optical logic' of the scene:

If one presumes that the laws of optics apply, it is far more economical to make the temporal hypothesis: the painting condenses two distinct moments or phases of representation – two snapshots, if you will – between which certain things and figures have changed places (de Duve & Holmes 1998, p. 146).

They argue that the temporal gap between the two 'snapshots' is registered in the changed position of objects and the figures. In short, the authors argue for 'one viewpoint, two moments' (de Duve & Holmes 1998, p. 148). Therefore, in this painting there is an unresolved tension between unity and fragmentation of perspective because, as De Duve and Holmes conclude:

It is the same man who addresses the barmaid from an angle and whom the barmaid addresses face-to-face, but it is not the same man at the same time. Only his reflection establishes the equation between two moments. By masking the movement of the mirror, Manet obliterates the irreducible interval of time that separates the man in the top hat from himself, in his two successive positions. This temporal gap [...] can never be filled by a spatial identification [...] (de Duve & Holmes 1998, p. 164).

This would also account for the altered positions of the bottles on the bar, indicative of changes taking place in the course of the barmaid's serving of customers. The 'snap shots' are separated by the pictorial field of the mirror itself.

Topic sentence
tells the reader the focus is on the notion of 'snapshot'

Development
explains the author's arguments and extends ideas further

Interpretation
analyses the argument presented by de Duve and Holmes

Conclusive statement

Support
uses quotes from de Duve and Holmes as support

(Adapted from Merritt 2014, pp. 10-11)

References

Davies, JW & Rutherford, U 2012, 'Learning from fellow engineering students who have current professional experience', *European Journal of Engineering Education*, vol. 37, no. 4, pp. 354-365.

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