Literature Review

**What is a literature review? A literature review:**

* is written to provide others with information about current or relevant literature in a particular field
* addresses major texts in the chosen area of study
* discusses the content of related texts and comments on the effect of the noted research or theories

**What must a literature review attempt to do? A literature review must:**

* compare and contrast different authors’ views on an issue
* group together authors who draw similar conclusions
* note areas in which authors are in disagreement
* highlight gaps (or existing problems) in the area of study
* identify particular shortcomings of past research (methodology used, data collection methods, flaws in findings, etc.)
* critically evaluate the literature related to the problem

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* conclude by summarising what the literature says

**In addition, a literature review may:**

* resolve a controversy and/or identify disagreements
* establish the need for additional research
* define a topic of inquiry
* outline a practical problem that needs resolution

**Why do you do a literature review? A literature review is undertaken to:**

* communicate about the existing debate in an area of study
* demonstrate ability to identify an issue for inquiry and discuss it in a meaningful manner
* motivate the reader to reflect on what has been discussed

**Useful references**

Macauley, P 2001, *The literature review*, Deakin University, Geelong, Victoria, Australia.

Machi, LA & McEvoy, BT 2009, The literature review: six steps to success, Corwin Press, Thousand Oaks, California.