

# Evaluating the literature

- What **ideas, techniques and quotations** can you gain from the article?
- Is the author clearly identified and **well recognised** within the field?  
Are the article and/or its author quoted in other material?
- Can the article make **a direct and meaningful contribution** to your project?
- How important is the article within its field?
- Is the article **up-to-date**, and is it still relevant within its field?
- How **respected and authoritative** is the publication?
- Is the article **well researched**, referenced and logically presented?
- Is the article based on **fact, logical reasoning, speculation or opinion**?
- Are the conclusions **consistent** with the facts and arguments?
- Is the article **biased** or unbalanced?

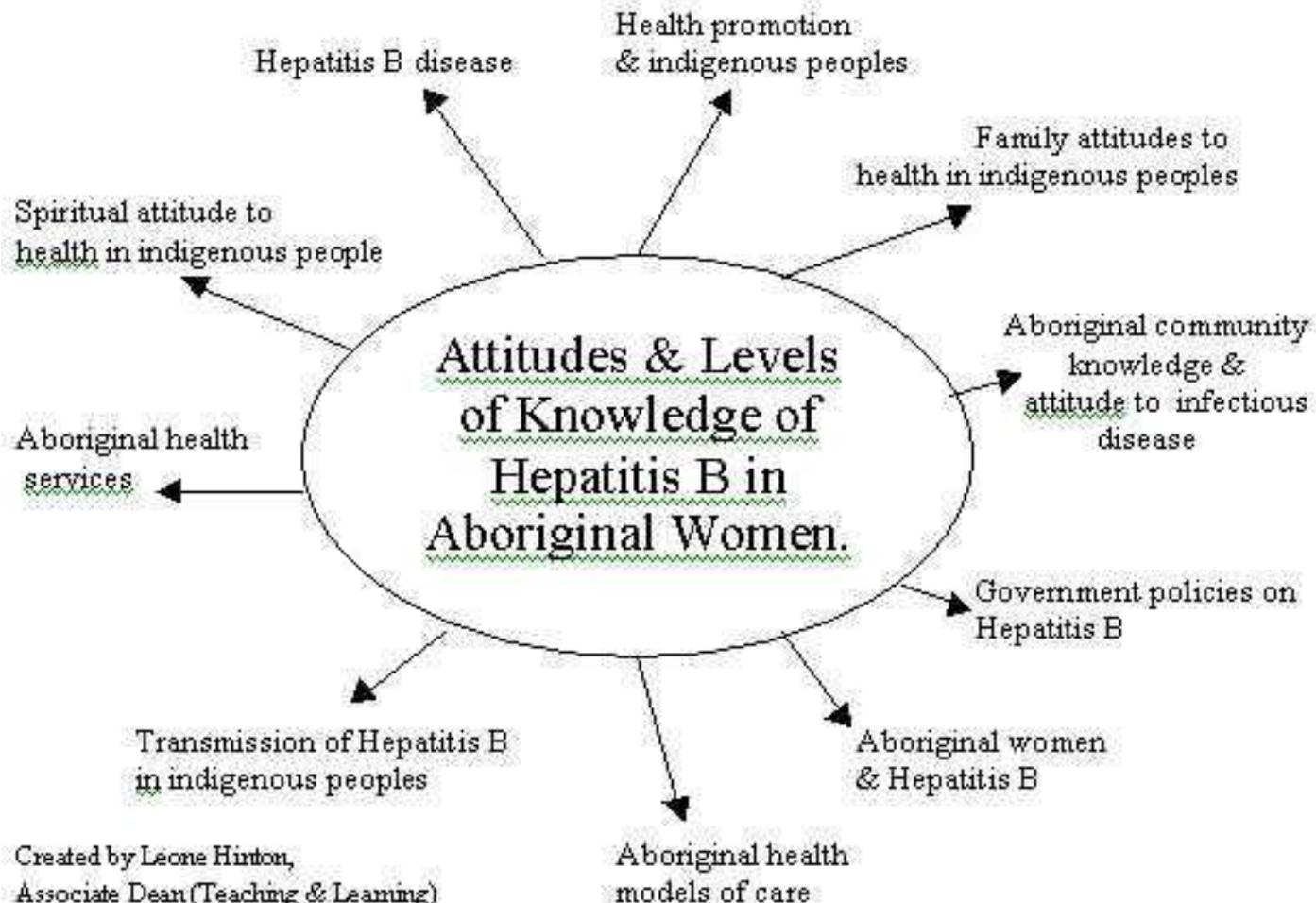
# MUST DO

- If you are reading something, take notes there and then. Don't think you will come back to it later, because you never do.
  - Read and immerse
  - take good notes
  - Construct a line of argument with the literature
  - keep your references
  - write down the dates you took the notes
  - keep a type of record eg. front page and abstract, or be like me a complete control freak and photocopy/download everything.

# Required Skills

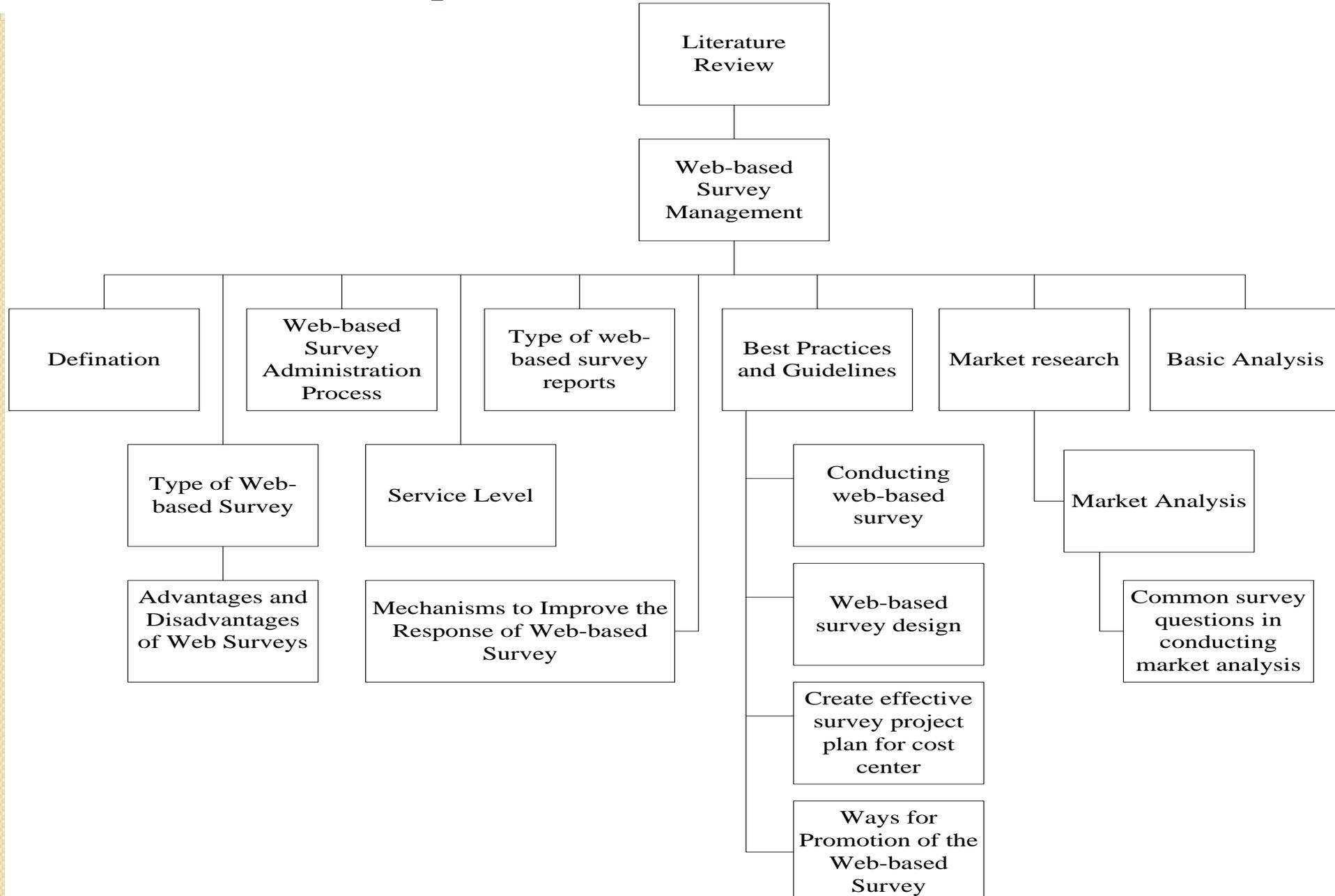
- **information seeking**: the ability to scan the literature efficiently, using manual or computerized methods, to identify a set of useful articles and books
- **critical appraisal**: the ability to apply principles of analysis to identify unbiased and valid studies.

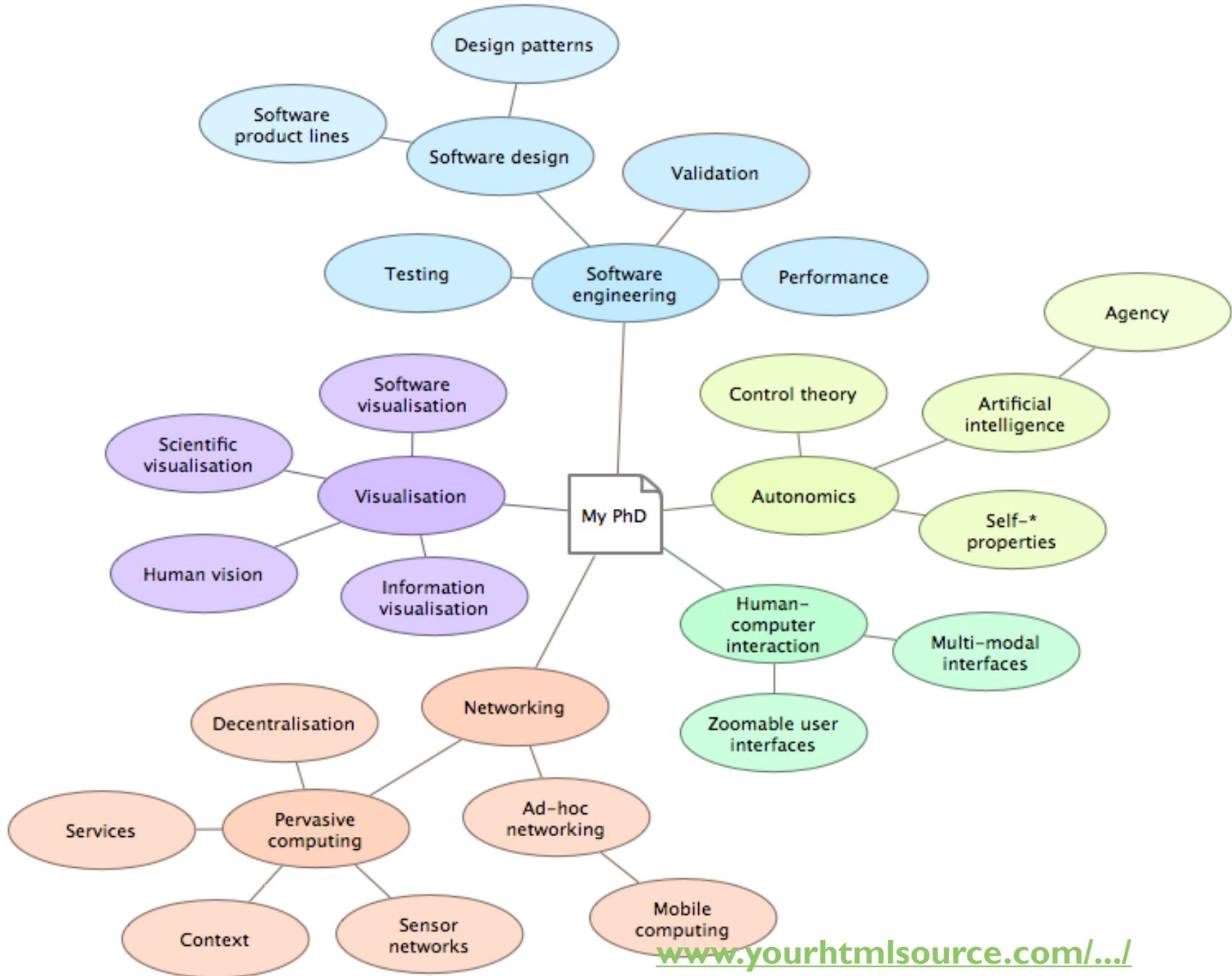
# Breaking the need into its component parts

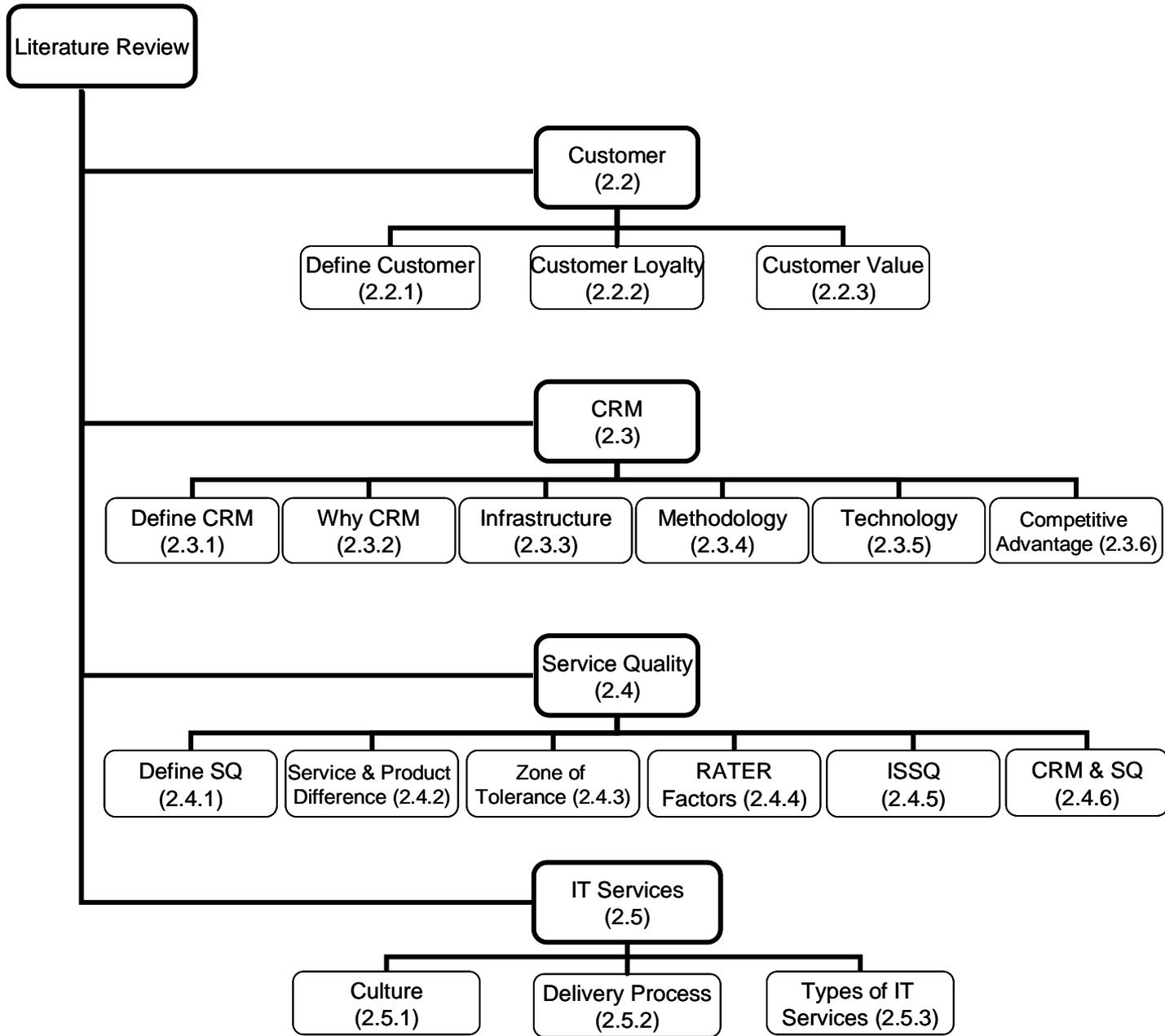


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30 August 1999

# Sample: LR Structure







() thesis section

# Evaluating the information

- assess the standing of the author - is he/she an academic? a journalist? another student? a researcher?
- look at the date of publication - is the topic representative of thinking at that time?
- ascertain the intended audience - was the material written for a general audience? other researchers? particular groups with particular views?
- notice the writing style - is it conversational? academic? provocative? sensational? descriptive?
- look at the presentation - does the author use tables, graphs, diagrams, illustrations appropriately? are the descriptive details sufficient?
- refer to the bibliography and references - has the author referred to the work of others? have all ideas been acknowledged and cited? are there any citations listed which would further your work?
- look at the type of publication and its' purpose - is it a scholarly journal? a popular journal? a refereed publication? a book? conference proceedings?

# Critically analyse the content

- determine the facts / arguments / points of view
- look at any new findings - is there clear evidence to support each finding?
- ascertain the reliability and accuracy of the document - are all assumptions valid? are there any flaws in the methodology? is the research based on established fact?
- determine the significance of work - is it a landmark article? does it merely discuss what is already known? what does it contribute to accepted theory?
- Ascertain the limitations, flaws, weaknesses, strengths and underlying assumptions of the analysis in relation to the related literature and current thought.
- contextualise the work within the discipline - where does it fit? which thoughts and ideas relate/contradict/support current thought?
- study the methodology - is it appropriate to the type of study?

# Getting the information

- Full text available in library
- Electronic databases
- Be aware of options for obtaining more than references
  - Ordering via the library
  - Searching local resource centers - Public and special libraries
  - Access to the catalogues of other university libraries
  - Commercial document vendors

# Organising information (information management)

- systematic with your approach to searching, Record your searches and the date they were done
- easier to update and reminds you which databases and sources retrieved useful information and which ones didn't.

# Positioning the literature review

- Understand and clarify the relationships between your research and the discipline/s.
- Place and justify your research within the discipline/s.
- Understand the existing literature and how it relates /supports/contradicts your topic.

# Literature reviews should comprise the following elements:

- An overview of the subject, **issue or theory** under consideration, along with the objectives of the literature review
- Division of works under review into categories (e.g. those in support of a particular position, those against, and those offering alternative theses entirely)
- Explanation of how each work is **similar** to and how it **varies** from the others
- **Conclusions** as to which pieces are best considered in their argument, are most convincing of their opinions, and make the greatest contribution to the understanding and development of their area of research

# Tips

(Dr Tony Ward, Senior Lecturer in Marketing and Strategic Management, School of Marketing and Tourism)

- keep **complete** and accurate records of everything read (especially references)
- identify referencing requirements and learn the style as soon as you can
- **summarise** every paper you read
- think **holistically** (get the big picture)
- do not be afraid to think '**outside the square**' - it is your review so try to find your own insights rather than just copy previous work
- break the review into thematic sections, treat each thematic area as a '**mini**' review

# HOW CAN I WRITE A GOOD LITERATURE REVIEW?

- **Read with a purpose:**
- you need to summarize the work you read but you must also decide which ideas or information are important to your research (so you can emphasize them), and which are less important and can be covered briefly or left out of your review.
- You should also look for the major concepts, conclusions, theories, arguments etc. that *underlie* the work, and look for *similarities* and *differences* with closely related work.
- This is difficult when you first start reading, but should become easier the more you read in your area.

# HOW CAN I WRITE A GOOD LITERATURE REVIEW? contd

- **Write with a purpose:**
- your aim should be to evaluate and show relationships between the work already done (Is Researcher Y's theory more convincing than Researcher X's? Did Researcher X build on the work of Researcher Y?)
- and between this work and *your own*.
- In order to do this effectively you should carefully plan how you are going to organize your work

# Referencing

- Systems: Harvard, Vancouver, American Psychological Association (APA)
- Required for ALL sources (including the Internet):
  - Full names of the authors (may be an organisation)
  - Year of publication
  - Full title of article
  - Full name of on-line journal or website
  - Publisher or organisation responsible for maintaining the website, if different from author
  - Place of publication, if known
  - Internet address (URL) of article
  - Date of access

# Example: Reference

- Ahmad Zaki Abu Bakar (1989). *Pemrosesan Teks Bahasa Melayu Untuk Pemahaman Komputer*. Universiti Teknologi Malaysia: Tesis Doktor Falsafah.
- American Chemical Society ed. (1978). *Handbook for Authors of American*
- Billings, S.A. (1980). Identification of Nonlinear Systems: A survey. *Proc. Instn Electr. Engrs, Part D*. 127(6): 272-284.
- Engineers Joint Council (1969). *Thesaurus of Engineering and Scientific Terms*. Technical Report. ILOG S.A.
- Puget, J. F. and Albert, P. (1994b). *A C++ Implementation of CLP*. Technical Report. ILOG S.A.
- Veres, S. M. (1990). *Structure Selection of Stochastic Dynamic Systems*. New York: Gordon and Breach Science Publishers.



“Effort only fully releases its reward after a person refuses to quit.”

Napoleon Hill

“One characteristic of winners is they always look upon themselves as a do it yourself project.”

Denis Waitley

# LR Exercise

- Find minimum 5 papers related to a particular topic of interest maybe related to your research
- Develop a table and categorize the themes in the 5 papers based on an existing framework/your conceptual framework (Briefly describe the framework)
- Choose 2-3 of the papers & conduct a detailed literature review of the papers
  - Research Problem/RQ
  - Theory/framework/model used
  - Method employed
  - Result
  - Your own discussion/analysis of the papers
- Please provide the full list of reference of all the papers
- Due 2 weeks from today



# Example

Review of Academic Computing Literatures

**Table 2.2:** Academic computing areas described in selected literature

| Authors                         | Academic computing areas* (in columns of similar theme) |   |   |   |   |   |
|---------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|                                 | A   | B | C | D | E | F |
| (Abend, 1997)                   | ✓   | ✓ |   |   | ✓ | ✓ |
| (Ardoin and Weems, 1993)        |   | ✓ |   |   | ✓ |   |
| (Brookshire, 1989)              |   | ✓ |   |   |   | ✓ |
| (Carleton University, 2001)     | ✓   | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| (Cohn <i>et al.</i> , 2004)     | ✓   | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| (Conrad, 1992)                  | ✓   | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| (Cooper, 1991)                  | ✓   |   |   |   |   | ✓ |
| (Corman and Lach, 1995)         |   | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |   | ✓ |
| (Dury and Marks, 1990)          | ✓   | ✓ | ✓ |   |   | ✓ |
| (Ferguson <i>et al.</i> , 2004) | ✓   | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| (Ferrer and Corya, 1990)        |   | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| (Gardner and Schwob, 1990)      |   | ✓ |   |   | ✓ | ✓ |
| (Gloster and Salzberg, 1995)    | ✓   | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| (Greenberg, 1993)               |   | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |   | ✓ |
| (Hancock <i>et al.</i> , 1995)  | ✓   | ✓ |   |   | ✓ | ✓ |

\*Academic computing areas  
A: ICT Vision, Plan, Policies and Standards  
B: ICT Infrastructure  
C: Teaching and Learning Using ICT  
D: Researching Using ICT  
E: Information Services  
F: Institutional ICT Support

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|---------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|                                 | A   | B | C | D | E | F |
| (Harris, 1993)                  | ✓   | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |   | ✓ |
| (Higginbotham, 1997)            | ✓   | ✓ | ✓ |   | ✓ | ✓ |
| (Huth, 1991)                    |   | ✓ |   |   |   | ✓ |
| (Johnston and Supra, 1997)      |   | ✓ |   |   | ✓ | ✓ |
| (Kettinger, 1990)               | ✓   | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |   | ✓ |
| (McMullen, 1996)                | ✓   | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| (Nielsen <i>et al.</i> , 1995)  | ✓   | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| (Nixon and Lackie, 1998)        | ✓   | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| (Olexy, 1991)                   |   | ✓ | ✓ |   | ✓ | ✓ |
| (Pittinsky, 1999)               |   | ✓ | ✓ |   | ✓ |   |
| (Prescott <i>et al.</i> , 2001) |   | ✓ |   |   |   | ✓ |
| (Prupis, 1989)                  | ✓   | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| (Ricigliano and Owen, 1995)     | ✓   | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| (Rohde and Haskett, 1990)       | ✓   | ✓ |   |   |   | ✓ |
| (Wall, 1991)                    | ✓   | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |

\*Academic computing areas

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