

Thesis Process 2022-23

Info Session 4

The Literature Review

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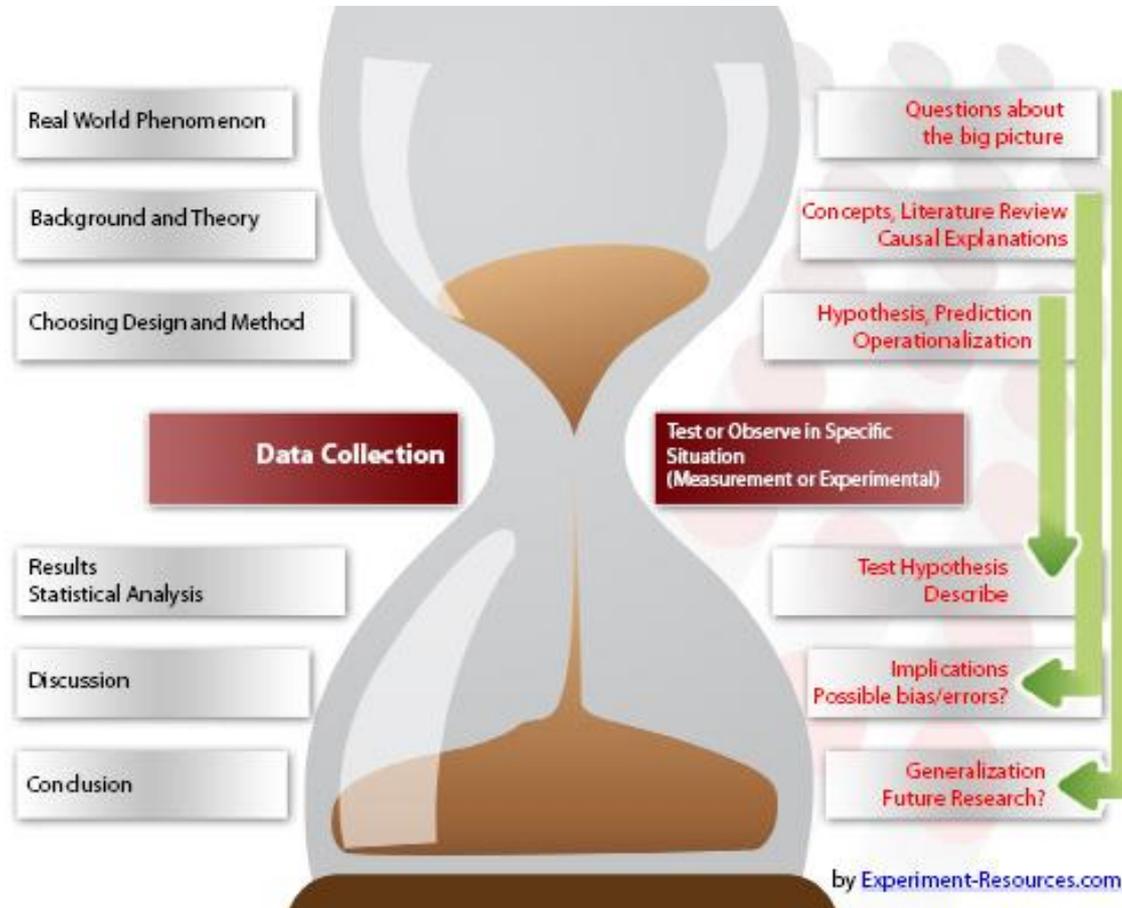
November 16, 2022

Research hourglass

- Where are you in the process?
- Get ready to immerse yourself in the literature relevant to your topic.

The research hourglass

<https://explorable.com/what-is-research>



Purposes of the Literature Review—to:

- assess the situation in the field you are studying;
 - immerse yourself in the subject; and
 - develop your own framework for analysis.
- You'll discuss this in more detail in the Literature Review Workshop led by Sophia Butt.

Reminder: evaluating sources

- There are norms in academia for what is considered acceptable—you covered this in academic writing & critical thinking.
- **Acceptable:**
 - books (incl. monographs, chapters in anthologies)
 - journal articles (peer review important)
 - theses and dissertations
 - government documents
 - unpublished manuscripts, working papers, conference proceedings (cutting-edge research by top scholars)

Which sources to avoid?

- Textbooks are usually not acceptable
 - They are for teaching purposes, not research. If a concept is mentioned in a textbook you can be sure it is based on an important original work.
- Newspaper articles and magazines
 - Unless a news item or opinion piece on a contemporary topic adds something to the scholarly debate, which is not very common.
 - Newspaper articles have a certain angle, are time-bound, and have not been peer-reviewed.
 - So if you use them, think carefully about why it's justified.
- You'll discuss the evaluation of sources in the lit review workshop.

Should I use Wikipedia?



Wikipedia and other open-source texts

- Authoritativeness is in doubt due to many authors
- They lack information on their methodology.
- Use them in browsing perhaps, never in the final thesis.
- A means to an end, not a quotable source!

Jimmy Wales

Co-founder of Wikipedia



Jimmy said. . .

- At the GCEC (Global Conference of Entrepreneurship Centers) conference in Stockholm in 2019:
 - Wikipedia has grown in reliability in recent years. . .but. .
 - it should not be cited in academic works.
 - Why? It's open source.
 - It should be seen as a means to an end.

Lit review links your research to that of other scholars

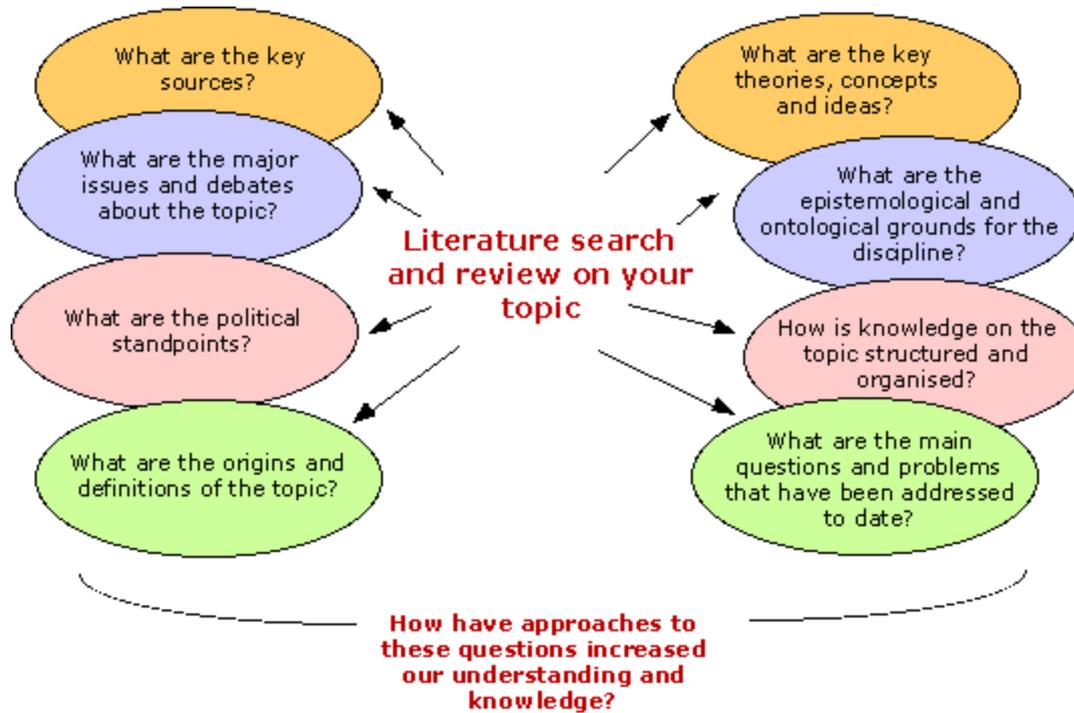
- Where do I place myself in the debate?
- Here is where your “voice” comes into the lit review – it is individual but not too personal.
- Styles vary in this regard—US style uses first person more, European not as much.
- It is not about saying “I think this is &%!#, just because . . .” but engaging yourself in the debates.

Your point of view

- You'll outline your full argument in the findings.
- However, your lit review chapter does set the tone, and provides the basis for your own argument.
- For some theses that do not include primary sources (eg conceptual theses), this becomes even more important.
- It is acceptable to use secondary empirical research (ie someone else carried out a survey), but then you must work with that material and develop your own argument about it and other relevant research.

Asking yourself questions

(Use this diagram when working on your lit review.)



Some of the questions the review of the literature can answer

Adapted from Hart, C. (1998). *Doing a literature review: Releasing the social science research imagination*. London, Sage, p. 14.
Source: The Learning Centre UNSW <http://www.lc.unsw.edu.au>

Conceptual frameworks

- Many students struggle with concepts in their thesis research.
- What is a concept?

Defining a concept

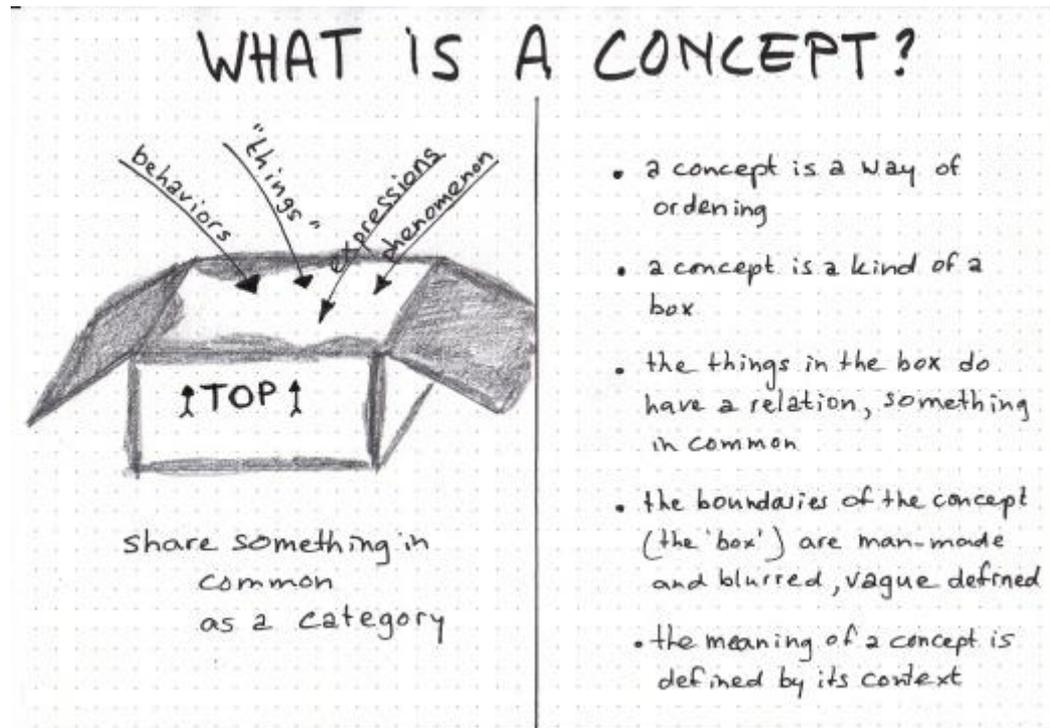
<https://slideplayer.com/slide/8568838/>

What is a concept?

- Part of semantic memory (vs. episodic memory)
- A class of items that seem to belong together
 - ‘dog’, ‘balloon’, ‘terrorist’ (things)
 - ‘tall’, ‘ugly’ (properties)
 - ‘walk’, ‘jump’ (actions)
- A mental construct (vs. the outside world)
- Abstract knowledge

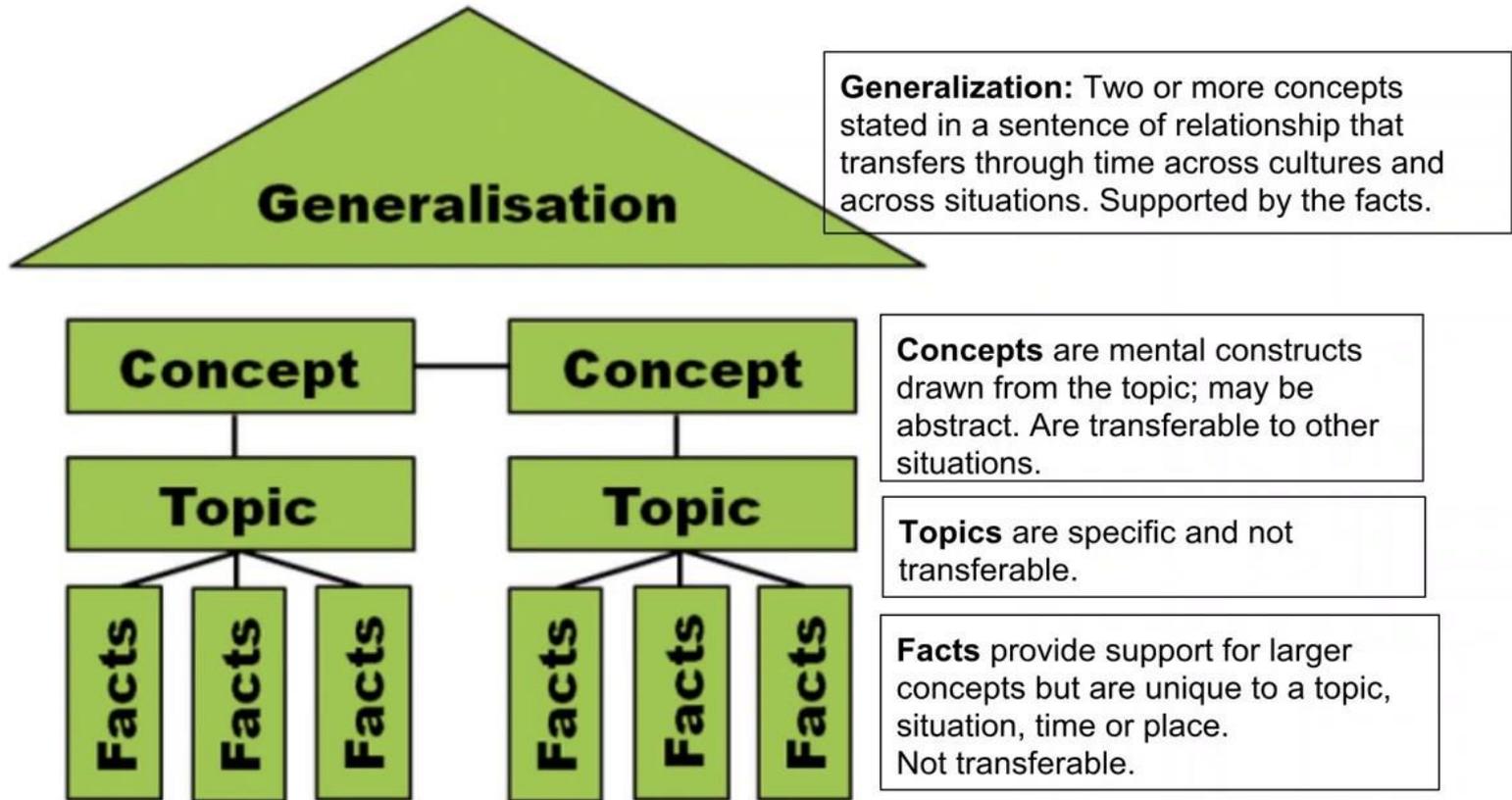
What is a concept?

<https://thinkibility.com/2015/02/24/what-is-a-concept-basically-thinkibility-boost/>



What is a concept?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bM9jRVz78oo>



Conceptual Framework

- A conceptual framework
 - reflects existing research and its relevance for your topic;
 - provides clear links between the existing literature and your research questions;
 - identifies gaps in the research that you are trying to fill;
 - shows how you have adapted or improved or extended an existing framework;
 - presents the key ideas or constructs in your approach and their relationship; and
 - is usually expressed in a schematic diagram or table.
- **Examples:**
- <https://www.google.fi/search?q=%22conceptual+framework%22&biw=1920&bih=1054&tbm=isch&tbo=u&source=univ&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwjJu-TlgKvQAhVCCywKHYY6CcYQsAQlaQ>

Additional resources

- <http://libguides.uwf.edu/litreview>
- An example:
- <https://www.emeraldinsight.com/doi/full/10.1108/02634500710834223>
- And materials posted on Into.

Key deadlines for Lit Review

- Lit Review-related deadlines:
 - Draft Reference List: Jan. 7, 2023
 - Draft Lit Review: Jan. 26, 2023
 - Revised Lit Review: Feb. 10, 2023
- Challenge: Use the time over the break well! Decide when you will be on a break and when you will work on the thesis.
- Challenge: Make the most of the lit review workshop with Sophia Butt.

Good luck!

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