



Reading and analysing the literature

Using note-taking matrices to prepare a narrative literature review

Narrative literature reviews aim to gain a view of the current state of knowledge on a particular topic. Note-taking matrices can be used to give order to the research you're analysing. For this activity, you will be using a blank overview matrix located on the following page to review a source.

An overview matrix uses basic headings to give you an overview of each source. You can add or change the column headings to suit your focus. Some column headings might include:

- Year
- Country/area
- Publishing channel/source
- Discipline/theoretical background/main focus
- Reference
- Summary

Useful tips for constructing an overview matrix

- Do not try to fully complete a matrix before reading the source you're analysing in full. Reading the source is an important way to discern its nuances and summarise it more effectively.
- If including column headings of your own choice, try to choose ones which will allow you to examine differences between the source you're analysing and additional literature you might analyse. This is preferable to headings which might yield the same answer for every source.
- Record your analysis of each source in your reference management program (eg. EndNote or RefWorks) in the notes field to keep all the related information together.
- For more detail on using note-taking matrices, please watch Dr. Claire Urbach's video [Analysing the Literature for a Literature Review \(video, 06:30\)](#).

To complete the overview matrix, fill in the blank spaces below each column heading with information from the source you're analysing.

TITLE OF SOURCE:

YEAR	COUNTRY/AREA	PUBLISHING CHANNEL/ SOURCE	DISCIPLINE/ THEORETICAL STANDPOINT	REFERENCE	SUMMARY

Need more help? Speak to our friendly Library staff at one of our campus libraries. Or contact the Online Librarian by chat, email or phone (02) 9852 5353.