

## A literature review

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### Abstract

*The abstract is normally a single paragraph that states the main themes of the paper, provide some context to the literature review being described and go on to summarise some of the main themes or ideas. If you have included exclusion criteria so, in effect, it is a systematic review – this should be mentioned in the abstract.*

### Keywords

Your choice of keywords is critical to the discovery of your article from search engines like Google Scholar. Give this careful consideration and select a minimum of five keywords.

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### Introduction

This short section should explain what the paper is for. Remember, literature reviews are undertaken to summarise research done to date, to illustrate different ideas about a topic and/or to highlight any gaps in knowledge.

### Background

The background section in literature reviews is often relatively brief or could be excluded altogether. You should use the background section to set the purpose of the study, especially if it has been stimulated by a piece of policy (e.g. 'teaching excellence' in the light of the Teaching Excellence

Framework). Think also about narrowing your literature – for example, you may wish to focus on literature that only focuses on the impact of flipped classrooms on the academic self-efficacy of students. In this case it would be desirable to describe both the flipped classroom and self-efficacy.

### Methodology

The methodology section should outline how the search for literature was undertaken. It is a good idea to mention the citation databases as well as the terms used for the search. Some literature reviews will include exclusion criteria, in which case, it may be worth mentioning particular

strategies used in systematic reviews (e.g. the Kirkpatrick hierarchy sometime applied in medical/nursing education).

## Results

Some reviews present summaries of key studies in a table. Generally, this section might open with a brief overview, but would focus on a series of sub-themes.

## Discussion

Not all reviews have discussion sections; however, if the review was prompted by a

piece of policy, it might be appropriate to revisit it in light of the review to analyse how the inspiration for the work and the results of the search relate.

## Conclusions

The conclusions of a literature review should include a brief summary of the main points identified. In addition, points of weakness (in the review and in the research that was identified) should be pointed out and the implications of the study for other pieces of work should be made clear.