

# **Module 12    Action Research**

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## **Unit 12.2            Reviewing of the Literature**

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# Introduction

## About this unit

Welcome to the unit on the reviewing of the literature.

We hope that you will find the study of this topic to be informative and interesting.

This unit introduces the concepts of the importance of the literature and its review. It outlines the two main sources of information and lists the procedural steps to be followed in the review of the literature.

## How to use this manual

The manual is designed to facilitate the development and application of research and writing skills. You should work through it at your own pace in the order presented.

This unit includes activities. These are designed to reinforce the information and to enable you to develop and practise the content.

**Answers** to the activities are provided at the back of this manual. Check your responses as soon as you complete an activity.

An **assessment task** is provided at the end of the unit. This is designed to assist you in the achievement of the learning outcomes for this unit.

## How you will be assessed

Assessment of this unit will take the form of a **written assignment** that will cover the content outlined in this unit.

This should be completed with guidance from your tutor. In addition, this assignment will enable you to apply the skills discussed in this unit.

Assessment of this unit will be in two parts.

Please contact your tutor when you are ready to start the assessment.

## Finding your way

As you work through the text you'll see symbols in the left margin of some pages. These 'icons' guide you through the content.



Read



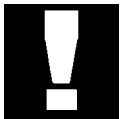
Important- take note!



Activity



Assessment task



## Competency

The resources for the TVET curriculum are competency based. The competency for each unit is expressed as a number of learning outcomes and assessment criteria.

The assessment criteria specify what you must be able to do to show you have gained the knowledge, skills and attitudes needed to achieve each learning outcome.

Each unit has its own assessment criteria specified. **Recognition of prior learning** is encouraged. If you feel confident you have the necessary level of competence to successfully complete the elements shown below, you may be able to take the assessment.

## Learning outcomes

When you have completed this unit you will be able to:

- Recognise the importance of the literature review.
- Source primary and secondary literature.
- Conduct a review of the literature.
- Draft the bibliography.
- Apply requirements for Chapter 2 of the action research project.

## Assessment criteria

- Select appropriate primary and secondary sources of literature and write reviews using direct and indirect referencing styles.
- Draft a Literature Review for Chapter 2 of the action research project.
- Draft the bibliography according to the rules outlined in the APA style.
- Apply the requirements for Chapter 2 of the action research project.

## Other resources you may find useful

- Cohen, L & Manion, L. (1985). Research Methods in Education. London: Croom Helm.
- McNiff, Jean (1992). Action Research: Principles and Practise. Routledge.
- Winter, R. (1996). Some Principles and Procedures for the Conduct of Action Research in O. Zuber-Skerritt (Ed.) New Direction in Action Research. London: Falmer Press.





# Section 1



## Reviewing of the literature

*The literature* is a collective body of reading material that may be related to an individual's planned research project.

*The review of the literature* involves locating, reading and evaluating reports of research as well as reports of casual observation and opinion that are related to your planned research project.

### Importance of the Literature Review

Reference to the literature provides the following:

- the foundation upon which all future works will be supported
- information about previously completed works that can be used or improved
- the progress or status of research
- establishing the significance of problems and their suitability for research

### Purposes of the Literature Review

The review of the literature helps the researcher develop a clearer understanding and insight into previous work on the topic area. It also helps in:

- delimiting the research problem from the general to specific areas of the study e.g., “Literacy Problems in Schools” to “Literacy Problems Among Male Adolescent Students”
- seeking new approaches and insights into methods and possible areas for further study
- being a source for sampling current opinions and viewpoints on the topic

### Sources of information

There are two (2) main sources of information

- i. Primary
- ii. Secondary

**Primary Sources** are direct descriptions of an event, occurrence or experience by an individual who actually observed or witnessed first hand. They are therefore descriptions of the research study by the individual who carried it out.

**Secondary Sources** are written materials, which the author did not directly observe, experience or participate in the events described. i.e.: textbooks of History, Psychology, Management, etc. The author compiled the reports of others and arranged them in a book format.



### **Activity 1** **Sources of Literature**

Select one primary source of literature and One secondary source of literature.

Write a review of each source selected using both direct and indirect referencing styles.

*Discuss your answers with your tutor..*



### **Conducting the review of the literature**

**Step one:** *List key words or variables.*

Key words or variables: student motivation, workshop/laboratory environment, health and safety practises, workshop/laboratory management and control, teacher effectiveness.

e.g., your topic “Improvements in Safety Practises Among Year 1, Group 2 Woodwork Students”.

**Step two:** *Check Sources*

Information may be obtained from the following sources:

- indexes, abstracts, yearbooks
- bibliographies, encyclopaedias
- theses, computer searches
- journal articles, books
- the internet

***Step three: Read and Note Selected References.***

For each book or article that you believe might contain material pertinent to your review, you should note the details on index cards or note sheets.

Important details are:

Author's name (last name first), year of publication, title of publication, volume, number, pages.

*Example:*

Skinner, Solomon. (1998). "Motivation Levels in the Workplace", Journal, of Comparative Studies, 33(2), p.130-138.

Before taking notes on research articles, you should

- a) thoroughly read the article
- b) decide if it is appropriate for your literature review
- c) if so, prepare an abstract or summary of the article by describing the following:
  - the purpose and problem statements
  - the methodology
  - sample characteristics and size
  - methods for measuring the variables
  - design and statistics
  - findings and conclusions

Quotations: material to be quoted should be copied very carefully on note cards and enclosed in quotation marks. The page from which the quote was taken must be noted, as most systems of referencing require that page numbers must be cited for direct quotations. This facilitates rechecking of the quotations.

***Step four – Write the Review***

Introduction: make a general opening statement about the extent or approaches taken by the literature you selected as your sources of information.

*Example:*

*"The literature on safety practises in the workshop/laboratory setting is very extensive. It is appropriate for this project which focuses on*

*the improvement of safety practises among first year woodwork students...”*

Body: the key words or variables will be the source of sub-headings. The organisation of the review should relate to the order of your research questions.

Each subheading should begin with a sentence introducing the purpose, content or relevance of the literature and end with a sentence summarising the conclusions or trends evident from the literature reviewed.

*Example:*

*Student Motivation*

*Smith (1988,) in her review emphasising European research concluded that there was no evidence for differences in overall motivation at any age range. She suggested that differences in specific components might be lost when each case is examined. Several British studies have found that the significant factors are age, gender and social backgrounds (Black and Foote, 1996)... This study also demonstrated that... Wright (1997) revealed that...”*

It is necessary that you record your own evaluation of the study and indicate how it may relate to your research, e.g., provide a critical analysis highlighting its weaknesses or strengths.

*Example:*

*“The researcher agrees with the concerns expressed by Smith because she is able to relate it to behavioural patterns which adolescents have been displaying within recent times.”*



## **Activity 2**

### **Conducting a review of the literature**

1. Trace steps one to four as you attempt to review one source of literature.
2. Note the reference source in the appropriate bibliographical style.

***Discuss your answers with your tutor.***



## Essential Elements

In the presentation of the literature, the focus should be on:

- adequacy: has it covered the literature to a sufficient extent?
- clarity: are the important points clearly stated?
- empiricalness: are actual findings cited rather than just opinions?
- recentness: are the citations up-to-date?
- relevance: do the citations relate to the variables and research questions?
- organisation: is the presentation of literature well organised in terms of the introduction, sub-headings and summaries?
- convincingness: does it help in making a case for the study?

## Requirements for Chapter 2 of the action research project

- i. A review of the literature.
- ii. A bibliographical list that is placed within the Appendices Section.



## Summary

In this section we explored the processes for the review of literature. **Literature** is a collective body of reading material.

**The Review of the Literature** involves locating, reading, and evaluating reading material that are related to the planned research project.

### ***Importance of the literature review:***

- a foundation
- an information source
- establishes problem significance and suitability for research

***Purposes of the Literature Review:***

- delimiting the research problem
- seeking new approaches
- a source for sampling current opinions on the topic

***Sources of information:***

- Primary – direct descriptions of an event
- Secondary – written materials of which the authors did not experience.

***Conducting a Review of the Literature*****Steps**

- list key words or variables
- check sources
- read and note selected references
- write the review

**Chapter 2 requirements:**

- The Literature Review
- Bibliographical Listings



### Activity 3

#### Check your progress

Develop the literature review (Chapter 2) for your action research project. Follow the steps outlined above.

1. List key words or variables \_\_\_\_\_

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2. Check sources – indicate type \_\_\_\_\_

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3. Note selected reference sources \_\_\_\_\_

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4. Write a review of the literature

Introduction - \_\_\_\_\_

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Body -

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Conclusion -

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***Discuss your answers with your tutor.***



## **Suggested solutions to activities**

### **Activity 1 Sources of literature –page 6**

There are no suggested solutions to this activity. You should discuss your responses with your tutor or a colleague to get their opinion.

### **Activity 2 Conducting a review of the literature – page 8**

There are no suggested solutions to this activity. You should discuss your responses with your tutor or a colleague to get their opinion.

### **Activity 3 – page 11**

Discuss your answers with your tutor.



## **Assignment No. 12.2-1**

You are now required to do the Assignment 12.2 – 1 that will be found at the end of this unit or distributed by your tutor.





## Assignment No. 12.2-1

To be completed and returned to your tutor for assessment.

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Due Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

1. Identify four (4) variables that you have determined to be appropriate for your action research project.
2. Source three pieces of literature for each variable identified.
3. Write the literature review – Chapter 2. Aim for a maximum of 600 words or three (3) word-processed pages – double line spaced.