**Literature Reviews: Approach**

Literature reviews can effectively focus and deepen meaning of concepts as there is a logical process that takes place. There are a number of approaches to collating research to construct a comprehensive literature review.

This information sheet includes a few of the most popular approaches when undertaking a literature review. Read through the summaries below to help you organise your ideas and select an approach.

A **narrative review** is suitable for completing research within a limited time frame and facilitates the identification of patterns and leading ideas within a topic (Wilkins and Burke, 2015; Brock *et al*., 2016). The research should explore literature discovered from a search based on key terms identified to discuss the selected topics (associated with the research question). This is done by building interlinked ideas it follows the style of a narrative review style (Ferrari, 2015).

A **systematic literature review** aims to add to previous reviews rather than replicate existing research. This type of literature review is constructed by analysing research from a fixed timescale so that is consists of current research and practice. It tends to include literature based on empirical research, so that any policy recommendations arising from the review are supported by credible ideas and evidence based practice (Davies *et al*., 2013).

A **thematic approach** begins with a literature search and applies the categorisation of the research through arranging ideas by the key themes found (Girden, 2001; Booth, 2016). This includes grouping the research using codes to identify the leading themes (Bizup, 2008). This approach can be extremely useful in to refining the research direction and developing a logical argument.

**Task:** Think about your research question and write some ideas about the approach/structure you feel is most suitable for your literature review.

Make notes to support your structure your literature search and plan.