

# *Research Methods*

## **Lecture 5**

**Writing a research proposal and  
conducting the literature review**

# ***1. Writing a research proposal***

**- structure and content**

# ***2. The Literature review***

**- developing the theoretical perspectives and selecting the methodological approach**

# 1. *Writing a research proposal*

- useful foundation/starting point from which to develop your ideas and argument(s) – a necessary framework for your research
- issues you encounter and deal with will run/carry on through your research
- ***BUT*** your proposal will change as you proceed through your research
- you will discover new relevant information, arguments and theories
- some things you intended will not be possible

# *Research proposal*

## **A) ABSTRACT**

- **short summary of what you are researching**
- **contribution to knowledge about subject?**
- **research question and hypothesis**
- **main theories, methodology and methods**

## **B) INTRODUCTION**

- **context of your research**
- **hypothesis and reasons for  
useful/meaningful/topical piece of research**
- **boundaries**

## C) THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES/ LITERATURE SURVEY

- indicates major theories, theoretical positions and main arguments in existing work in your research area,  
*PLUS* how they combine and direct your research (concepts and ideas that underpin your research)
- how your research will contribute to debates in the research subject area

## **D) METHODOLOGIES AND METHODS**

- the reasons and arguments for the methodology(s) and method(s)
- sample(s), focus of data/information and literature searches, timetable, form(s) of analysis of results

## **E) RESEARCH DESIGN - DESIGN OF STUDY**

- what research is to be carried out *WHEN* and *HOW*
- what analysis is to be carried out *WHEN* and *HOW*

## **F) ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

- protection of identities?**
  - personal questions?**
  - refer to University Code of Ethics?**
- 

**So, finally:**

- a) produce a draft research proposal plan**
- b) read through a couple of days later, and discuss with colleague**
- c) can you justify and explain each part of it?**
- d) what questions or gaps are there?**

## ***2. The Literature Review***

- **not just a ‘dead list’ of disconnected comments about texts**

***BUT* an examination and identification of ongoing dialogues, discussions and debates between experts, theorists and theories that underpin your research**

- **to do this you will need to:**

**a) read widely for contexts and debates**

**b) note and record sources**

**c) summarise points in the critical debates**



## *Purposes of literature review:*

- a) **to become familiar with the ‘conversation’ (debates, discussions, arguments in subject)**
- b) **to ‘tighten’ and clarify your research question and hypothesis/argument**
- c) **to ascertain and identify the nature of previous research and issues**
- d) **to find evidence in academic discourse and debate to establish the necessity for your proposed research**
- e) **to enable you to keep up to date and aware of ongoing research in subject**

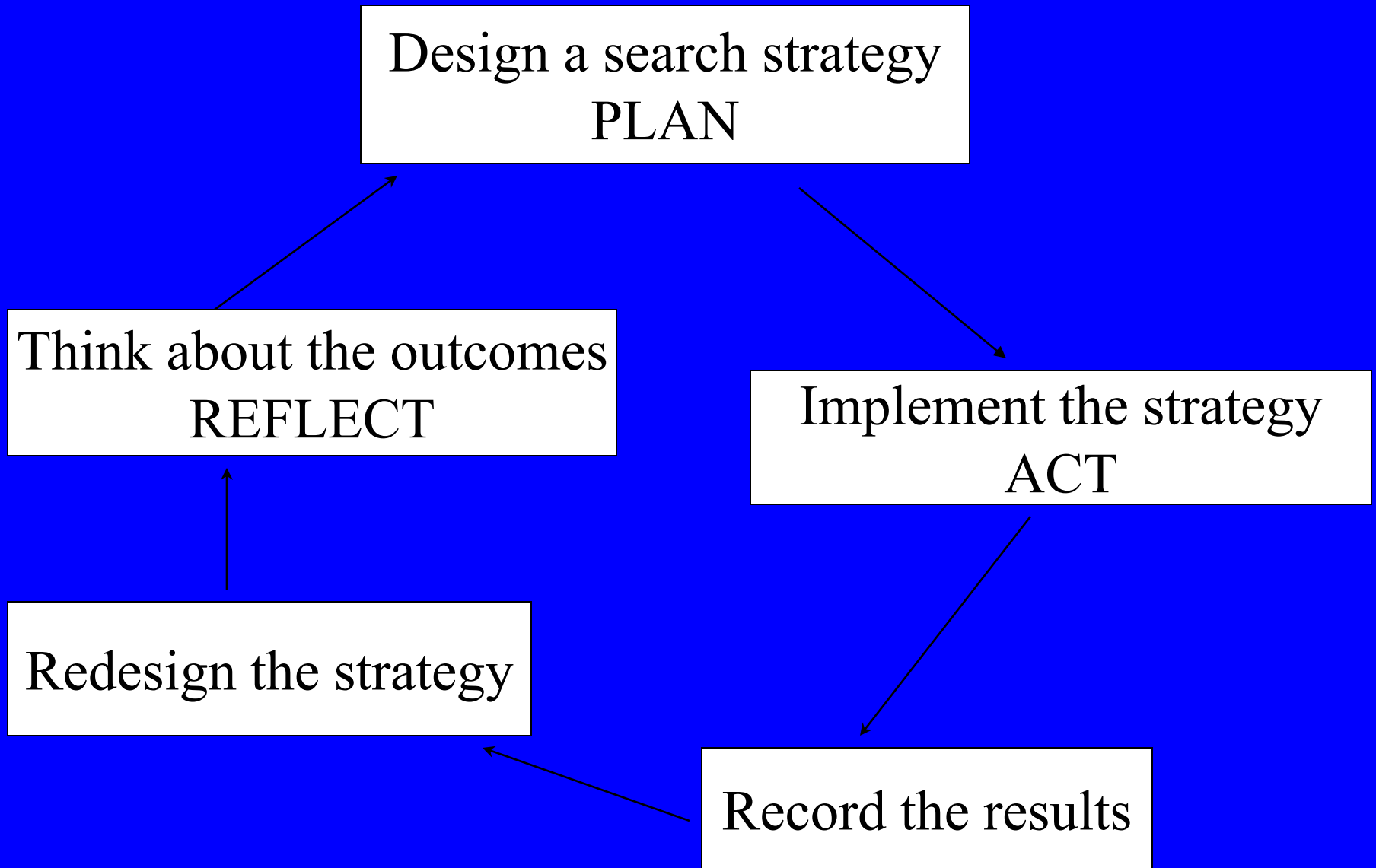
Design a search strategy  
PLAN

Think about the outcomes  
REFLECT

Implement the strategy  
ACT

Redesign the strategy

Record the results



## *Note-taking*

- 1. Read introduction, conclusion, section headings in chapter/article and notes/summaries in margins**
- 2. SQ3R**
  - survey (skim, no notes, get ‘feeling’)
  - question (what is it about?)
  - read (key words, concepts, arguments)
  - record (make notes under headings, summarise major arguments)
  - review (identified most important points, arguments, what you need, references?)