

Research Methods

Lecture 4

**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?**
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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**

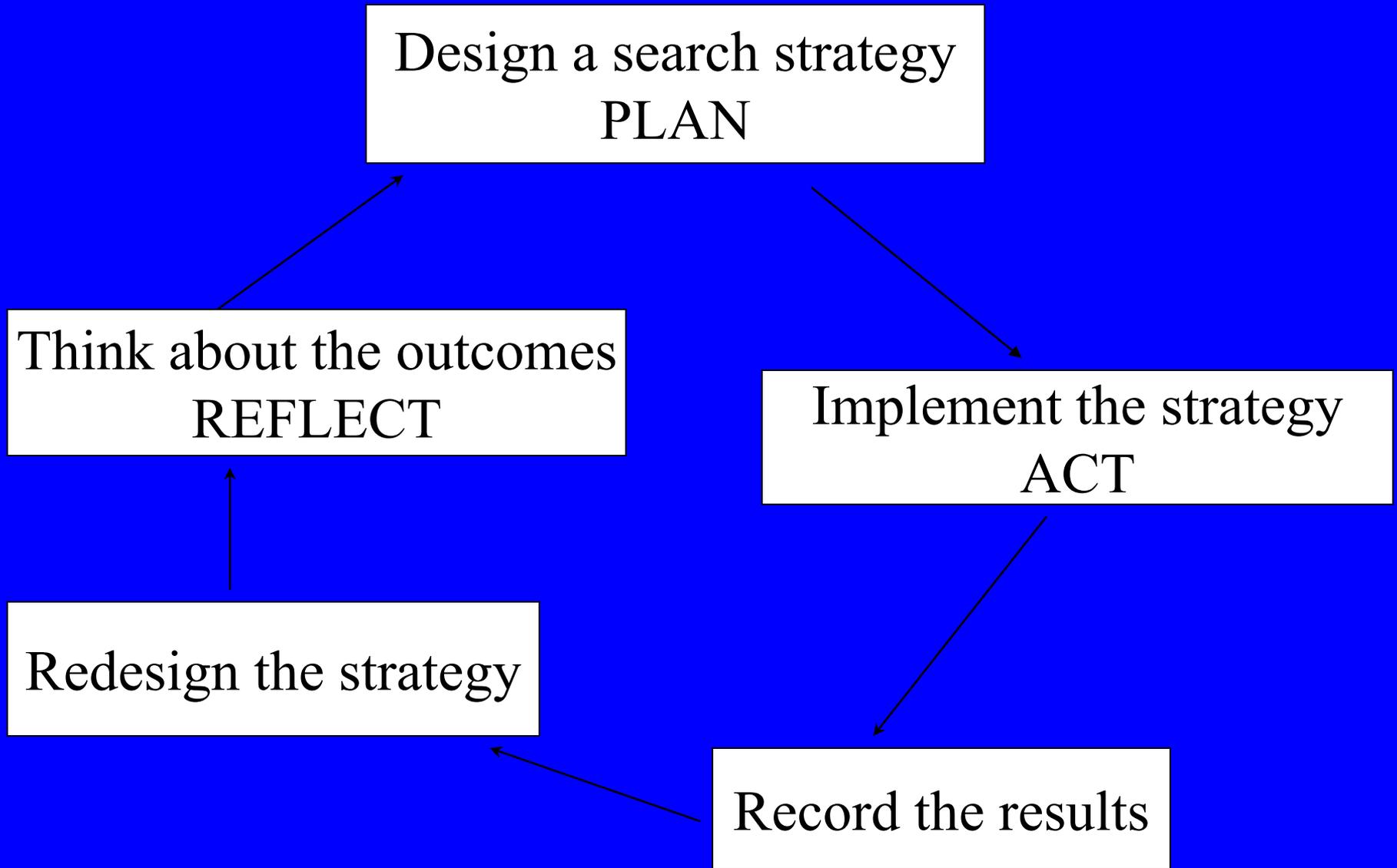
Design a search strategy
PLAN

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?)