

## **Occupational Therapy Literature Review**

This set of Infosheets is designed to help students compose a literature review in Occupational Therapy. It may also be useful to students composing literature reviews in other science and health courses.

### **OT Literature Review Infosheet 1 - Writing a Literature Review Overview**

This sheet introduces students to the literature review.

### **OT Literature Review Infosheet 2 - Format for the Paper**

This sheet addresses literature review paper formatting.

### **OT Literature Review Infosheet 3 - Step-by-Step Guide**

This sheet introduces strategies for writing the literature review.

### **OT Literature Review Infosheet 4 - Step-by-Step Guide Continued**

This sheet continues to address strategies for writing the literature review.

### **OT Literature Review Infosheet 5 - Step-by-Step Guide Continued**

This sheet continues to address strategies for composing the literature review, following from Infosheets 3 and 4.

### **OT Literature Review Infosheet 6 - Step-by-Step Guide Continued**

This sheet continues to address strategies, engaged in Infosheets #3-5, for writing a literature review.

### **OT Literature Review Infosheet 6.1 - Concept Map**

This sheet introduces the concept map as a specific strategy for writing a literature review.

### **OT Literature Review Infosheet 6.2 - Sample Concept Map**

This sheet offers an example of the concept map addressed in Infosheet 6.1.

### **OT Literature Review Infosheet 6.3 - Table**

This sheet introduces the table as a specific strategy for writing a literature review.

### **OT Literature Review Infosheet 7 - Step-by-Step Guide**

This sheet continues to address strategies for writing the literature review.

### **OT Literature Review Infosheet 7.1 - References**

This sheet credits source material for OT Literature Review Infosheets.

### **OT Literature Review Infosheet 8 - Format of the Scientific Journal Article**

This sheet addresses the formatting of scientific journal articles.

### **OT Literature Review Infosheet 9 - Scientific Writing Style**

This sheet offers guidelines to writing style in the sciences.

### **OT Literature Review Infosheet 10 - Final Tips**

This sheet offers additional tips for writing the literature review in the sciences.

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## Writing a Literature Review: Overview

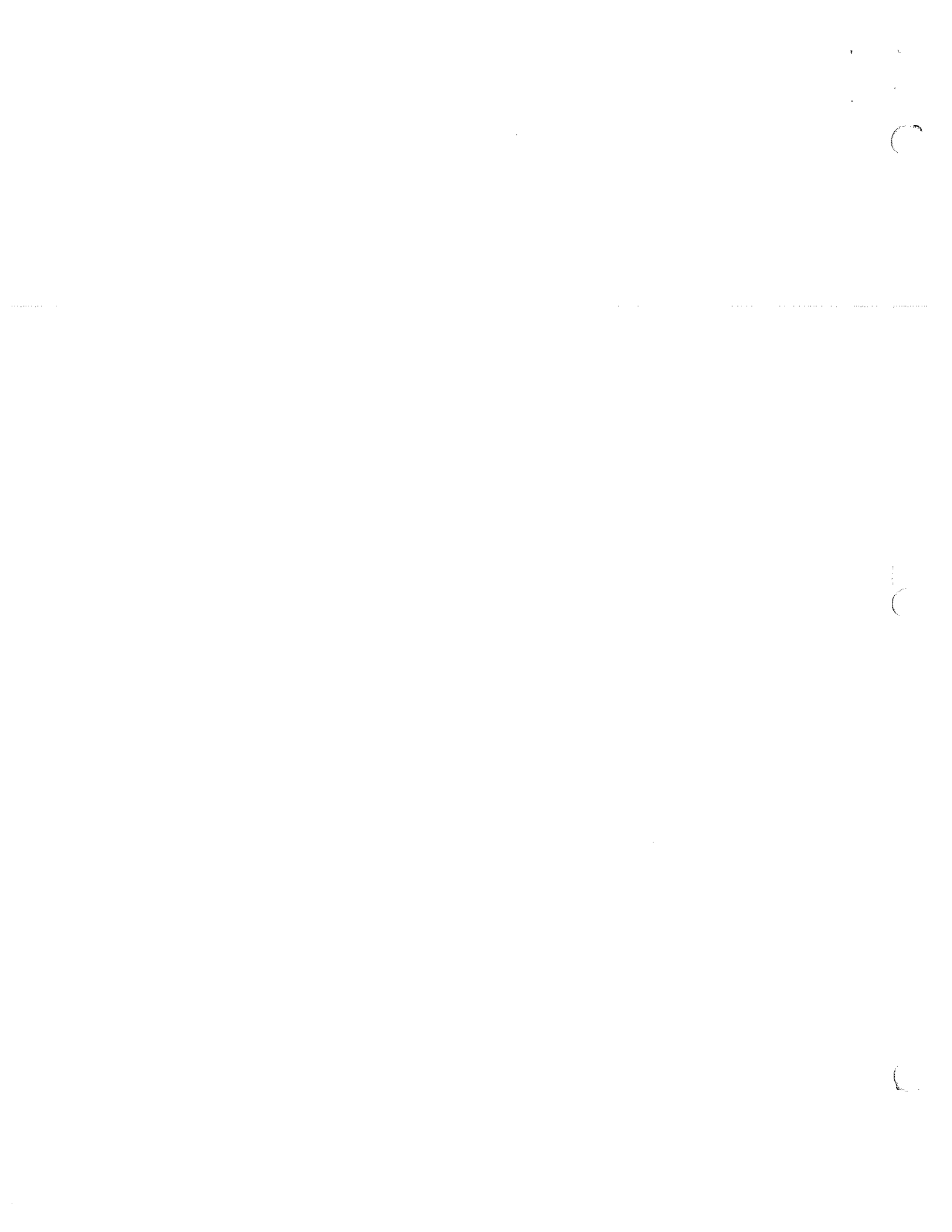
A **Literature Review** represents an in-depth written survey of scholarly articles, books, and other sources in a problem area you choose to research. Your purpose is to substantiate the state of the field: provide an overview of significant literature in your field.

### A literature review:

- begins with the formulation of a *problem* or *question* that you wish to investigate or a **hypothesis** (an educated guess, hunch, or speculation proposed as a possible solution to a problem that is based on observation and can be supported or refuted through further observation or experimentation).

*Example:* Chocolate may cause pimples

- addresses why it is important.
- discusses *concepts* and **data**, not “papers”, “articles”, or authors.
- is *not* a list describing or summarizing one piece of literature after another.
- includes a *critical analysis* of the relationship among different works.
- organizes the significant literature into sections that present themes or identify trends that are related to your research problem.
- does not list all the material published, but *synthesizes* and *evaluates* according to the guiding concept of your problem or question (your review makes something new out of parts and elements of related articles that you judge as important to your problem or question).
- may be written as a stand-alone paper or to provide a *theoretical framework* and **rationale** for a research study (such as a thesis or dissertation).



## Writing a Literature Review: Format for the Paper

There are usually *three* sections to a **Literature Review**, although they will not be identified as such in the paper:

1. *Introduction*: topical area is clearly identified; focus is narrowed to problem area; clear statement of the problem or issue; research trends related to problem delineated; justification for the research.
2. **Review of articles: Data** sources clearly identified. In a paragraph or two for each study, briefly explain the purpose, how it was conducted (how information was gathered), and the major findings. Meaningful organizing framework used; major studies with impact on problem reviewed.
3. *Conclusion*: Comment about what questions need to still be answered.

*References*: List the studies used on a separate page according to *APA style format*.

When referring to an article, use the last name of author or authors and date of publication in the text.

*Example*:

Calvin and Brommel (1996) believe family communication . . .

*or*

Communication serves two primary functions in families--cohesion and adaptability (Calvin and Brommel, 1996).



## Writing a Literature Review: General Step-by- Step Guide (Step 1)

Step 1-- Review APA guidelines for general document guidelines (e.g. font, margins, spacing), title page, abstract, body, text citations, quotations.

Citing a source is a two-part process:

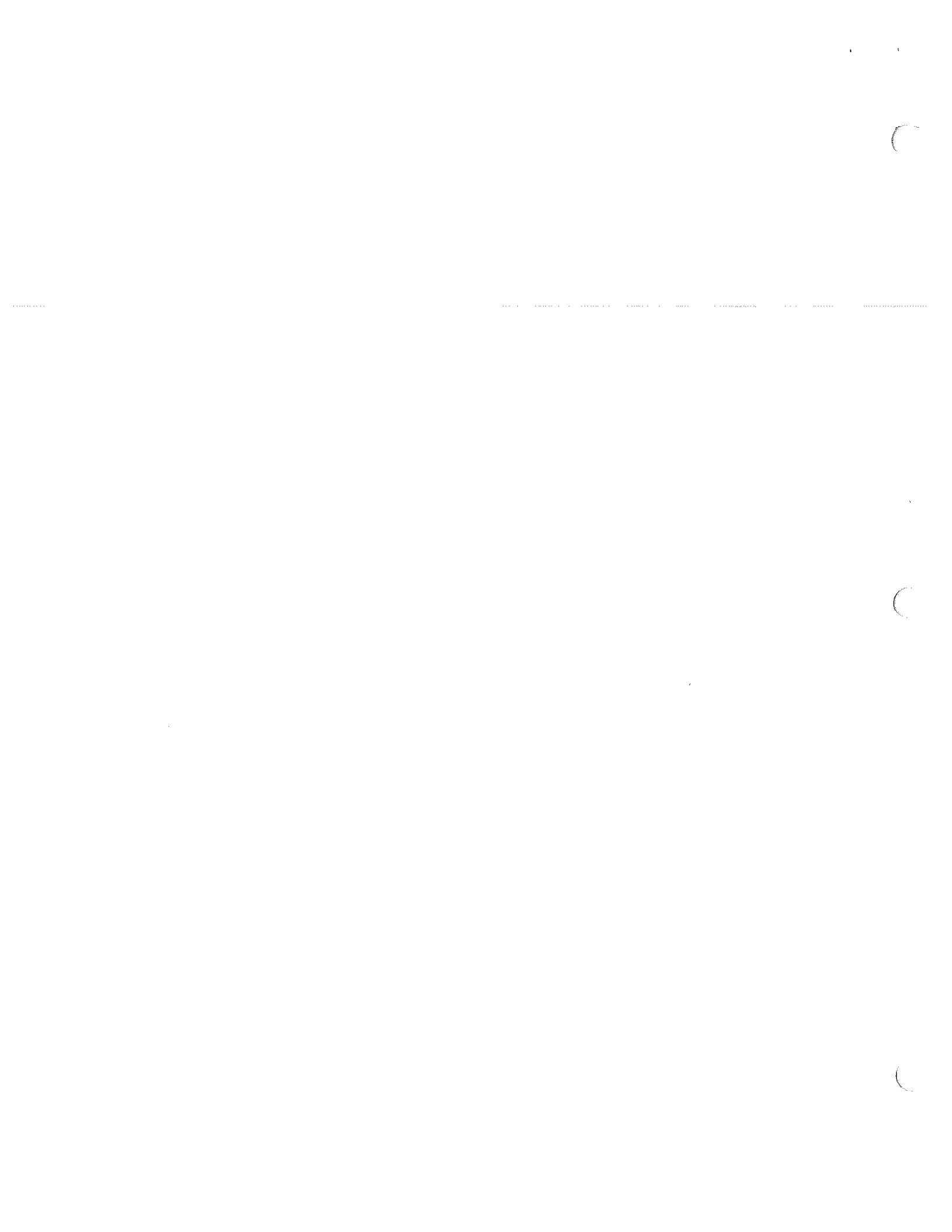
### 1. *In-text or parenthetical citation*

This appears in the body of your paper and tells the reader where to look for the complete citation in the bibliography at the end of the paper. Example of an in-text citation using APA style Howell (2008) reported that “Black infants in the United States are more than twice as likely to die as White infants in the first year of life” (p. 31).

### 2. Entry in the *list of references or works cited*

This appears in the complete bibliography at the end of your paper, where you list all the sources you have used and cited. Example of an entry in the list of references using APA style Howell, E. A. (2008). Racial Disparities in Infant Mortality: A Quality of Care Perspective. *Mount Sinai Journal of Medicine*, 75, 31-35.

(See Listing References Using APA Style Infosheet #22)





## Writing a Literature Review: General Step-by-Step Guide (Steps 2&3)

Step 2-- *Decide* on a topic and refine it to a *question, problem* or **hypothesis** (an educated guess, hunch, or speculation proposed as a possible solution to a problem that is based on observation and can be supported or refuted through further observation or experimentation).

Step 3-- *Identify* the literature that you will use and the relevant databases in your field of study.

Be sure to identify landmark or classic studies and theorists of your study. In your initial search of literature in an electronic database, use key words from your question and be as broad as possible.

Then *refine* and *narrow* your search to your question.

*Examples:*

*Question:* "How assistive technology and physical environmental issues have been studied in the research published in international peer-reviewed occupational therapy journals" (Ivanoff, Iwarsson, & Sonn, 2006).

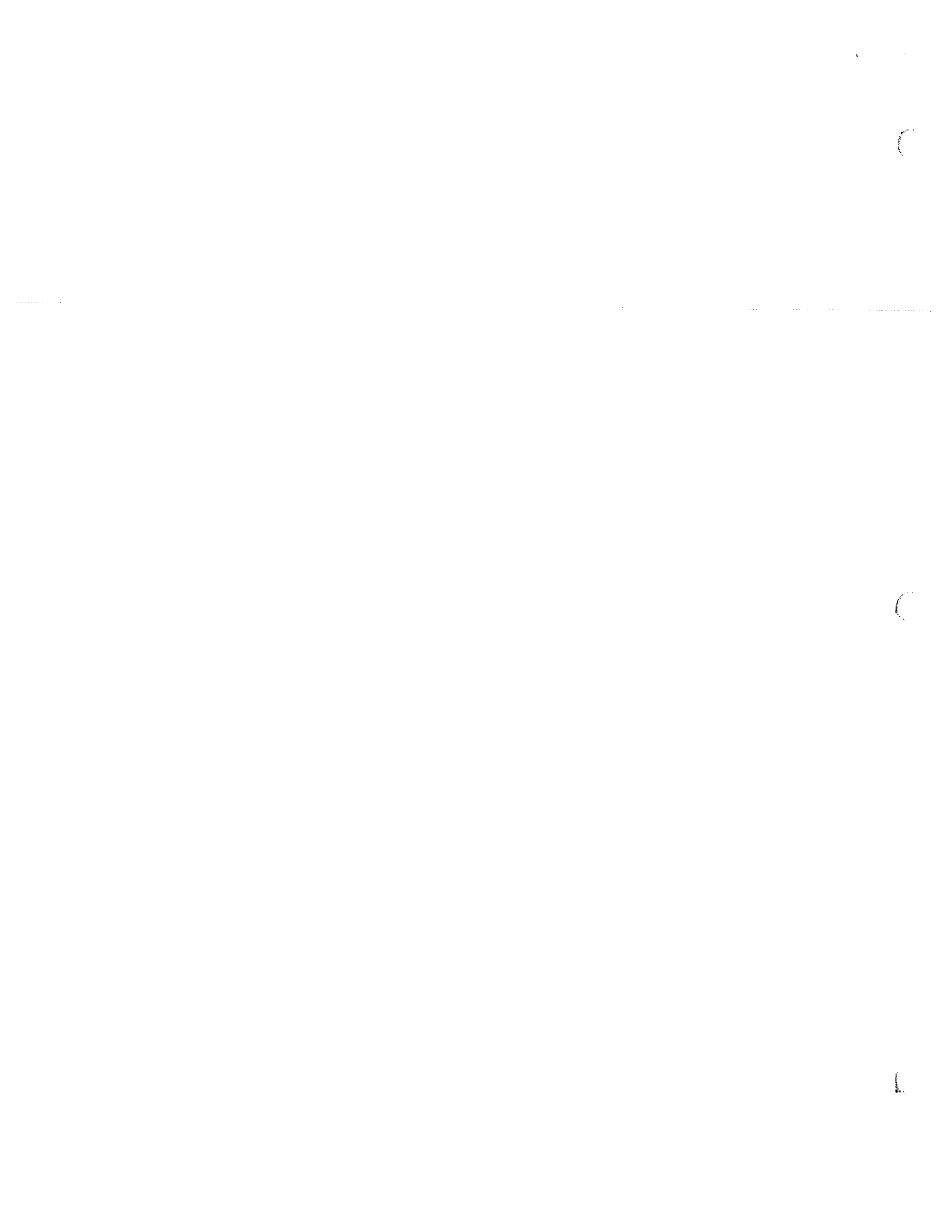
*Key Words:* Assistive Technology, Environment, Occupational Therapy

*Problem:* "The Impact of Stroke on Informal Carers"

*Key Words:* Stroke Rehabilitation, Attitude of Health Personnel, Self-Help Devices

**Hypothesis:** Chocolate causes Pimples

Some helpful electronic databases in the Health Sciences are: BIDS-EMBASE, MEDLINE, CINAHL, and PSYCHLIT.



## Writing a Literature Review: General Step-by- Step Guide (Step 4)

Step 4-- Analyze the literature (break it down systematically into its constituent parts):

1. *Skim* the articles
2. *Group* the articles into categories (e.g. into topics and subtopics and chronologically within each subtopic).
3. Take notes, *define key terms*, note *statistics*.
4. Note strengths and weaknesses.
5. *Identify* major trends or patterns.
6. *Identify* gaps in literature.
7. *Identify* relationships among studies.
8. *Evaluate* your references for currency and coverage (newest and most important studies or articles).

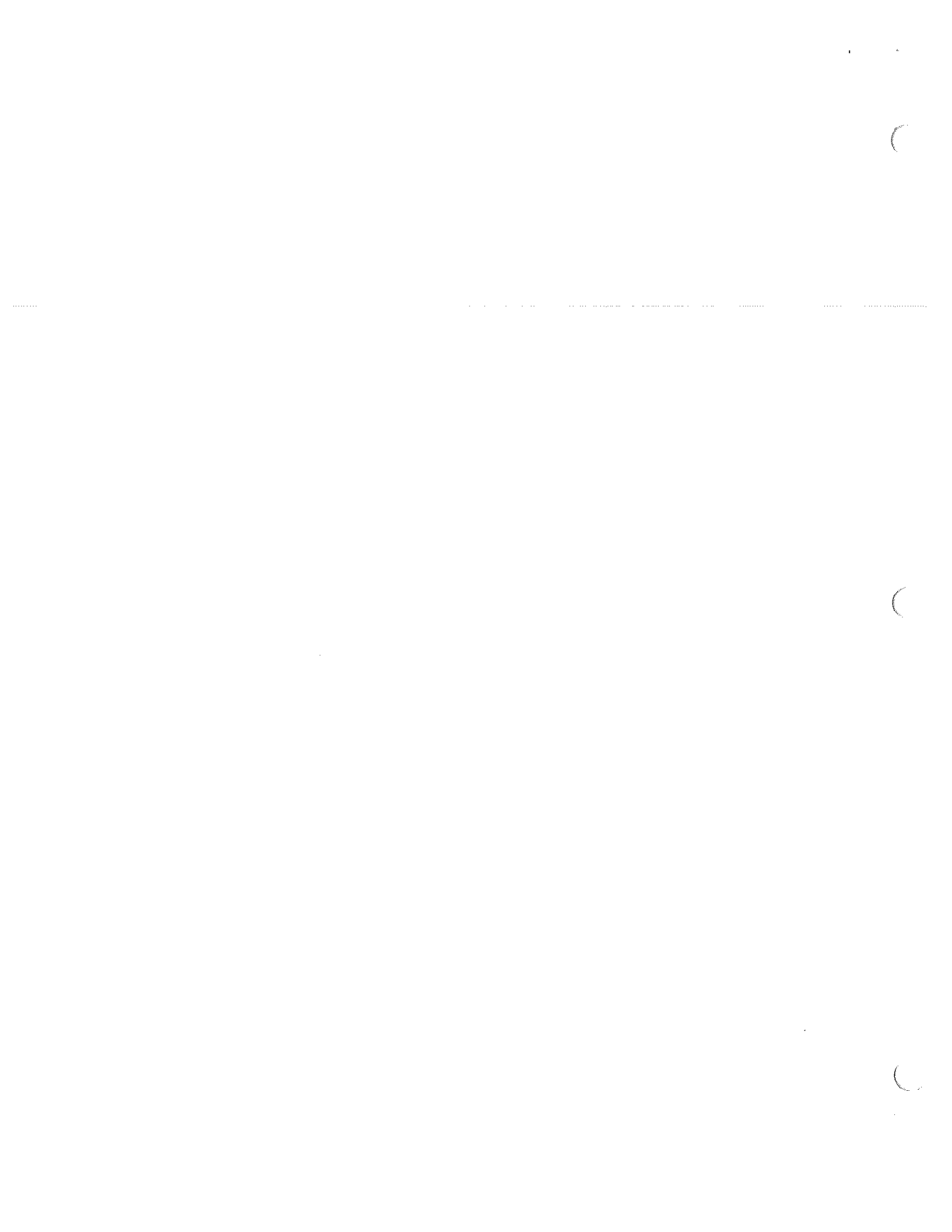
*For Example:*

(Groups findings into three categories)

“The objective of this review was to establish the following: (a) to evaluate the impact of the stroke on the informal carers' quality of life, (b) to identify factors which help carers to cope with their caring role, (c) to evaluate health service provision for stroke carers.” (Low, Payne, & Roderick, 1999).

(Identifies trends and patterns and notes gaps and weaknesses)

“The studies reviewed had many limitations; few gave definitions of ‘informal’ carer and there was a predominant use of cross-sectional studies and non-standardised outcome measures.” “More studies are also needed evaluating the effectiveness of health services on carers' quality of life.” (Low, Payne, & Roderick, 1999).

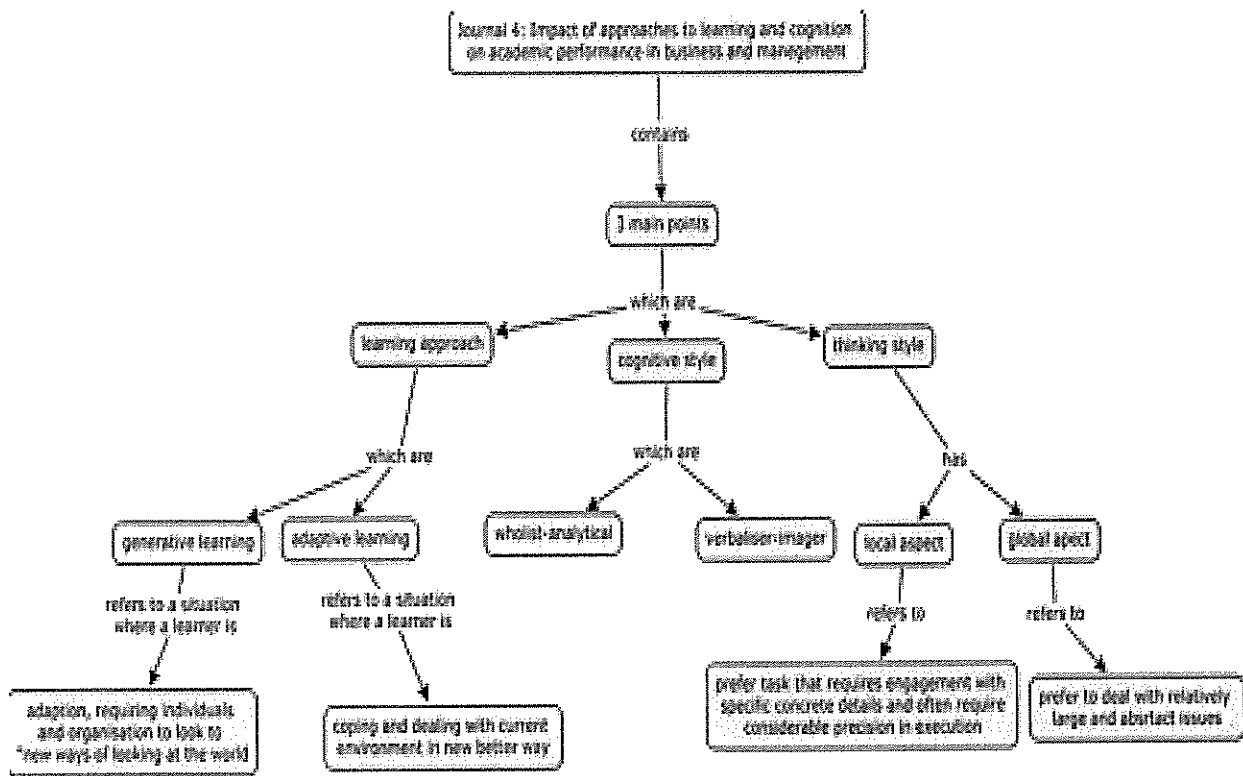


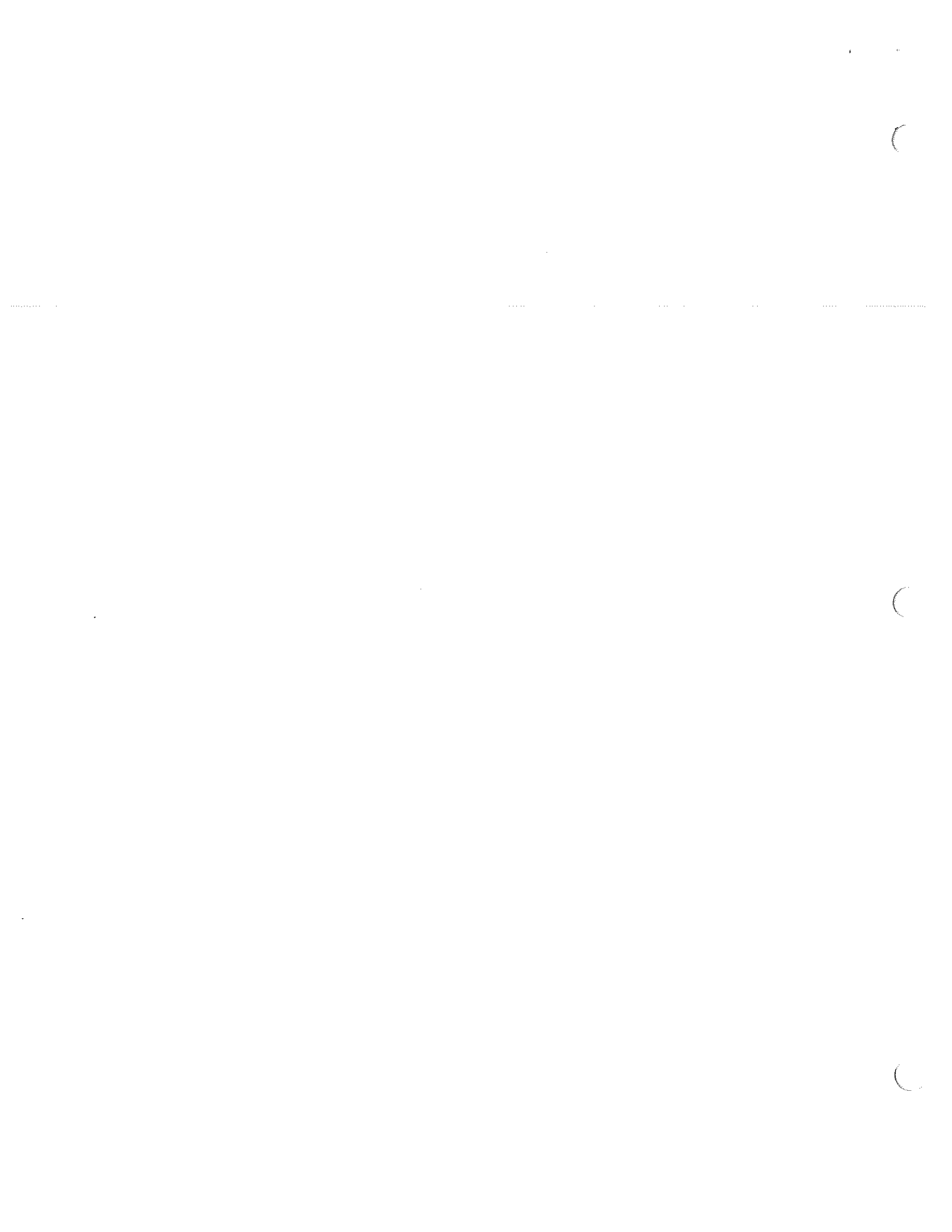
## Writing a Literature Review: General Step-by-Step Guide (Step 5)

Step 5-- *Reduce* information to a manageable unit. Sort your findings according to a variety of factors (e.g. date, and then author; or by methodology and then date). Summarize literature in a *concept map* or *table*. This is a way of organizing your research.

*Example:*

**Figure 1:** Important points and concepts identified from an article using concept mapping (Alias & Suradi, 2008).





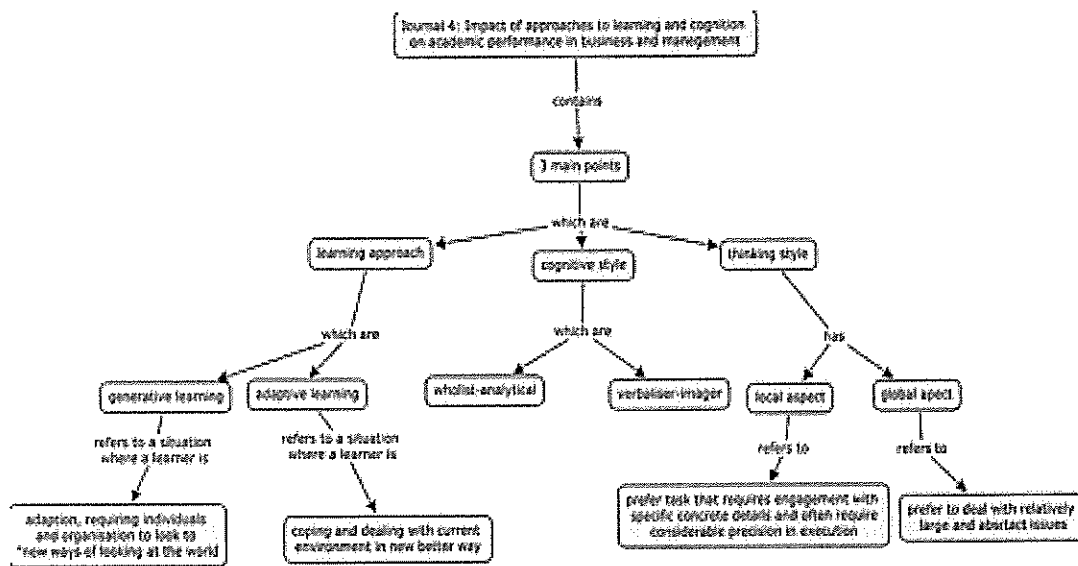
## Writing a Literature Review: Concept Map

“What is a Concept Map? Why might Concept Mapping be useful for a Literature Review? Concept Maps are graphic representations of topics, ideas, and their relationships. They allow users to group information (such as research sources) in related modules so that the connections between and among the modules become more readily apparent than they might from an examination of a list.”

*Concept Mapping for a Literature review*

[http://www.csun.edu/~krowlands/Content/Writing\\_Mentor/Literature%20Reviews/Concept%20Mapping%20for%20a%20Literature%20Review.pdf](http://www.csun.edu/~krowlands/Content/Writing_Mentor/Literature%20Reviews/Concept%20Mapping%20for%20a%20Literature%20Review.pdf)

(See Infosheet 6.2 for a view of this concept map)







**Journal 4: Impact of approaches to learning and cognition on academic performance in business and management**

Contains  
3 Main points, which are

Learning approach

Cognitive style

Thinking style has

Local aspect

Generative learning

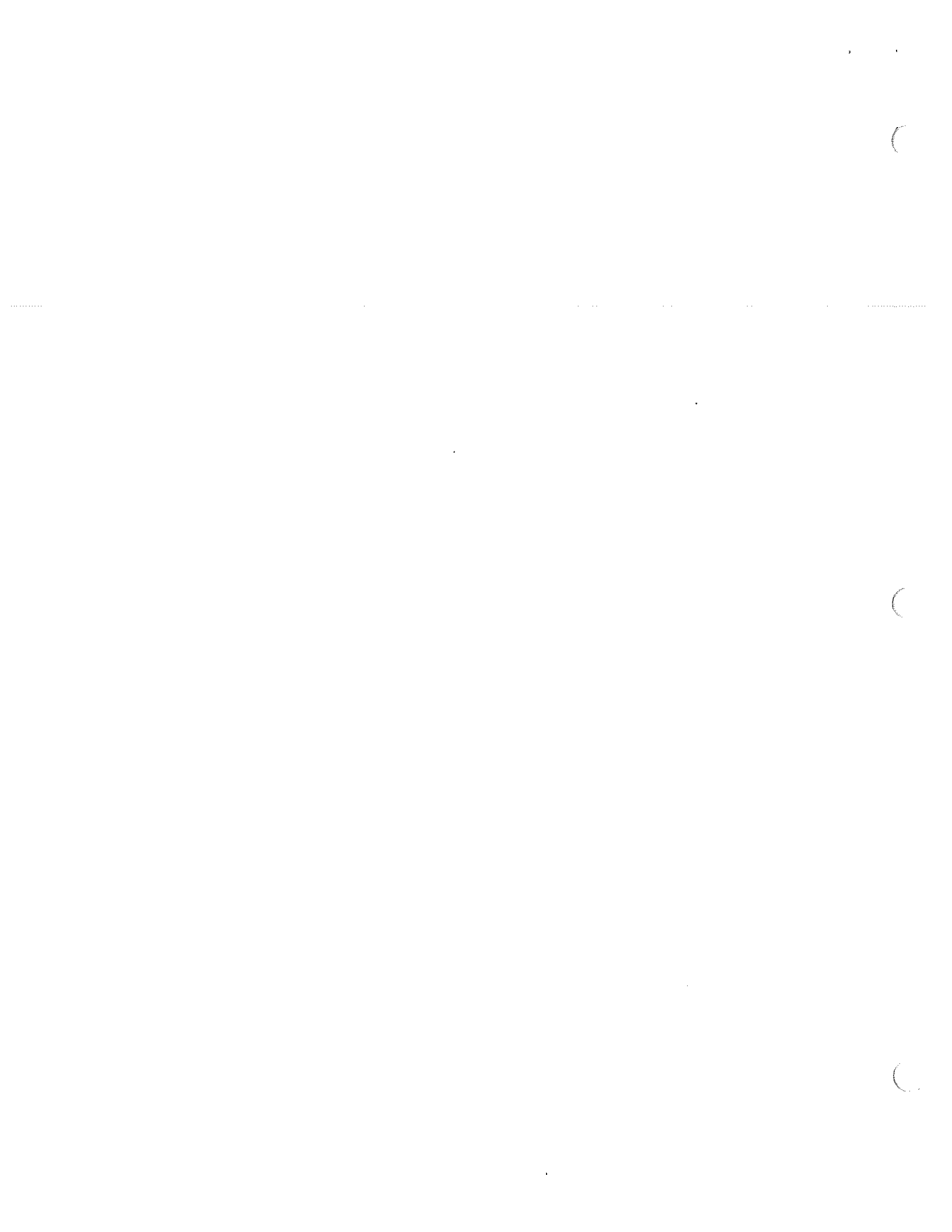
Adaptive learning

Wholist -analytical

Verbalizer - imager

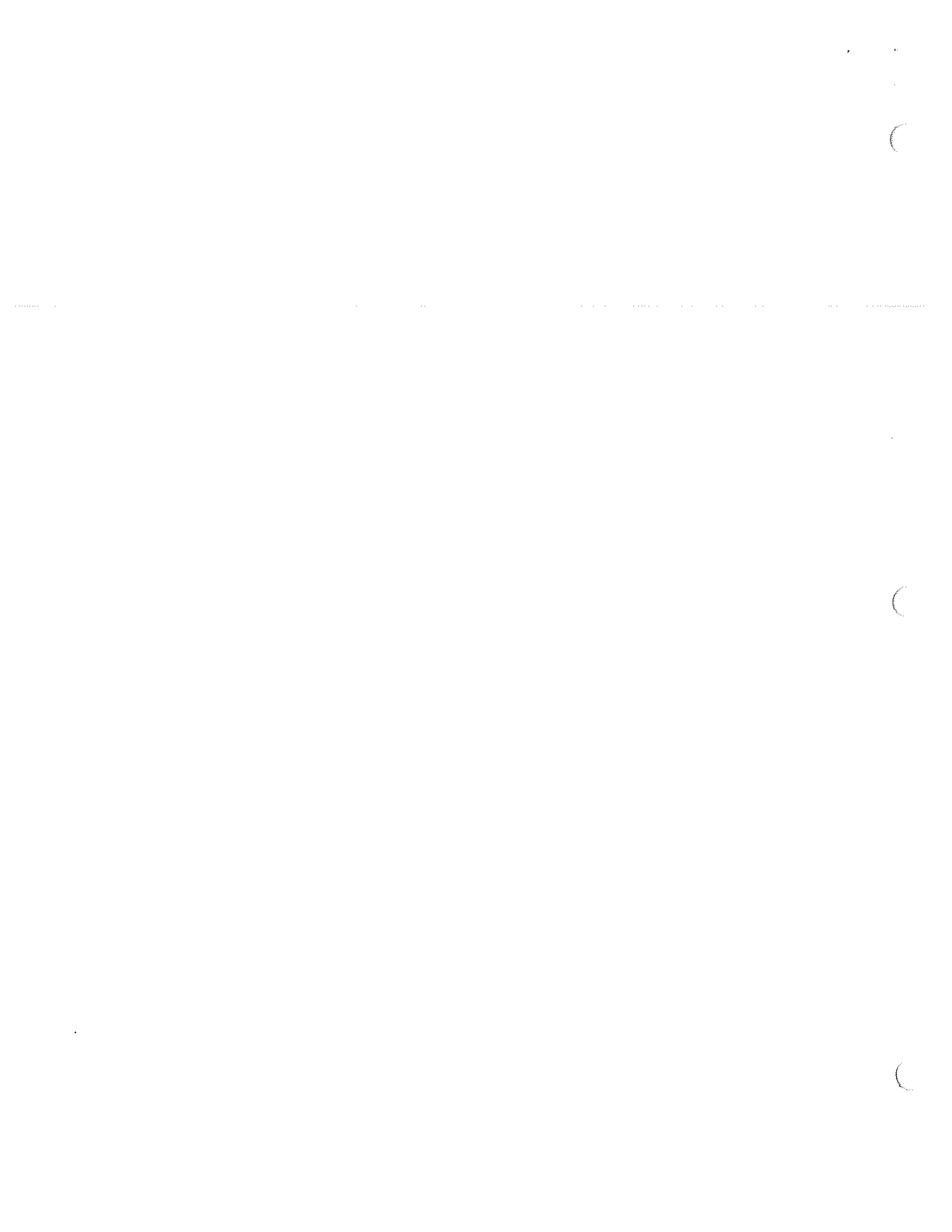
Refers to a situation where a learner is adaption, requiring individuals and organization to look to "new ways of looking at the world"

prefer task that requires engagement with specific concrete details and often require considerable precision in execution



**Writing a Literature Review: Table (see  
<http://scholar.lib.vt.edu/theses/available/etd-093099-180817/unrestricted/Appendices.pdf>)**

<u>Reference</u>	<u>Method of Analysis</u>	<u>Principal Findings</u>
Ashour, M. Pilling, P. Norris, G. Perez, H. (1996)	analytical approach	Developed an analytical approach (incorporated into the computer program SWSG) known as the strain wedge model to evaluate the response of piles and pile groups. The model relates 1-D beam on elastic foundation analysis to 3-D soil pile interaction response, which is based on the deformation of soil within a plastic wedge in front of the pile. Plane stress conditions are assumed within the wedge and group effects are quantified by considering the overlap of passive wedges and accompanying strains.
Rao, S.N. Ramakrishna, V.G. Raju, G.B. (1996)	2-D finite element study	Performed simplified plain strain finite element analyses to evaluate group efficiencies for various pile spacings and geometric arrangements. Compared calculated results with those obtained from 1g model tests.
Gandhi, S.R. Selvam, S. (1997)	analytical approach	Present a nondimensional method for predicting pile response based on a power function relationship. Multiplication factors, determined from 1g model tests, were used to model group behavior.



## Writing a Literature Review: General Step -by- Step Guide (Steps 6&7)

Step 6--*Synthesize* (requires you to bring together all the pieces of your analysis in order to reassemble it in a new order) the literature prior to writing your review:

Consider your *purpose* and *voice*.

Consider how you *reassemble* your notes and *reorganize* them according to your argument.

Plan to present *conclusions* and *implications*.

Plan to suggest specific directions for future research near the end of the review.

Plan to provide *closure* so the path of your argument ends with a conclusion.

Step 7-- Write the review. (See infosheets 8,9,& 10 for more tips) Check the flow of your argument for coherence. (See infosheet 3 for review of APA citation format)

*Example:*

(Discusses possible specific directions for future studies)

“Future studies should broaden their research question to evaluate quality of life, using standardised measures to do this and employing either a longitudinal or randomised control design to improve the robustness of results. More studies are also needed evaluating the effectiveness of health services on carers' quality of life” (Low, Payne, & Roderick, 1999).



### Writing a Literature Review: References

Canas, A.J., Reiska, P., Ahlberg M., & Novak, J. D. (Eds.) Proceedings of the Third Int. Conference on Concept Mapping. Tallinn, Estonia & Helsinki, Finland 2008.

Galvan, J. (2006). *Writing literature reviews: a guide for students of the behavioral sciences* (3rd ed.). Glendale, CA: Pyczak Publishing.

Ivanoff, S.D., Iwarsson, & S., Sonn, U. (2006) Occupational therapy research on assistive technology and physical environmental issues: a literature review. *Canadian Journal of Occupational Therapy, Volume 73* (2), pp. 109-119.

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## Writing a Literature Review: Format of the Scientific Journal article

Within a scientific paper, researchers typically explain four basic things:

1. What they did.
2. Why they did it.
3. What they found out.
4. What they think it all means.

The general organization of a *Scientific Journal Article*:

*Title:* Gives information about the research presented.

*Authors*

**Abstract:** Describes the experimental question and the main reason for the study; the primary results, the main conclusions.

*Introduction:* Describes why the study was undertaken.

**Materials and Methods:** Describes how the study was conducted.

**Results:** Presents key results.

**Discussion:** Interprets the results in light of what was already known.

*References:* Alphabetical listing of literature cited in APA style.



## Writing a Literature Review: Scientific Writing Style

Use the past tense when referring to your research--research papers reflect work that has been completed.

State clearly what will and will not be covered in the beginning of your review.

Be clear and concise.

Avoid embellishments or adjectives, no flowery prose.

Be precise.

Imprecise: "It was a Study of enormous proportions..."

Better: "The John Garfield Study included 780 cases..."

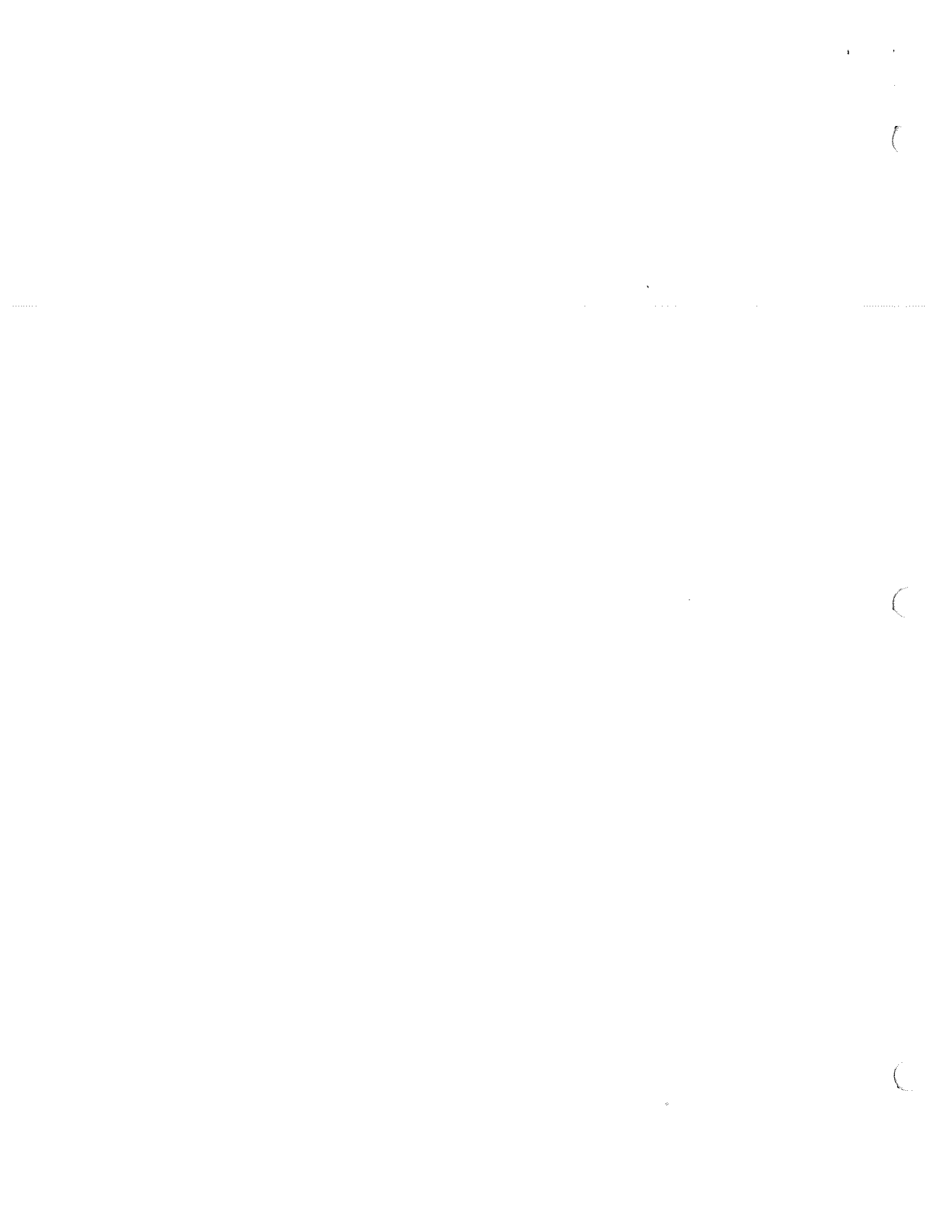
*Avoid a passive voice in your writing.* Use of passive verbs (is, was, has, etc...) represents an outdated, bland style of scientific writing.

Use active verbs to convey information concisely and with greater impact.

*Active:* "The mouse consumed oxygen at a higher rate..."

*Passive:* "Oxygen was consumed by the mouse at a higher rate..."

For more on this topic see also *Guidelines for Writing a Literature Review*  
<http://www.d.umn.edu/~hrallis/guides/researching/litreview.html>



## Writing a Literature Review: More Tips

*When writing a literature review:*

- be selective, not exhaustive, in choosing studies to cite and amount of detail to include.
- emphasize main arguments or findings made in each source.
- quote sparingly, if at all.
- move from general to specific.
- look for gaps in the research. Think about aspects of the subject area that have not been explored, limitations in the formulation of questions for research, inadequate data collection methods and inappropriate interpretations of results.
- look for examples of excellent literature reviews in your field that can serve as a model for your own literature review.

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