**Literature Review**

A Literature Review is an overview of studies, articles, analyses on an issue or topic and shows that the writer has extensively read and synthesized the information in the existing literature.

**What it is NOT:**

1. It is NOT an annotated Bibliography.
2. It is NOT a research paper.

**What it IS:**

1. An effective Lit Review is **an essay that is organized around themes in the existing literature on the topic** and takes the reader from theme to theme, **emphasizing the findings of previous research**, citing literature on a topic and **grouping articles with similar findings together**.

**Example**: In his study Rawlings (2007) found that managers that used positive reinforcement created a work environment that was less stressful for employees which meant workers were more productive and there was less employee turnover (Kerry, Franke, & Rudolph, 2005; Barney & Bush, 2006; Muldoon & Sweeney, 2007).

1. An effective Lit Review **points out trends and themes in the literature as well as the gaps**.

**Example**: There have been a number of studies that show that employee stress is the main reason for quitting a job and that bad bosses are the main cause of employee stress (Haley, Barnes & Tupak, 2008; La Belle, Ferner & Jolly, 2009). However there needs to be more studies on the possibility of direct correlation between employee stress and health problems.

1. The author should **express opinions about the strengths and weaknesses of the research** being cited.

**Example**: The Joiner, Boland, McKenny (2012) study report employee morale is directly affected positively or negatively by management style. However this study sample is too small to apply these findings to different work places and different employee demographics.

1. **Use direct quotes sparingly** and **avoid reporting the details of the literature** being cited.
2. The Lit Review is used to **establish the need for the current study**.