

Why should a literature review be substantive and comprehensive?

A literature review is text that aims to review the critical points of knowledge including substantive findings as well as theoretical and methodological contributions to a particular topic. The literature review usually precedes a research proposal and results section. The goal of this review is to bring the reader up to date with current literature on a specific topic and to form the basis for another goal, one example is future research that may be needed in the area for the particular topic that contains substantive and comprehensive information however does not add anything extra to the topic. Essentially it is a logical flow of ideas and thoughts on a particular subject and formed into a body of text containing current and relative references to form an unbiased and comprehensive view of the previous research on the topic. Basically this type of review is one to let the reader know the ensuing chapters in which they are about to read, or a review of what they have already read.

Response 2

The dictionary defines substantive as having a firm basis in reality and therefore important, meaningful, or considerable; and comprehensive as including all or nearly all elements or aspects of something.

A literature review should be substantive in that it should be a true representation of the literature. The review should intend to discuss important points and refrain from unnecessary criticism and likewise unnecessary praise. The review should focus on the meaningful information an audience may want to know and be interested in.

A literature review should also be comprehensive. A comprehensive literature review will seek to mention all relevant aspects of the piece. The review will touch base on all major topics covered in the writing and explain why these are important as well as explain what each portions pertains to.

Included both these elements will create a meaningful review that informs the audience about the important elements of the writing and does not leave any part out of the review. This allows the audience to ascertain the topic the literature discusses and the relevancy of the literature as it applies to the reader's needs. A substantive, comprehensive review debriefs the audience on the information contained within the writing allowing a person to determine its validity in relation to his or her needs without having to read the entire piece of writing to do so.