Literature Review Maps

It is clear that undertaking the literature rewiew of a PhD project is not for the faint-hearted.

Whilst not to be easily overwhelmed, there is a considerable literature background that needs sifting through so that to insure the project against later criticism for a lack of thoroughness.

The actual *research* section of the project is divided into two parts: developing the profile evaluator tool; and assessing each research group's academic confidence.

The one leads naturally on to the other but it is clear that both of these research sections will require literature reviews, that although not mutually exclusive to each other, will nevertheless each have a slightly different focus with a broadly overlapping central area.

This is because in the development of the profile evaluator it is necessary to explore the literature relating to each of the five psychological sub-constructs independently of each other - for example, it will be important to tease out research on *learned helplessness* in areas that are contextual to this project in addition to exploring everything that has been written about *self-esteem*; areas: ditto - as well as exploring research on their interrelationship or otherwise. Just as for the other three sub-constructs that form the scaffold of the profile evaluator: *self-efficacy*, *anxiety regulation and motivation*, and *learning-related emotions.*

For the second part, where academic confidence is the focus, there is a necessity to map out the development of this as a concept hypothesised from original research by Sander et al (2000) into HE students' expectation of teaching which appear to be the nascent project from which the Academic Behavioural Confidence Scale was to emerge to the application of the concept and the scale most recently, for example in a project to explore chronological development of academic confidence in relation to academic aspiration (Putwain & Sander, 2014). It seems clear even at this early stage in the project that Dr Paul Sander has been instrumental in the development of the concept and much of the more recent work appears to have been carried out either by him, or with his collaboration, or by others also clearly influenced by his extensive work in this area.

So the point about this post is to sketch out the literature review process that is to be applied to this research project:

The research aspires to be innovative, imaginative and perhaps somewhat unconventional - already demonstrated by the intention to record and continuously publish progress and developments through these webpages. This is broadly in line with the researcher's sense of creativity and intention to make a valuable contribution to the body of knowledge in this field through a robust, scientific process of data collection and analysis together with a strongly analytical appraisal of what has preceded it.

In this vein, a recent article published on the academic thread of the blog: medium.com which focuses on working at literature reviews in the digital age has much to say about streamlining the lengthy process of finding *all* the relevant prior research in a PhD-er's field. Specifically a very useful summary about the differences between a *narrative review* and a *systematic review* have been very helpful in suggesting to which model the literature review for this project can be most expediently aligned. Although the summary regards lit reviews in the humanities and social sciences to be more generally of the narrative, chronologically sequenced model, this researcher is much taken with the alternative, systematic approach in which it is suggested that 'quality criteria' are first established by the research which are the tools used to 'progressively filter down' the broad panoply of research literature available so that just the best-conducted studies are more deeply reviewed. The complete article is available at the link above.

It is with some relief that two major points are revealed to the researcher:

- that during the course of the research project, the researcher's understanding of not only their own project's core and principal focus, but that of the broader research domain 'expands hugely'; and
- that the literature review may be best treated as almost organic rather than a somewhat frozen reflection of understanding at a particular time-point in the project, and in this way, it should be more so a continuous thread of reading, analysing, reflecting and writing-about that binds the research together throughout (and perhaps beyond) the project's life.

The literature review maps will record this systematic process of literature review and will be another innovative aspect of the research.
In experimenting with the first of these - to tease out the emergence and early research history of academic confidence - accessible here in 'Prezi' format, it is hoped that this will present one aspect of The Researcher's reflective and analytical processes and also demonstrate an unusual use of a presentation application to show how it might aid the development of wider thinking to foster the formation alternative ideas and new knowledge.