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RS292 Research Methods

*Searching, Critically Reviewing and
Using the Literature*

Lecturer: Dr Maya Krayneva

Textbook: Gray, D. (2018). *Doing research in the real world*. (4th ed.). Los Angeles: Sage.

The background of the slide is a blurred photograph of a library. On the left, there are tall wooden bookshelves filled with books. In the center, a person is seen from behind, sitting and reading a book. The lighting is warm and soft, creating a bokeh effect with out-of-focus light spots in shades of blue and yellow. The overall atmosphere is quiet and scholarly.

Research Community

- Established RESEARCH COMMUNITY and a canon of shared knowledge (and accepted methodologies)
- Build on the scholarship of those who have come before

Purpose of a Literature Review

**up-to-date
understanding**

**issues and
themes**

**guides
research
development**

**assists future
researchers**

**guides study
design**

See Case Study 5.1, p. 99
→ more research is
needed

The Literature Search Journey

At the outset: you have a general notion
(but your initial theme maybe too wide)

Your reading takes you down some
(unanticipated) paths

Metaphors:

Train

Mining

Camping





Literature Search Process

- ✓ Select research focus and questions (develop an 'angle' to define and narrow down the subject area)
- ✓ Choose search terms (keywords & putting them together)
- ✓ Sequence the search (journal articles, books, conference papers)
- ✓ Search source materials (databases, libraries)
- ✓ Critically evaluate sources (screening criteria & critical engagement)



Activity (computer lab)

1. Identify your keywords
2. Search relevant databases (Table 5.2, p. 104)
3. Search Scopus (p. 107)

Critically Evaluating Sources

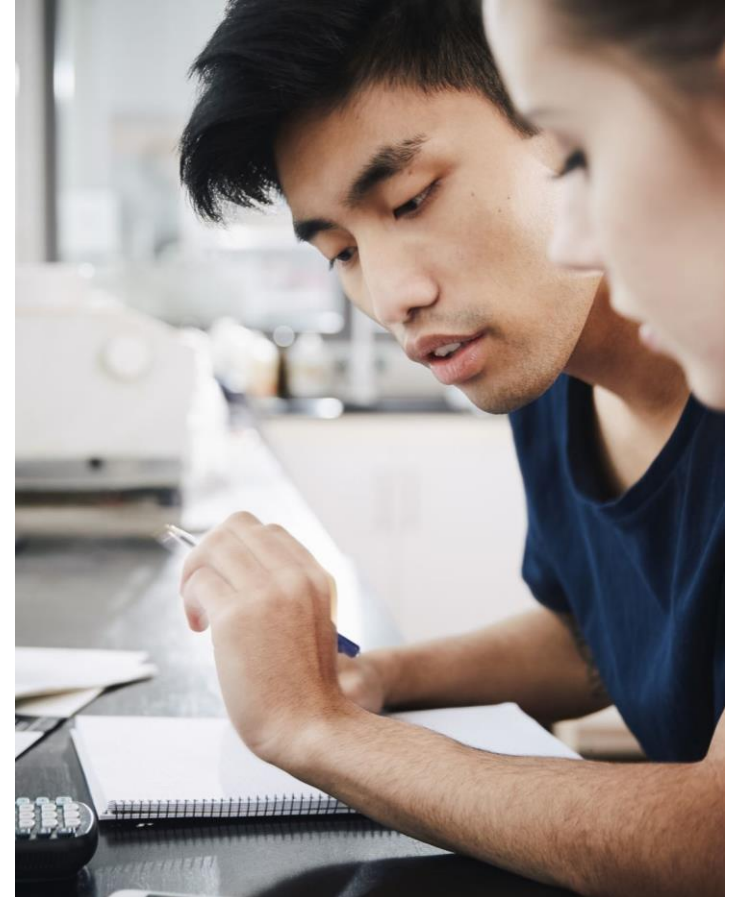
Establish a set of screening criteria

see Table 5.3 on p. 112 → work out your own

Make critical judgements

see Table 5.4 and Table 5.5 on p. 113;

Their quality + Your skills (analysis, synthesis, comprehension, knowledge)





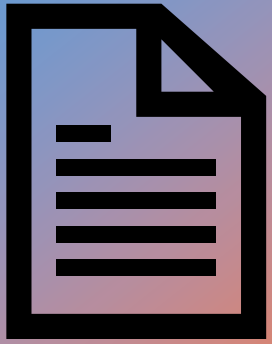
Activity (computer lab)

1. Select an article
2. Read the abstract – a summary of a research article. The abstract usually begins the article and states the purpose of the research, the methods used, and the major findings.
3. Skim the article, noting section headings and tables and graphs
4. Read the article in its entirety
5. Critically review the article

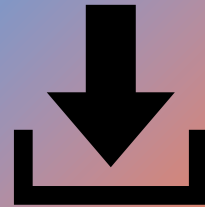
Managing Information: Maintaining a Research Log

Accurate, consistent and searchable
means of storing your literature search
data

- What will “serve” you?
- What is going to work for you?
- Think of your reference list
(Reference Manager, EndNote)



+



Synthesising and Integrating Search Results

Answering the following questions:

- What do we know about this problem (its seriousness, correlates, consequences) and its solutions (interventions tested to date)?
- How (by what methods and measures) do we know it?
- What is missing? (gaps in the literature)



Synthesising and Integrating Search Results

- *NOT* summarising information
- *NOT* 'annotation' but 'critical evaluation' (e.g. identify strengths and weaknesses, gaps in the research, emerging research questions, and evidence for need for further studies)

Critical Literature Review

Critique of RHETORIC: Evaluating a problem with the use of effective **language** and making reasoned judgements

Critique of TRADITION: Challenging **conventional** wisdom

Critique of AUTHORITY: Challenging **dominant views**

Critique of OBJECTIVITY: Recognizing that the information being discussed is **not value free**

Critique of COMPREHENSIVENESS: Identify **gaps** in the literature.



Critical Literature Review

“The review must **compare and contrast** the views presented by different authors to provide a **holistic perspective** on the subject, and do so in a way that differentiates between **fact and opinion.**”

Positioning Literature Review

- Introduction,
- Separate section, or
- Towards the end

(see Table 5.8 on p.118)

Use APA referencing (in text & reference list)





Discussion

a. Difference between traditional (narrative) and systematic literature review (see Table 5.11 on p. 122)

b. Cost of bias versus cost of limitation

Assessment 1: Literature Review

Format: Literature Review

Length: 2,000 words

Weighting: 25%

You are required to define a topic for further research, and produce a critical review of the literature relevant to your proposed topic.

Your literature review will involve:

- Conducting a preliminary search of literature relating to the content of your research topic, and to the range of available research approaches.
- Critically analysing and evaluating the body of knowledge through reflective thinking.
- Synthesising information and knowledge from the literature with personal insights.
- Clearly defining gaps in the literature, which justifies your decision to conduct research in the area.

A descriptive review of the literature is not acceptable. It must be a critical and evaluative review. Students will be assessed on their capacity to organise the literature, develop arguments, and generate critical insights into their chosen topic.

The literature review should be approximately 2,000 words. All pages must be numbered, and the document has to be prepared with 12 font size and single space format.

ULO's assessed: A, B, D

Literature Review Rubric*

Criteria /Grade	High Distinction (80-100%)	Distinction (70-79%)	Credit (60-69%)	Pass (50-59%)	Fail (0-49%)
Search & Selection	Evidence of a broad search and selection of material; consistent use of databases, experts, handbooks and web resources; selection of high quality material, like peer-reviewed articles	Evidence of sound ability in search and selection of material; frequent use of databases, experts, handbooks and web resources; selection of quality material	Evidence of a basic search of some databases and resources; some use of databases, experts, handbooks, and web resources; some use of high-quality materials	Evidence of a limited search; limited use of databases, experts, handbooks and web resources; a few well-selected materials, but mostly non-scholarly resources	No evidence of systematic or sufficient research; no use of databases, experts, handbooks, and web resources; poor selection of materials
Synthesis	The research is situated in broader scholarly literature or in a historical context; effective examination leads to statement of new direction for research; ambiguities are acknowledged but perhaps only partially resolved	Demonstrates ability in evaluating research context; offers new directions in the literature; critical analysis and review of key terms and ambiguities	Shows promise in engagement with research context; emerging new direction in the literature; analysis and review of key terms and ambiguities	Evidences engagement with research context; some analysis and review of key terms and ambiguities	No research context given; poor analysis of topic; key ambiguities and definitions missing
Breadth & Scope	Explains why specific topics and materials are used; gives clearly structures criteria for inclusion and exclusion of sources	Demonstrates sound ability in justifying reasons for included and excluded literature	Evidences discussion of the reasons for included and excluded literature	Shows promise in discussing some of the reasons for included and excluded literature	Does not discuss the criteria for inclusion or exclusion
Justification for Research	Clearly identifies specific gaps in the literature; articulate and persuasive justification to conduct research in the area	Clearly identifies gaps in the literature; sound justification to conduct research in the area	Identifies gaps in the literature; provides general justification to conduct research in the area	Identifies vague gaps in the literature; attempts justification to conduct research in the area	Does not identify gaps in the literature; no justification to conduct research in the area
Style & Format	Models language, style, and format of scholarly literature; publishable	Style and format standards consistently applied; accurately documented	Few errors of style and format; most sources documented correctly	Inconsistent style and format; lacks precision in use of quotations and citation of sources	Style/format standards not applied; sources plagiarised; clarity compromised by errors
Language Conventions	Free of mechanical errors; smooth flow and effective transitions	Few mechanical errors; good flow and strong transitions increase comprehensibility	Generally follows mechanical conventions, but with some minor errors; appropriate transitions	Frequent mechanical errors; ineffective transitions and flow from point to point	Numerous mechanical errors, making comprehension almost impossible
Uses APA conventions	Uses correct APA headings and referencing (in-text & final page) 80% or more of the time	Uses correct APA headings and referencing (in-text & final page) 70-79% of the time	Uses correct APA headings and referencing (in-text & final page) 60-69% of the time	Uses correct APA headings and referencing (in-text & final page) 50-59% of the time	Uses correct APA headings and referencing (in-text & final page) less than 50% of the time

*Adapted from a rubric developed by faculty at Andrews University resources – www.andrews.edu, which was in turn adapted from Boote, D.N. & P. Belle. 2005. Scholars before Researchers: On the centrality of the dissertation literature review in research preparation. *Educational Researcher*. 24:6. 3-15.

Homework



READ TEXTBOOK CHAPTER 4 &
BABBIE CHAPTER 3



START WORKING ON YOUR
LITERATURE REVIEW



TOPIC NEXT WEEK:
RESEARCH ETHICS