LITERATURE REVIEW

PURPOSE

• It provides a framework for establishing the importance of your study

• Benchmark for comparing the results of your study to other findings

• Presents results of other studies that are closely related to your study – comparative and contrasting studies are appropriate here.

• Relates your study to the larger ongoing discussion in the literature

• Demonstrates how your study fills in gaps in the literature or extends the work of prior studies

ORGANIZING YOUR LIT REVIEW & YOUR SEARCH

• Consider designing a map of relevant issues in your study--demonstrate the relationships between the issues
  o Concept Map
  o Visual relationships between key concepts

• Create an outline of your argument and then use it as a framework for the literature search

• Quantitative researcher may chose to organize literature review by:
  o Review of independent variables
  o Review of dependent variables
  o Review of scholarly literature that relates dependent and independent variables
PRIORITIZING MATERIAL FOR YOUR LITERATURE SEARCH

• Journal articles in peer reviewed (juried) journals especially those that describe specific research projects. The research may be quantitative and qualitative depending on the nature of your project.

• Monographs or Books

• Conference Papers/Proceedings- particularly for areas that are new or not well represented in the research literature.

• Using the search engines AND digging in the stacks

• Using the abstracts to decide if a particular article will actually be helpful to you

• Using MAJOR AND MINOR keyword descriptors to find most relevant research
HOW TO SUCCINCTLY SUMMARIZE SOURCES

FOR RESEARCH ARTICLES:

• State the problem being addressed
• Central purpose and concept of study
• Sample, population, subjects
• Highlight KEY results
• Point out methodological limitations if any
• Implications for areas of further study

FOR ESSAYS, NON-EMPIRICAL WORK AND/OR RESEARCH SYNTHESIS:

• Briefly articulate problem being addressed
• Identity primary theme of the piece
• Highlight major conclusions related to theme
• Specify practical application of research outcomes
• Critique methods, logic of argument if necessary

IMPORTANT DO’s AND DON’T’s

• Do create a cogent, thoughtful argument about the importance of your research

• Do use the literature that gives your ideas a foundation to stand on

• Do include contradictory ideas— but also remember to seek out means of countering those ideas.

• Do organize your literature review so that there is smooth transition between various studies cited.

• Do demonstrate the relationships between the works you are citing.

• Do cite everything correctly—be overly cautious if you need to

• Don’t use a study simply because you have it—does it serve a purpose?

• Don’t simply summarize one study after another without demonstrating a connection or transition between issues/ findings

• Don’t create an Annotated Bibliography or Book report—this is a literature review

• Don’t forget to proof read for grammar and spelling errors