Strategies for Writing Literature Reviews

The Graduate Writing Center

Overview:

This workshop is designed to introduce the process of planning, researching, and drafting a literature review. As part of this focus, this workshop will address reading sources critically and writing reviews that place these sources in the context of their field. This workshop will also suggest a variety of organizational patterns for literature reviews and address some major revision concerns and methods for citing sources appropriately.

Goals:

1. To help you understand the purpose and basic requirements of an effective literature review.
2. To help you critically assess research materials.
3. To develop strategies for inventing, organizing, and drafting a literature review.
4. To help you cite sources appropriately.

A Note About This Workshop and the Graduate Writing Center

Please note that these workshops are designed to address general writing principles. As a result, you may not find information in this packet or during the workshop that is directly relevant to your field or your current study. The best way to view these workshops is as opportunities to be exposed to general skills that should transfer across disciplines. That means attending these workshops is **not a substitute** for reading extensively in your field and asking questions of advisors and peers.

The Graduate Writing Center, located in 111-L Kern Building, provides free, one-on-one consultations for graduate students working on any kind of writing project—from seminar papers to presentations to articles to dissertations. Scheduling an appointment with the Graduate Writing Center is an excellent way to follow up on the practical information you receive during the workshops.

To learn more about the Graduate Writing Center, visit the Center's website at http://composition.la.psu.edu/resources/graduate-writing-center/GWC, or you can schedule an appointment directly at https://secure.gradsch.psu.edu/wccal/studentview.cfm. Please note that the appointment schedule is posted one week in advance and appointment times book quickly.

What is a Literature Review?

The literature review is a critical look at the existing research that is significant to the work that you are carrying out. This overview identifies prominent research trends in addition to assessing the overall strengths and weaknesses of the existing research.

Purpose of the Literature Review

- To provide background information about a research topic.
- To establish the importance of a topic.
- To demonstrate familiarity with a topic/problem.
- To "carve out a space" for further work and allow you to position yourself in a scholarly conversation.

Characteristics of an effective literature review

In addition to fulfilling the purposes outlined above, an effective literature review provides a critical overview of existing research by

- Outlining important research trends;
- Assessing strengths and weaknesses (of individual studies as well the existing research as a whole);
- Identifying potential gaps in knowledge;
- Establishing a need for current and/or future research projects.

The Steps of the Literature Review Process

1) *Planning*: identify the focus, type, scope and discipline of the review you intend to write.
2) *Reading and Research*: collect and read current research on your topic. Select only those sources that are most relevant to your project.
3) *Analyzing*: summarize, synthesize, critique, and compare your sources in order to assess the field of research as a whole.
4) *Drafting*: develop a thesis or claim to make about the existing research and decide how to organize your material.
5) *Revising*: revise and finalize the structural, stylistic, and grammatical issues of your paper.

This process is not always a linear process; depending on the size and scope of your literature review, you may find yourself returning to some of these steps repeatedly as you continue to focus your project.

Planning: What type of literature review am I going to write?

As you plan to write your literature review, you'll need to begin by asking, what type of literature review am I writing? What are the focus, type, scope, and discipline of my review?

- **Focus:** What is the specific thesis, problem, or research question that my literature review helps to define?
- **Type:** What type of literature review am I conducting? Will my review emphasize theory, methodology, policy, or qualitative or quantitative studies?
- **Scope:** What is the scope of material that I will include? What types of sources will I be using?
- **Discipline:** What academic discipline(s) will be included (e.g. nursing, psychology, sociology, medicine)?

Reading and Research: What material am I going to use?

Collecting and reading current research on your topic may entail several steps:

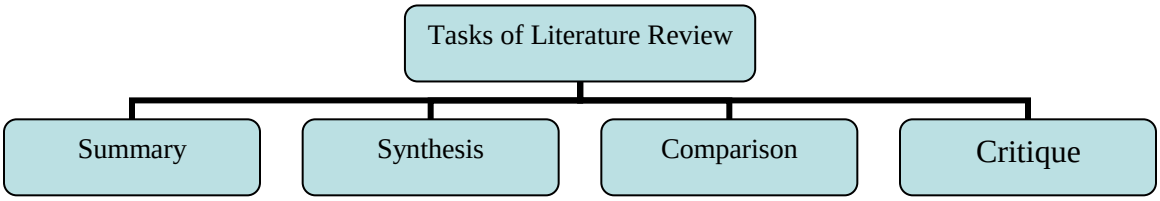
1) **Collect and Read**: Collect literature relevant to your topic that fits within the focus, type, scope, and discipline you have chosen for your review. *Use databases, bibliographies, and recommendations from advisers to identify source material.* Read the sources carefully enough to understand their main arguments and relevance to your study.
2) **Summarize**: Once you have read your source material, consider writing a brief summary of the text using the following questions:
    a. Who is the author? What is the author's standing in the field?
    b. What seems to be the author's main purpose? To offer advice, make practical suggestions, solve a specific problem? To critique? To establish the truth?
    c. What is the author's theoretical perspective? Research methodology?
    d. Who is the intended audience?
    e. What is the principal point, conclusion, thesis, contention, or question?
    f. How is the author's position supported? Does the author consider alternative evidence or explanations?
    g. How does this study fit into the context of the problem or topic? Does this study cite other studies you've seen cited elsewhere? Is it cited by other studies? If so, how?
    h. What does this study add to <u>your</u> project?

Please note: These summaries will probably not get incorporated into your final literature review. Their purpose is to help you clarify your understanding of what each text is arguing and what approach(es) the author(s) uses.

<u>Select</u>. Your next step is to sort through your summaries and select <u>only</u> those books and articles that are most relevant to your project. Resist the temptation to incorporate everything you have read—this will only serve to make a difficult task impossible.

Analyzing: How can I assess existing research?

A literature review is never just a list of studies—it's always an (implicit) argument about a body of research (or it is part of a larger argument). Thus, your literature review needs to contain a balance of summary and analysis. This analysis occurs on two levels: individual studies and the field as a whole. The following four tasks will help you analyze the existing research in your chosen field.



Summary and Synthesis

In your own words, summarize and/or synthesize key findings relevant to your study from each of the major studies. Consider asking the following questions about the field as a whole:

- What do we know about the immediate areas of this research field?
- What are the key arguments, key characters, key concepts, key figures?
- What are the existing debates/theories?
- What kinds of methodologies are generally employed by researchers in this area?

Sample language for summary and synthesis:

- Normadin has demonstrated…
- Early work by Hausman, Schwarz, and Graves was concerned with…
- Elsayed and Stern compared algorithms for handling…
- Additional work by Karasawa et. al, Azadivar, and Parry et. al deals with…

Examples of summary and synthesis:

Under the restriction of small populations, four possible ways [to avoid premature convergence] were presented. The first one is to revise the gene operators. . . . Griffiths and Miles applied advanced two-dimensional gene operators to search the optimal cross-section of a beam and significantly improve results. The second way is to adjust gene probability. Leite and Topping adopted a variable mutation probability and obtained an outperformed result.

Piaget's theory of stages of cognitive development and Erikson's stages of psychosocial development are commonly used for educational psychology courses (Borich & Tombari, 1997; LeFrancois, 1997; Slavin, 1997). Piaget described characteristic behaviors, including artistic

ones such as drawing, as evidence of how children think and what children do as the progress beyond developmental milestones into and through stages of development.

Comparison and Critique

Comparison and critique allow you to see the strengths and weaknesses of your field of research. Remember that you may not recognize strengths and weaknesses until you have read widely in your subject and begin to see which studies are stronger. As you compare studies, you'll begin to be able to offer critique. You may consider asking the following questions:

- How do the different studies relate to one another? What is new, different, or controversial about the various studies?
- What views need to be further tested?
- What evidence is lacking, inconclusive, contradicting, or too limited?
- What research designs or methods seem unsatisfactory?

Sample language for comparison and critique:

- In this ambitious but flawed study, Jones and Wang . . .
- These general results, reflecting the stochastic nature of the flow of goods, are similar to those reported by Rosenblatt and Roll . . .

Examples of comparison and critique:

The critical response to the poetry of Phillis Wheatley often registers disappointment or surprise. Some critics have complained that the verse of this African American slave is insecure (Collins, 1975, p. 78), imitative (Richmond, 1974, pp. 54-66), and incapacitated (Burke, 1991, p. 33, 38)—at worst, the product of a "White mind" (Jameson, 1974, pp. 414-15). Others, in contrast, have applauded Wheatley's critique of Anglo-American discourse(Kendrick 1993, pp. 222-23), her revision of literary models…

The situationist model has also received its share of criticism. One of the most frequently cited shortcomings of this approach centers around the assumption that individuals enter into the work context *tabula rasa*.

Evaluative Adjectives

In order to effectively convey your critique, you will want to use evaluative adjectives. Remember that a critique can be positive as well as negative; what readers want from you is your assessment of the available literature.

Unusual	Complex
Small	Competent
Simple	Important
Exploratory	Innovative
Limited	Useful
Restricted	Careful

Analysis: Putting it all together

Once you have summarized, synthesized, critiqued and compared the relevant literature, you will want to consider the overall picture that emerges. What kinds of common trends do you see? What kinds of conversations are scholars having about your topic? Ask yourself whether the studies you've identified

- Show that the problem or topic has been approached from several different perspectives at once.
- Demonstrate the problem or topic's chronological development.
- Show an ongoing debate between/among competing interpretations.
- Center on a "seminal" study or studies.
- Demonstrate a "paradigm shift."

Your literature review as a whole should demonstrate both what scholars in your field KNOW about your topic—and what they DO NOT know. After assessing the literature in your field, you should be able to answer the following questions:

- Why should we study (further) this research topic/problem?
- What contributions will my study make to the existing literature?

Once you have answered these questions, you are ready to begin drafting your literature review.

Example

How well does the following review balance summary and analysis? (Refer to the questions under "summary and synthesis" and "comparison and critique" to help you assess this review). How is the review organized? Is it a good literature review? Why or why not? How could it be more successful?

> Until recently, many researchers have shown interest in the field of coastal erosion and the resulting beach profiles. They have carried out numerous laboratory experiments and field observations to illuminate the darkness of this field. Their findings and suggestions are reviewed here.
>
> JACHOWSKI (1964) developed a model investigation conducted on the interlocking precast concrete block seawall. After a result of a survey of damages caused by the severe storm at the coast of the USA, a new and especially shaped concrete block was developed for use in shore protection. This block was designed to be used in a revetment type seawall that would be both durable and economical as well as reduce wave run-up and overtopping, and scour at its base or toe. It was proved that effective shore protection could be designed utilizing these units.
>
> HOM-MA and HORIKAWA (1964) studied waves forces acting on the seawall which was located inside the surf zone. On the basis of the experimental results conducted to measure waves forces against a vertical wall, the authors proposed an empirical formula of wave pressure

distribution on a seawall. The computed results obtained by using the above formula were compared well with the field date of wave pressure on a vertical wall.

SELEZOV and ZHELEZNYAK (1965) conducted experiments on scour of sea bottom in front of harbor seawalls, based on the theoretical investigation of solitary wave interaction with a vertical wall using Boussinesque type equation. It showed that the numerical results were in reasonable agreement with laboratory experimental data.

Exercise 1: Balancing Summary and Analysis

The first example below makes some of the mistakes of the review on the previous page: it provides summary rather than analysis and is organized by author (without any clear justification for doing so). What strategies might this author use to better integrate these summaries?

In Gretel Ehrlich's essay, "About Men," she is more interested in describing a particular type of man—a cowboy—than men in general. Contrary to social stereotypes of a "macho, trigger-happy man," she describes cowboys as sensitive and humorous, and gives examples to back up her assertions. Her own appreciation for this often misunderstood type of life-style leads her to argue that these men are "androgynous at the core" (204): men who are rugged, powerful, and courageous—as well as sensitive, generous, and ultimately vulnerable.

Dave Barry, on the other hand, is much less romantic in his approach to describing men. In his essay "Guys vs. Men," Barry humorously categorizes the majority of the male gender as "guys" or "men." Although most of the essay is spent describing what it means to be a guy, he does briefly define men as those who take their manhood seriously, which results in "stupid, behavioral patterns that can produce unfortunate results such as violent crime, war, spitting, and ice hockey" (361). He defines "guys" as being much more laid back, interested in technology simply because it is technology (or "neat stuff" as he calls it), enjoying pointless challenges, having difficulty maintaining a rigid moral code and communicating intimate feelings. He seems to assume that this kind of "guy-ness" is pretty widespread in American society.

Where Barry treats the concept of masculinity humorously, Paul Theroux's treatment of masculinity is serious, with wide-reaching implications. For him, the American version of manhood involves a lack of feeling and critical thinking, requiring men to be stupid, aggressive, and misogynistic. It is, he writes "essentially right-wing, puritanical, cowardly, neurotic, and fueled largely by a fear of women" (539).

Compare this example to the second example below. How has the second example improved on some of the problems in the first example?

In the wake of the various feminist movements of the twentieth century in America, we have become increasingly aware of what it means to be a woman, and the ways in which societal expectations shape the expression of femininity. What such discussions often leave out—or at least gloss over—is a corresponding critical examination of what societal expectations are for men, and what the implications of these expectations may be. A brief comparison of three vastly different essays—Gretel Ehrlich's "About Men," Dave Barry's "Guys vs. Men," and Paul Theroux's "Being a Man"—offers us a useful framework for thinking about the social construction of masculinity, particularly in terms of its limitations.

Underlying all three essays is a sense of masculinity as prescriptive—and limiting. All three acknowledge, at least tacitly, that society often valorizes masculinity as aggressive, unfeeling, and powerful. Although Barry glosses over manhood on his way to defining "guys," he acknowledges that masculine behavior "can produce unfortunate results such as violent crime, war, spitting, and ice hockey" (361). Ehrlich acknowledges the negative limits of manhood by taking pains to establish the androgyny (primarily through proofs of emotional sensitivity and vulnerability) of what is typically considered one of the most "manly" occupations—the cowboy. Theroux, of the three authors, is the most explicit about the negative limits of masculinity, and the ways that expectations about masculine behavior damage our society—both by the resulting misogyny and by the limits masculinity puts on cultural and emotional expression of men.

Drafting: What am I going to write?

As you begin to write your paper, you will want to consider the following:

- *Exigence*: explain why your topic is currently an important area of scholarly concern. You may also want to indicate how this study/literature review contributes to existing research on this topic.
- *Thesis*: offer an argument about the existing literature.
- *Organization*: arrange your material in a logical fashion to support your major claim.
- *Introduction and conclusion*: consider how you will introduce readers to your topic and provide closure to your paper.
- *Citations*: integrate citations smoothly and appropriately into your draft.

Thesis Statement

Your thesis statement offers an argument about the literature. It may:

1. Offer an argument and critical assessment of the literature (i.e. topic + claim).
2. Provide an overview of current scholarly conversations about your topic.
3. Point out gaps or weaknesses in the literature.
4. Relate the literature to the larger aim of the study.

Examples of thesis statements:

1) In spite of these difficulties we believe that preservice elementary art teachers and classroom teachers need some knowledge of stage theories of children's development…[then reviews development theories]

2) Research on the meaning and experience of home has proliferated over the past two decades, particularly within the disciplines of sociology, anthropology, psychology, human geography, history, architecture and philosophy. . . . Many researchers now understand home as a multidimensional concept and acknowledge the presence of and need for multidisciplinary research in the field. However, with the exception of two exemplary articles by Després (1991) and Somerville (1997) few have translated this awareness into genuinely interdisciplinary studies of the meaning of home.

3) Polyvalency refers to the simultaneous binding of multiple ligands on one entity to multiple receptors on another. Polyvalent interactions are ubiquitous in nature, with examples including the attachment of viruses to target cells, bacteria to cells, cells to other cells, and the binding of antibodies to pathogens. . . . In this article, I review recent developments in polyvalency and discuss the numerous opportunities for chemical engineers to make contributions to this exciting field, whose applications include drug discovery, tissue engineering, and nanofabrication.

4) In this article, we review and critique scholarship on place-based education in order to consider the ingredients of a critical place-based pedagogy for the arts and humanities. . . . We begin by reviewing ecohumanism's call for a more locally responsive education in light of the marginalization of place and community. . . . We follow this with a discussion of the practical limitations of both ecohumanist and critical pedagogical approaches. . . . Finally, we argue that place-based educators in the arts and humanities should not only include the materials of local cultural production but also legitimate these as literature and art, in order to confront the politics of space in these discourses that privilege the (trans)national at the expense of place(s).

Organization

One of the most difficult parts of drafting a literature review is deciding how to organize the information you have accumulated. Organizing your literature review according to themes, methodologies, and/or underlying concepts is generally more effective than presenting each source one by one, as it demonstrates your mastery of the topic and provides readers with a better sense of the state of research in that field. Some common organizational approaches include:

Topical

- *Characteristics*: This approach breaks the field into a number of subfields, subject areas, or approaches, and discusses them one by one, sometimes with critiques of each. (Most common pattern). Most useful for organizing a large body of literature that does not have one or two studies that stand out as most important or a clear chronological development.
- *Typical language*: Three important areas of this field have received attention: A, B, and C. A has been approached from two perspectives . . . . The most important developments in terms of B have been . . . . C has also been an important area of study in this field.

Distant to Close

- *Characteristics*: This is a variation of topical organization; studies are organized in terms of their relevance to the current study. This approach starts by describing studies with general similarities and ends with studies most relevant to the specific topic. Most useful for reviews of methodologies or models.
- *Typical language*: Method/model M (slightly similar to current research) addresses . . . . Drawing upon method/model N (more similar to current research) can help . . . . This study applies the procedure used in method/O (most similar to current research) to . . . .

Debate

- *Characteristics*: Also a topical organization, with a chronological element. This organization emphasizes various strands of research in which proponents of various models openly criticize one another. Most useful when clear opposing positions are present in the literature.

- *Typical language*: There have been two (three, four, etc.) distinct approaches to this problem. The first model posits . . . The second model argues that the first model is wrong for three reasons. Instead, the second model claims . . .

Chronological

- *Characteristics*: This approach lists studies in terms of chronological development; it is most useful when a field shows clear development over time, either linear progression of thinking or a linear progression that is interrupted by a paradigm shift.
- *Typical language*: This subject was first studied by X, who found . . . . In (date), Y modified/extended/contradicted X's work by . . . . Today, research by Z represents the current state of the field.

Seminal Study

- *Characteristics*: Begins with a detailed description of one extremely important study. Later work is organized following another pattern (chronological, topical, etc.). Most useful when one study is clearly most important or central in laying the groundwork for future research.
- *Typical language*: The most important research on this topic was the study by X in (date). Following X's study, research fell into two camps (extended X's work, etc.).

Exercise 2: Organizational Patterns

Can you correctly identify the organizational pattern for each of these four examples—seminal, topical, debate, or chronological? Do you recognize any of these from your field? Which one are you most likely to use?

1) Three important aspects of this field have received extended critical attention: (1) length of time students spend on writing literature reviews, (2) the amount of revision typically required by thesis advisers, and (3) the extent to which highlighters help or hinder the review process.

The first of these subjects, the length of time students spend on writing literature reviews, has been studied both in terms of total time and in terms of time spent reading as considered separately from the time spent writing. In terms of total time, Horowitz found that the average number of hours spent on a literature review is 22.6 hours. This is very close to the finding of Smith (1910), who in a study of Harvard Divinity school graduates found an average time of 21.8 hours.

The second major issue in this field, the amount of revision typically required by thesis advisers, has received more complete study. Downs (1980), Thomas (1981) and Hyperion (1997) have concluded that advisors always require at least two drafts of a literature review. In terms of the high end of the spectrum, these studies vary in their findings. Downs found a maximum of 10 drafts, and Thomas found a maximum of 14, while the highest number of revisions required of any single student in Hyperion's study was 274. These studies have all been challenged by Xie's 1994 study, which determined that advisors in social science fields require on average 2 more revisions than advisors in engineering or biological sciences, with some engineering advisors requiring only one revision.

The third major issue in the field….

2) This subject was first studied by Smith in 1910, who found that graduate students writing literature reviews often took much longer to complete the tasks than their initial estimate. Fifty percent less hours than the actual time spent on the task.

In 1955, this finding was contradicted [or expanded, or confirmed, or extended] by Jones, who found that graduate students were able to write literature reviews in just about exactly the amount of time they predicted.

After the influx of large numbers of students in the 1960s, Harbor and Timon (1970) took a different approach to the problem, triangulating the students' estimates of how long the task should take with their advisers' estimates. They argued that the congruence of the adviser's estimate with the student's estimate had a direct correlation to the accuracy of the student's estimate.

Today, Young (1990) and Horowitz (1997) represent the current state of thinking on this question. Young has confirmed Harbor and Timon's findings, while adding the insight that earlier studies likely yielded different results because of the differences among graduate students early in the century and post-World War II. Horowitz's synthetic study offers further confirmation of Young's arguments.

3) There have been two (or three, etc.) distinct approaches to this field. The first model (commonly referred to as the Smith proposition) posits that students are reasonably good at predicting the length of time it will take them to write a literature review. This point of view was first taken by Smith in 1910, who found that students underestimated the time required for the task by only 3%. Confirmation of Smith's general argument can be found in Jones (1935), Horowitz (1955), Timon and Hyperion (1980), with only a few variations. Notably, Horowitz correlated the accuracy of students' perceptions with their advisers' predictions and found that when advisers overestimate by more than 10%, students also overestimate by more than 10%. Left on their own, however, Horowitz found that students could estimate the time required with great accuracy, usually within 2.5% in either direction.

The second model, called the poor predictions model or PPM, has critiqued the Smith proposition on the basis that all students involved in Smith's early study, and in the studies that replicated them, were students in the humanities or liberal arts. Proponents of PPM have shown that, when the mix is between students in engineering and the humanities, the accuracy of students' predictions falls drastically, with students underestimating the time required by an average of 27% in one study (Yakov 1975) and as much as 63% in the most recent study (Hughes 1994).

4) The most important research on this topic was the study by Smith in 1910. This study established the basic facts in this field, as well as serving as the source for future research and hypotheses. Smith studied 374 graduate students in English at fourteen universities in the Northeast. He used the Smith Writing Time Estimate Inventory (SWTE) to obtain prior estimates of the time required to write a literature review for a dissertation. He then observed students writing literature reviews under controlled laboratory conditions. Students wore electronic monitors that determined when they were daydreaming, so that those time periods could be eliminated from the actual performance time (APT). When comparing the estimated performance time (EPT) to the APT, Smith found that students overestimated the time required by approximately 3%.

Following Smith's research, studies on this subject either merely replicated Smith's (Jones 1917, Yakov 1940, Dubronov 1967) or extended Smith's inquiry by comparing student's EPT to adviser's EPT (Hardwick 1978), by adding engineering students to the study (Hughes 1994), or by eliminating the daydream of control monitors (Crawford 1972). All of these studies offered findings that reinforced those of Smith.

Introductions

The main tasks of an introduction are to:

1) Indicate the scope of the literature review.
2) Provide some background to the topic.
3) Demonstrate the importance of the topic or the need for more research on the topic.
4) Make a claim.
5) Offer an overview/map of the structure of the paper.

Example of an introduction:

There is currently much controversy over how nonhuman primates understand the behavior of other animate beings. On the one hand, they might simply attend to and recall the specific actions of others in particular contexts, and therefore, when that context recurs, be able to predict their behavior (Tomasello & Call, 1994, 1997). On the other hand, they might be able to understand something of the goals or intentions of others and thus be able to predict others' behaviors in a host of novel circumstances. Several lines of evidence (e.g., involving processes of social learning; Tomasello, 1997) and a number of anecdotal observations (e.g., Savage-Rumbaugh, 1984) have been adduced on both sides of the question, but few studies directly address the question: Do nonhuman primates understand the intentions of others?

Conclusions

The main tasks of a conclusion are to:

1) Summarize the main findings of your review.
2) Provide closure.
3) Answer the question: So what?
4) Discuss implications for future research (if the literature review stands alone)—OR—connect to the current project.

Example of a conclusion

In summary, although there is some suggestive evidence that chimpanzees may understand others' intentions, there are also negative findings (e.g., Povinelli et al., 1998) and a host of alternative explanations. As a consequence, currently it is not clear whether chimpanzees (or other nonhuman primates) distinguish between intentional and accidental actions performed by others. In contrast, there are several studies indicating that children as young as 14 months of age have some understanding of others' intentions, but the lack of comparative studies makes it difficult to know how children compare to apes. This study is the first to directly compare children, chimpanzees, and orangutans with the use of a nonverbal task in which the subjects were to discriminate between the experimenter's intentional and accidental actions.

Citations

Finally, a successful literature review will not consist simply of a string of linked quotes or paraphrases. Over-reliance on the author's words or ideas suggests "book report" instead of "analytical review." Your goal is to synthesize your summary of a source's ideas with your own opinions and comments on the source material.

Basic rule for citation: If it's not your own idea (and it's not common knowledge), *document it!*

Some tips on appropriate citations:

- In general, you should paraphrase (restate in your own words) the author's main ideas. In order to appropriately paraphrase, your sentence cannot replicate the word choice or sentence structure of the original.
- Use direct quotations sparingly. You may use them to call attention to terms or phrases that have specific resonance in your field, or when the language of the quotation is particularly powerful.
- If you do use a quotation, make sure you introduce the quote and/or explain its significance so that readers understand how the quotation adds to your argument.
- Because a literature review is a review of other people's ideas, it is crucial that you use appropriate in-text citation and complete references. Be sure to follow whichever style guide is standard for your field (APA, Chicago, MLA, etc.).
- Keep accurate citation records of your sources as you read and compile your notes; this will make your final task of integrating quotations and providing appropriate citations much easier.

Using a quotation

Despite pleasant depictions of home life in art, the fact remains that for most Seventeenth-century Dutch women, the home represented a curtailment of some degree of independence. Art historian Laurinda Dixon writes that "for the majority of women, however, home was a prison, though a prison made bearable by love and approval" (1995, p. 136).

Using a paraphrase or summary

Despite pleasant depictions of home life in art, the fact remains that for most Seventeenth-century Dutch women, the home represented a curtailment of some degree of independence. Art historian Laurinda Dixon argues that the home actually imprisoned most women. She adds that this prison was made attractive by three things: the prescriptions of doctors of the day against idleness, the praise given diligent housewives, and the romantic ideal based on love and respect (1995, p. 136).

Some things to avoid

Plagiarism: Despite pleasant depictions of home life in art, the fact remains that for most Seventeenth-century Dutch women, *home was a prison, though a prison made bearable by love*

and approval. (This writer has lifted the italicized phrase directly from the source; this writer needs to paraphrase the plagiarized phrase, or put it in quotation marks, and cite the author.)

Irrelevant quotation: In paintings, images of caged birds were often associated with the bonds of marriage or the voluntary imprisonment of love. Somewhat ironically, Dixon notes that the "image of the fragile, passive, housebound woman has always been a reflection more of male wish fulfillment than of female reality" (3). (This quote has nothing to do with the claim made in the first sentence.)

Unintroduced quotation: In some quarters, Seventeenth-century Dutch women were accorded considerable respect. "Beverwijck solves the dichotomy between the public and private woman's role by lauding the superior qualities of women that make them not only capable rulers, artists and savants, but also good daughters, wives, and mothers" (Moore, 1994, p. 642). (Although this quote relates to the topic of the paragraph, the author needs to explain this relationship.)

Information Prominent Citations

Information prominent citations make the information contained in the study being referenced the main focus of the sentence(s) describing the study.

Information prominent citations

- Refer to general concepts or ideas in the field
- Report factual information: information that is accepted as scientific fact or general facts about the research
- Use the present tense

Information	*Reference*
In most deserts of the world, transitions between topographic elements are abrupt.	(Smith, 1968).
The research on teacher cognition is driven by two basic assumptions	(Clark & Peterson, 1986).

General statements about research (a type of information prominent citation)

- Refer to previous research activity or the literature related to a particular topic in general terms
- Use present perfect tense
- Provide a reference if the information should be attributed to another source

Level	*Verb*	*Fact*	*Reference*
Little research	has been conducted	on teachers' beliefs in instructional influence.	
The literature on teaching effectiveness	has established	few theoretical grounds to guide the selection of meaningful variables	(Doyle, 1978).

Author Prominent Citations

Author prominent citations make the author of the study being referenced the main focus of the sentence(s) describing the study.

Author prominent citations

- Refer to studies more closely related to your own
- Report the findings of individual studies
- Use the simple present tense

Author(s)	*Reference*	*Information*
Leopold	(1921)	listed foods, but gave no quantitative data.
Allen and Reiner	(1)	described graphically the differences between various vibration scales

Author prominent citations often use a verb of report (either objective or subjective) to introduce the findings.

Author(s)	*Reference*	*Verb of Report*	*That*	*Findings*
Magano and Allen	(1986)	found showed reported noted observed	that	writing teachers approached classroom instruction differently depending on their beliefs about writing.
Munby	(1982)	suggested	that	the study of teachers' theoretical beliefs is essential since teacher thinking can only be understood in relation to the psychological context within which teachers plan and decide.

Weak author prominent citations (a type of author prominent citation)

- Focus on a research area studied by several authors
- Refer to the authors as a group
- Use present perfect tense

Topic	*Verb*	*Fact*	*Reference*
Several researchers	have proposed	that teachers possess certain theoretical assumptions about teaching	(Harste & Burke, 1977; Duffy & Anderson, 1982; Deford, 1983).

Tense in Author Prominent Citations

The verb of report used to introduce the findings is always in the past tense, while the verb tense used to describe the findings varies according to the attitude taken toward the findings themselves.

Findings limited to one study—If you believe the findings are restricted to the specific study you are citing, use the past tense in the complement verb**.**

Author	*Reference*	*Verb of Report*	*Findings* (Past)
Abramson	(1974)	reported	that mobile students *had* lower academic performance.

Findings presented as tentative by the author(s)—If you are citing findings that were viewed as tentative by the original authors, or were suggestions or proposals rather than findings, use tentative verbs for the verb of report and a modal auxillary (can, may, should) with the complement verb.

Author(s)	*Reference*	*Verb of report*	*That*	*Tentative Findings* (Modal Auxiliary + Verb)
Van Bennekom	(5)	believed proposed suggested hypothesized	that	aluminum *may* be common in diatom residues.

Findings accepted as fact—If you believe that the findings are generally accepted as fact, use the present tense in the complement verb.

Author(s)	*Reference*	*Verb of Report*	*That*	*Findings* (Present)
Leu and Knizer	(1987)	found	that	teachers' theoretical beliefs *influence* their instructional practices

Revising: How can I fine-tune my draft?

As you complete your draft and begin to revise, here are some things you may want to address:

- *Title*: Is my title consistent with the content of your paper? Does it help orient readers toward the topic?
- *Introduction*: Does my introduction achieve the main tasks of an introduction? (see p.10).
- *Thesis*: Does my review have a clear claim? Does it provide an assessment of the field?
- *Body*: Is the organization clear? Have I provided headings where appropriate?
- *Topic sentences*: Have I clearly indicated the major idea(s) of each paragraph?
- *Transitions*: Does my writing flow (between sentences and paragraphs)? Are there places where the movement between topics is rough or unclear?
- *Conclusion*: Does my conclusion achieve the main tasks of a conclusion? (see p. 10)
- *Spelling and Grammar*: Are there any major spelling or grammatical mistakes?

For more tips on revising, see: http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/general/gl_edit.html

The information for this presentation was taken from the following sources:

"Writing up Research: Using the Literature." Language Center. Asian Institute of Technology. http://www.lagnauges.ait.ac.th/EL21LIT.HTM

Taylor, Deanna and Margaret Procter. "The Literature Review: A Few Tips on Conducting It." Writing at the University of Toronto. http://www.utoronto.ca.litrev.html

"Writing Literature Reviews." Temple University Writing Center. http://www.temple.edu/writingctr/student_resources/lit_reviews.htm

Sources for examples:

Ball, E. & Lai, A. (2006). Place-based pedagogy for the Arts and Humanities. *Pedagogy, 6*, 2: 261-287.

Dixon, L. (1995). *Perilous chastity: Women and illness in pre-Enlightenment art and medicine*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP.

Glenn, C. (2002). *Making sense: A new rhetorical reader*. New York: Bedford/St. Martin's. [Source for Dave Barry, Gretel Ehrlich, and Paul Theroux essays].

Kane, R. S. (2006). Polyvalency: Recent developments and new opportunities for chemical engineers. *AlChE Journal, 55*, 11: 3638-3644.

Mallett, S. (2004). Understanding home: A critical review of the literature. *The Sociological Review, 52*, 1: 62-89.

Moore, C. N. (1994). Not by nature but by custom. *The Sixteenth Century Journal, 25*, 637-638.