

LITERATURE REVIEW

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Lecture format

- **What is literature**
- **Goals of literature review**
- **Conducting a literature review**

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What is literature Review (LR)

- **LITERATURE**

1. ‘everything that has been written in the field’, **OR**
2. ‘the [recognised] writing on a given subject’.
3. Implies two things:
 - **FIRST**, that the writing we are talking about is in some sense ‘respectable’, worth reading for academic study; and
 - **SECOND**, that it is probably therefore quite technical and specialised. What it does not mean in writing academic papers is “creative writing of recognized artistic value”.

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The basis of Literature Review

- *Literature Review* is based on the assumption that
 - **knowledge accumulates** and that we **learn from** and **build on** what other have done.
- i.e., Scientific investigation/Research is not done in isolation.
- We Read others’ Researches to
 - 1) **Compare**,
 - 2) **Replicate**, or
 - 3) **Criticise** them for weaknesses.

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Types of literature (publications)

| TYPE | EXAMPLE | AUTHOR | PURPOSE | STRENGTH | WEAKNESS |
|--|---|--|--|--|--|
| Peer-reviewed scholarly journal | <i>Social Science Quarterly, Social Forces, Journal of Contemporary Ethnography</i> | Professional researchers | Report on empirical research studies to professionals and build knowledge | Highest quality, most accurate, and most objective with complete details | Technical, difficult to read, requires background knowledge, not always current issues |
| Semischolarly professional publication | <i>American Prospect, Society, American Demographics</i> | Professors, professional policymakers, politicians | Share and discuss new findings and implications with the educated public | Generally accurate, somewhat easy to read | Lacks full detail and explanation, often includes opinion mixed in with discussion |
| Newsmagazines and newspapers | <i>Wall Street Journal, Christian Science Monitor, Newsweek, Time</i> | Respected journalists | Report on current events in an easy-to-read, accessible way for the lay public | Easy to read, accessible, very current | Semiaccurate, incomplete, distorted, or one-sided views |
| Serious opinion magazines | <i>Nation, Human Events, Public Interest, Commentary</i> | Professors, professional policymakers, politicians | Offer value-based ideas and opinions to the educated public | Carefully written and reasoned | One-sided view and highly value based |
| Popular magazines for the public | <i>Esquire, Ebony, Redbook, Forbes, Fortune</i> | Journalists, other writers | Entertain, present and discuss current events for lay public | Easy to read, easy to locate | Often shallow, inaccurate, and incomplete |

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The Goals of LR

- Survey of what has been written about your topic
 - “a systematic review of the published work about the topic of your study.”
- “... to justify the importance of the study and to create distinctions between past studies and a proposed study.
 - this component can be called “setting the research problem within the ongoing dialogue in the literature” (Creswell, 2003: 81).
- New studies need to add to the literature or to extend or retest what others have examined.

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- According to Neuman (2004: 89) LR is meant to:
 - To demonstrate a **familiarity with a body of Knowledge**.
 - To show the **Path of Prior Research** and How a current project (i.e. Your research thesis/project) is linked to it.
 - To **integrate and summarise** what is known in an area.
 - To **learn from others** and **stimulate** new Ideas.

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conducting a literature review

1. Define and Refine a topic.

We need to begin a literature review with a clearly defined, well-focused research question and a plan.

2. Design a search strategy

Set **parameters** on your search. E.g.,

- How much time you will devote to it?
- How far back in time you will look?
- The minimum number of research reports you will examine?
- How many libraries you will visit?

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Reading the Literature

According to Neuman (2011) reading techniques fall into a basic pattern involving four stages:

Stage 1

- Try to gain some quick impression of what the book is about;
 - what question or questions the author is trying to answer;
 - how the book is structured; and
 - Whether the questions tackled and the answers put forward are relevant to your needs.

You can do this by glancing over the cover or jacket, the preface (if any), the list of contents, and the index. Try then, to gain an overall impression of the book and its structure.

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Stage 2

If you decide that the book is relevant to your research subject, then

- you must ***formulate the question or questions that you anticipate will be answered in the book.***
 - This enables you to locate the required information and
 - will save you time and effort as you cannot afford to go on reading aimlessly through the book.
- In addition, at this stage you must adopt an ***active and analytical attitude.***

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Stage 3

After formulating the main question or questions that you anticipate the book will answer

- you must review the book to look for answers for your questions: involves locating the parts of the book where your questions are dealt with.
- Then look for the answers or conclusions that the author has drawn, and also at how the author arrived at them.
- Also look at arguments and evidence put forward to support the views expressed and you will make an attempt to assess the validity of the evidence and the structure of the argument which utilizes such evidence.
 - There are, however, cases where conclusions are unsupported, arguments or evidence are non-existent, or sometimes there is no conclusion at all.

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Stage 4

Supposing that you have extracted the relevant information from the written report...

- You must now record your data in note form, so that later you can retrieve it and use it easily at the appropriate stage.

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NOTE-TAKING: Reasons

According to Freeman and Meed (1993: 43), these are:

- ***To help you remember something***
 - You can't hope to retain a whole lecture, book or discussion permanently in your memory, so instead you make notes of the most important items and use the notes for revision and reference.
- ***To keep a permanent record of something***
 - If you attend a lecture or visit somewhere as part of your course, your notes may be your own record of what took place.

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- ***To help in your planning***
 - Notes can be a good way of starting off a project or a piece of writing; you can note down the main things you need to do, the books you need to read, and so on.
- ***To reorder material***
 - Making notes, which can be reshuffled, provides one of the most useful opportunities for rearranging material in whichever form is most convenient to you.

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- **To help you understand what you are learning:**
Writing things down yourself forces you to think them through properly and is one of the best ways of remembering them.
- **To help you to concentrate**
If you are listening to someone talking, your mind may easily wander; making notes helps to keep you active and involved.
- **To show other people**
You may want other learners to benefit from the notes you have made.

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Note-taking techniques

Smith and Smith 's (1994: 93–103) 'golden rules' to take successful notes.

1. Clarify your purpose.
2. Write all your notes on the same sized paper or cards.
3. When you begin, set out your notes properly: In making a full bibliographic record of the source of the notes you are writing, include:
 - Author (or speaker);
 - Date of publishing or of event (e.g. lecture, interview);
 - Title of book, article, conference, lecture etc.;
 - Where published or held;
 - Detailed page numbers referring to the individual points, opinions and data which are noted;
 - (and usefully,) the library catalogue number or other information to enable you to locate the book, article etc. quickly at a later date.

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4. Use the title of the chapter or lecture to help you anticipate the main ideas of the text.
5. Keep your own ideas, comments and criticisms separate from those in the text.
6. When you finish, sum up what you have written.

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