Chapter 1 : Literature Review

A literature review surveys scholarly articles, books and other sources relevant to a particular issue, area of research, or theory, and by so doing, providing a description, summary, and critical evaluation of these works.

The introduction and literature review sections will introduce the problem and provide general information. The following section will describe each of these parts in more detail. Additional information can be found in the Resources section of this module and in the Suggested Readings. Title The title should be specific and indicate the problem the research project addresses using keywords that will be helpful in literature reviews in the future. Abstract The abstract is used by readers to quickly review the overall content of the paper. Journals typically place strict word limits on abstracts, such as words, making them a challenge to write. The abstract should provide a complete synopsis of the research paper and should introduce the topic and the specific research question, provide a statement regarding methodology and should provide a general statement about the results and the findings. Because it is really a summary of the entire research paper, it is often written last. Introduction The introduction begins by introducing the broad overall topic and providing basic background information. It then narrows down to the specific research question relating to this topic. It provides the purpose and focus for the rest of the paper and sets up the justification for the research. Literature Review The purpose of the literature review is to describe past important research and it relate it specifically to the research problem. It should be a synthesis of the previous literature and the new idea being researched. The review should examine the major theories related to the topic to date and their contributors. It should include all relevant findings from credible sources, such as academic books and peer-reviewed journal articles. Methods The methods section will describe the research design and methodology used to complete to the study. The general rule of thumb is that readers should be provided with enough detail to replicate the study. Results In this section, the results of the analysis are presented. How the results are presented will depend upon whether the research study was quantitative or qualitative in nature. This section should focus only on results that are directly related to the research or the problem. Graphs and tables should only be used when there is too much data to efficiently include it within the text. This section should present the results, but not discuss their significance. The hypothesis should be answered and validated by the interpretation of the results. This section should also discuss how the results relate to previous research mentioned in the literature review, any cautions about the findings, and potential for future research. This section should be an alphabetized list of all the academic sources of information utilized in the paper. The format of the references will match the format and style used in the paper.

Chapter 2 : The Literature Review: A Few Tips On Conducting It | Writing Advice

A literature review surveys books, scholarly articles, and any other sources relevant to a particular issue, area of research, or theory, and by so doing, provides a description, summary, and critical evaluation of these works in relation to the research problem being investigated.

Government Websites Definition A literature review surveys scholarly articles, books and other sources relevant to a particular issue, area of research, or theory, and by so doing, providing a description, summary, and critical evaluation of these works. Literature reviews are designed to provide an overview of sources you have explored while researching a particular topic and to demonstrate to your readers how your research fits into the larger field of study. Importance of a Good Literature Review A literature review may consist of simple a summary of key sources, but it usually has an organizational pattern and combines both summary and synthesis, often within specific conceptual categories. A summary is a recap of the important information of the source, but a synthesis is a re-organization, or a reshuffling, of that information in a way that informs how you are planning to investigate a research problem. The analytical features of a literature review might: The purpose of a literature review is to: Place each work in the context of its contribution to the understanding of the research problem being studied, Describe the relationship of each work to the others under consideration, Identify new ways to interpret, and shed light on any gaps in previous research, Resolve conflicts amongst seemingly contradictory previous studies, Identify areas of prior scholarship to prevent duplication of effort, Point the way in fulfilling a need for additional research, and Locate your own research within the context of existing literature. All contect is from The Literature Review created by Dr. First, there are the primary studies that researchers conduct and publish. Second are the reviews of those studies that summarize and offer new interpretations built from and often extending beyond the original studies. Third, there are the perceptions, conclusions, opinion, and interpretations that are shared informally that become part of the lore of field. In composing a literature review, it is important to note that it is often this third layer of knowledge that is cited as "true" even though it often has only a loose relationship to the primary studies and secondary literature reviews. Given this, while literature reviews are designed to provide an overview and synthesis of pertinent sources you have explored, there are several approaches to how they can be done, depending upon the type of analysis underpinning your study. Listed below are definitions of types of literature reviews: Argumentative Review This form examines literature selectively in order to support or refute an argument, deeply imbedded assumption, or philosophical problem already established in the literature. The purpose is to develop a body of literature that establishes a contrarian viewpoint. Given the value-laden nature of some social science research [e. However, note that they can also introduce problems of bias when they are used to to make summary claims of the sort found in systematic reviews. Integrative Review Considered a form of research that reviews, critiques, and synthesizes representative literature on a topic in an integrated way such that new frameworks and perspectives on the topic are generated. The body of literature includes all studies that address related or identical hypotheses. A well-done integrative review meets the same standards as primary research in regard to clarity, rigor, and replication. Historical Review Few things rest in isolation from historical precedent. Historical reviews are focused on examining research throughout a period of time, often starting with the first time an issue, concept, theory, phenomena emerged in the literature, then tracing its evolution within the scholarship of a discipline. The purpose is to place research in a historical context to show familiarity with state-of-the-art developments and to identify the likely directions for future research. Methodological Review A review does not always focus on what someone said [content], but how they said it [method of analysis]. This approach provides a framework of understanding at different levels i. Systematic Review This form consists of an overview of existing evidence pertinent to a clearly formulated research question, which uses pre-specified and standardized methods to identify and critically appraise relevant research, and to collect, report, and analyse data from the studies that are included in the review. Typically it focuses on a very specific

empirical question, often posed in a cause-and-effect form, such as "To what extent does A contribute to B? The theoretical literature review help establish what theories already exist, the relationships between them, to what degree the existing theories have been investigated, and to develop new hypotheses to be tested. Often this form is used to help establish a lack of appropriate theories or reveal that current theories are inadequate for explaining new or emerging research problems. The unit of analysis can focus on a theoretical concept or a whole theory or framework. Structure and Writing Style I. Thinking About Your Literature Review The structure of a literature review should include the following: An overview of the subject, issue or theory under consideration, along with the objectives of the literature review, Division of works under review into themes or categories e. Does the work ultimately contribute in any significant way to an understanding of the subject? The Development of the Literature Review Four stages: Problem formulation -- which topic or field is being examined and what are its component issues? Literature search -- finding materials relevant to the subject being explored. Data evaluation -- determining which literature makes a significant contribution to the understanding of the topic. Analysis and interpretation -- discussing the findings and conclusions of pertinent literature. Consider the following issues before writing the literature review: Clarify If your assignment is not very specific about what form your literature review should take, seek clarification from your professor by asking these questions: Roughly how many sources should I include? What types of sources should I review books, journal articles, websites? Should I summarize, synthesize, or critique your sources by discussing a common theme or issue? Should I evaluate the sources? Find Models Use the exercise of reviewing the literature to examine how authors in your discipline or area of interest have composed their literature reviews. Read them to get a sense of the types of themes you might want to look for in your own research or ways to organize your final review. Narrow the Topic The narrower your topic, the easier it will be to limit the number of sources you need to read in order to obtain a good survey of relevant resources. A good strategy is to begin by searching the HOMER catalog for books about the topic and review their contents for chapters that focus on more specific issues. You can also review the subject indexes of books to find references to specific issues that can serve as the focus of your research. For example, a book surveying the history of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict may include a chapter on the role Egypt has played in mediating the conflict. Consider Whether Your Sources are Current Some disciplines require that you use information that is as current as possible. This is very common in the sciences where research conducted only two years ago could be obsolete. However, when writing a review in the social sciences, a survey of the history of the literature may be what is needed because what is important is how perspectives have changed over the years or within a certain time period. Try sorting through some other current bibliographies or literature reviews in the field to get a sense of what your discipline expects. You can also use this method to consider what is consider by scholars to be a "hot topic" and what is not. Ways to Organize Your Literature Review Chronological of Events If your review follows the chronological method, you could write about the materials according to when they were published. This approach should only be followed if a clear path of research building on previous research can be identified and that these trends follow a clear chronological order of development. For example, a literature review that focuses on continuing research about the emergence of German economic power after the fall of the Soviet Union. By Publication Order your sources by publication chronology, then, only if the order demonstrates a more important trend. However, progression of time may still be an important factor in a thematic review. The only difference here between a "chronological" and a "thematic" approach is what is emphasized the most: Note however that more authentic thematic reviews tend to break away from chronological order. A review organized in this manner would shift between time periods within each section according to the point made. Methodological A methodological approach focuses on the methods utilized by the researcher. For the Interbnet in American presidential politics project, one methodological approach would be to look at cultural differences between the portrayal of American presidents on American, British, and French websites. Or the review might focus on the fundraising impact of the Internet on a particular political party. A methodological scope will influence either the types of documents in the review or the way in which

these documents are discussed. In other words, a chronological review would have subsections for each vital time period; a thematic review would have subtopics based upon factors that relate to the theme or issue. However, sometimes you may need to add additional sections that are necessary for your study, but do not fit in the organizational strategy of the body. What other sections you include in the body is up to you but include only what is necessary for the reader to locate your study within the larger scholarship framework. Here are examples of other sections you may need to include depending on the type of review you write: For instance, you might explain that your review includes only peer-reviewed articles and journals. Questions for Further Research: What questions about the field has the review sparked? How will you further your research as a result of the review? When writing your review, keep in mind these issues. Use Evidence A literature review in this sense is just like any other academic research paper. Your interpretation of the available sources must be backed up with evidence to show that what you are saying is valid. Be Selective Select only the most important points in each source to highlight in the review. The type of information you choose to mention should relate directly to the research problem, whether it is thematic, methodological, or chronological. Use Quotes Sparingly Some short quotes are okay if you want to emphasize a point, or if what the author said just cannot be rewritten in your own words. Sometimes you may need to quote certain terms that were coined by the author, not common knowledge, or taken directly from the study. Do not use extensive quotes as a substitute your own summary and interpretation of the literature. Summarize and Synthesize Remember to summarize and synthesize your sources within each paragraph as well as throughout the review. For example, weave references to other sources into what you are writing but maintain your own voice by starting and ending the paragraph with your own ideas and wording. Common Mistakes to Avoid The most common mistakes made in reviewing social science research literature are that the researcher: Thinking interdisciplinarily about a research problem can be a rewarding exercise in applying new ideas, theories, or concepts to an old problem. For example, what might cultural anthropologists say about the continuing conflict in the Middle East? In what ways might geographers view the need for better distribution of social service agencies in large cities than how social workers might study the issue? However, particularly in the social sciences, thinking about research problems from multiple vectors is a key strategy for finding new solutions. Consult with a librarian about identifying research databases in other disciplines; almost every discipline has at least one comprehensive database devoted to indexing its research literature. While conducting a review of the literature, maximize the time you devote to this part of writing a research paper by thinking broadly about what you should be looking for and evaluating. Review not just what scholars are saying, but how are they saying it. How are they structuring their ideas? What methods have they used to study the problem? What sources have they cited to support of their conclusions? How have they used non-textual elements [e.

Chapter 3 : Writing a Discussion Section - Interpret the Results

The main focus of an academic research paper is to develop a new argument, and a research paper is likely to contain a literature review as one of its parts. In a research paper, you use the literature as a foundation and as support for a new insight that you contribute.

Introduction One of the major claims made regarding qualitative methods is that they diverge from scientific explanation models in terms of the need for hypothesis testing. A scientific hypothesis is based on a background theory, typically assuming the form of a proposition whose validity depends on empirical confirmation. Otherwise, a hypothesis is nothing but an imaginative conjecture. Moreover, when researchers do not obtain empirical confirmation for their hypothesis, the theory in question or part of it may not be able to predict relevant aspects of the phenomenon under investigation. Their primary interest is to achieve understanding Verstehen of a particular situation, or individuals, or groups of individual, or sub cultures, etc. In summary, qualitative methods are primarily inductive, in contrast to the deductive methods of experimental science. The debate centers around how we justify that what we know is valid. More specifically, induction is the form of reasoning based on empirical observation in the process of developing scientific laws and theories. Thus, induction negotiates the relationship between empirical reality and its theorization, in addition to the production and validation of knowledge. For example, qualitative methods have been accused of reflecting the problems pointed out by philosophers of science e. In other words, qualitative researchers tend to prioritize logic emerging from experience, preferring to expand their knowledge from it as opposed to using a priori, deductive, concepts. Qualitative researchers have for decades reacted to this distorted view of the field e. Of the many examples that could be cited, I highlight grounded theory methodology GTM. There are differences among researchers using this approach e. GTM rests in a state of permanent tension between 1. What is the role of theory in qualitative research? Alternatively, what function do empirical data play in the theorizing process? Answering these questions is important for the continuing advancement of qualitative methods as well as the inclusion of this field in the discussions of similar issues that have been witnessed in the philosophy of science. As a starting point, I recapitulate the main characteristics of the so-called problem of induction, arguing that it raises important questions regarding the value of theory in science. Next, I review ways of describing the theory-empirical data relationship that have been proposed in order to address the problem of induction in the realm of the philosophy of science. Against this backdrop, I discuss how qualitative researchers have dealt with the question of induction, using a "generic analytic cycle" common to qualitative methods as an illustration. In the last sections, I propose reconsidering the role of theory in qualitative research. I argue for the need to recover a substantial definition of theory in these studies. According to HUME [] , there are two primary ways to validate knowledge: Knowing facts is equivalent to identifying their causes and effects. However, observing facts, describing them in their manifestation, does not amount to science. There must be a leap from the visible to the invisible, and herein lies induction: The inductive leap allows us, based on singular facts, to create statements about sets of facts and their future behavior. What permits us to go from a singular fact to a statement about facts in general or future facts? According to HUME [] , induction does not involve a logical base. The "statement about all" is not contained in the "statement about some. HUME claims that it is merely habit that causes us to think that if the sun rose today, it will do so once again tomorrow. There is therefore a psychological component in this knowledge-building process. In other words, HUME demonstrated that passing from some to all is an emotionally and imaginatively based process, and that the root of any knowledge is sensory experience. The past may not be the best guarantee for current knowledge; otherwise, how can we explain unpredictable events? In the well-known analogy cited by POPPER , the fact that we observe innumerable white swans does not allow us to assume that there will never be a black one. Another relevant question is distinguishing between empirical generalizations, based on the observation of a recurring number of singular cases, and

universal generalizations, in the form of laws. Without resorting to metaphysics, how do we attest to the truth of universal laws, which establish necessary non-accidental connections between events, based on observations of singular cases only QUINE, , p. According to the skeptic HUME, all what we can do is create hypotheses about how things should occur, drawing from our own empirical experiences or habits; we can never determine the ultimate fundamentals of the phenomena. They argue that a large number of observations, obtained experimentally over a wide range of circumstances, allow inference from the empirical particular to the theoretical universal. Knowledge, they assert, can be constructed on the basis of repeated observations, to the point where no observational statements conflict with the law or theory thereby derived, or up to an established saturation point. He purports that if there is no logical support to infer a universal law from singular experience, there must be support for the opposite. That is, we can legitimately allege that a theory is true or false based on singular observational statements. Thus, the order is inverted: There is no observation without theory, since perception itself is influenced by expectations, previous experiences, and accumulated knowledge. At the same time, theoretical assertions without empirical content do not tell us much about the world. Theory must be confirmed or falsified by experience. From this emerges the well-known hypothetical-deductive method. The empirical world is supposed to determine if such a conclusion is confirmed true or pure speculation. For example, LAKATOS , states that a theory consists of a complex of universal statements embedded in particular research programs , rather than a single statement, like a hypothesis, that can be tested straightforwardly. This calls into question the value of the falsifiability of discrete hypotheses. Moreover, QUINE , , , proposes that we conceive theories holistically, as a web of interlocked statements, such that concepts can only be defined in terms of other concepts that make up the network and confer meaning on them, as well as relate them to experience. As a result of these criticisms, it is concluded that the value of theories is not restricted to allowing the elaboration of hypotheses to be individually tested; they are essential to explain the phenomena to be investigated. So, the primary focus of researchers should not be on data, but rather on the phenomenon, which is embedded into a given theoretical web. Relationship Between Theory and Empirical Data One of the most widely prevalent ways of thinking about the theory-data relationship is that the latter verify the former. This viewpoint is associated with the philosophy of logical positivism, which introduces a distinction between direct observation which is not theory-laden , and theory, whose value depends on the justification allowed by empirical data. Thus, theoretical statements should have empirical content, if they are to be trusted as claims about the world. The truth about a theoretical statement depends on a "correspondence theory" of truth: Positivists vehemently reject any pretense of metaphysical justification for scientific activity, arguing for the impossibility of synthetic propositions, that is, non-contingent statements. Only analytic propositions for example, logical and mathematical statements can be aprioristically true, since they have no empirical content and therefore say nothing about what really takes place in the world. However, a difference between them and the classical empiricists of the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries, including HUME, is that the positivists gave a linguistic and logical formulation to their theory of knowledge. A sentence with meaningfulness is a true sentence, corroborated verified by experience. In its strong version SCHLICK, , the criterion of verifiability assumes the existence of basic propositions that are capable of serving as the basis for the process of empirical observation. Thus, a statement is only significant true when we can, at least initially, verify it using basic propositions that indicate its meaningâ€"for example, a statement which is caused, as immediately as possible, by perceptive experiences AYER, In its weak version REICHENBACH, , the concept of probabilistic confirmation has been a field of investigation by the logical positivists, who sought to develop a system of inductive logic capable of determining the probability of a hypothesis being true as a function of a set of available data. From the perspective of the previously mentioned hypothetical-deductive model, it is up to empirical data to falsify a hypotheses developed aprioristically by researchers. But what does it mean for a hypothesis to be falsifiable? It means that the hypothesis cannot in principle be true in and of itself. A hypothesis results from an exercise of intellect, creative capacity, and consideration of context, since available knowledge offers us concepts,

ideas, relationships, etc. Thus, in principle, as a product of human intellect, any hypothesis can be true, even though it apparently makes no sense. Ultimately, the data tell us if our hypotheses are consistent. If confirmed, they contribute to human progress; if falsified, they should be substituted for by others. This shows that a theory must be always subject to revision, reconsideration, and improvement. In addition to those concerns already cited, another exists, related to the extent of falsification. Considering science from a historical and sociological perspective, several theories that initially seemed to have been falsified, which would indicate that they should be discarded, later proved to be true. Furthermore, when a hypothesis is falsified, it does not necessarily mean that the entire theory from which it was deduced should be discarded. This seems to show there is something more involved in the relationship between theory and empirical dataâ€"for realists, for example, this "something more" is the structure of the world itself WORRALL, , which is represented by the theory, if the latter is to be true. When associated with statistical models, for example based on frequency distribution, theories identify or represent repetition and patterns in a particular class of events. They seek order in the world. From a realist perspective, theories must be interpreted literally: There is a reality independent from us, and in order for theories to be scientific, they must tell us the true nature of this reality. This poses several problems for realists. One, which is of interest here, is the problem of how to explain the existence of two or more empirically successful theories explaining the same phenomenon. It indicates that there is no way to guarantee an essential, definitive connection between theory and any particular facts and properties of the world. The same phenomenon can be legitimately explained in different ways, using distinct theories and theoretical models. Therefore, the aim of a theory would not be "pegged" to the world, but would be designed to help us represent the world in aspects relevant to a proposed transformation of part of it. According to this pragmatic or antirealist perspective, phenomena are not discovered by science, but constructed by it. This argument depends on the premise that we can never come to know the true nature of the world due to the existence of unobservable entities. Phenomena themselves can be examples of the unobservable, since their postulation depends on their incorporation into a theoretical web. This reorders the relationship among a number of key concepts: However, a strong empiricist culture likely persists in our research activities, sustaining a certain "theoretical allergy" and conceptualizing theory and theories in an excessively restrictive sense. Does this also apply to qualitative research? To answer this question, I will now discuss the problem of induction and the role of theory in qualitative research. Induction and Theory in Qualitative Research 4. As a result of this growth, we have today a complex, diversified field influenced by a large number of schools, authors, and epistemological perspectives. It therefore seems risky to make assertions regarding qualitative methods which are best given in the plural. Nevertheless, I will attempt to do so in this section. Specifically, I will illustrate what seems to me to be the analytic core of many qualitative data analysis methods: I argue that this analytic cycle exposes the tensions inherent in the process of developing inductive theory from empirical data.

Chapter 4 : Components of a Research Paper - Center for Innovation in Research and Teaching

A literature review is a piece of discursive prose, not a list describing or summarizing one piece of literature after another. It's usually a bad sign to see every paragraph beginning with the name of a researcher.

Bibliography Definition A literature review surveys books, scholarly articles, and any other sources relevant to a particular issue, area of research, or theory, and by so doing, provides a description, summary, and critical evaluation of these works in relation to the research problem being investigated. Literature reviews are designed to provide an overview of sources you have explored while researching a particular topic and to demonstrate to your readers how your research fits within a larger field of study. Conducting Research Literature Reviews: From the Internet to Paper. Importance of a Good Literature Review A literature review may consist of simply a summary of key sources, but in the social sciences, a literature review usually has an organizational pattern and combines both summary and synthesis, often within specific conceptual categories. A summary is a recap of the important information of the source, but a synthesis is a re-organization, or a reshuffling, of that information in a way that informs how you are planning to investigate a research problem. The analytical features of a literature review might: Give a new interpretation of old material or combine new with old interpretations, Trace the intellectual progression of the field, including major debates, Depending on the situation, evaluate the sources and advise the reader on the most pertinent or relevant research, or Usually in the conclusion of a literature review, identify where gaps exist in how a problem has been researched to date. The purpose of a literature review is to: Place each work in the context of its contribution to understanding the research problem being studied. Describe the relationship of each work to the others under consideration. Identify new ways to interpret prior research. Reveal any gaps that exist in the literature. Resolve conflicts amongst seemingly contradictory previous studies. Identify areas of prior scholarship to prevent duplication of effort. Point the way in fulfilling a need for additional research. Locate your own research within the context of existing literature [very important]. Sage, ; Hart, Chris. Doing a Literature Review: Releasing the Social Science Research Imagination. Sage Publications, ; Jesson, Jill. Doing Your Literature Review: Traditional and Systematic Techniques. Political Science and Politics 39 January A Step-by-Step Guide for Students. Types of Literature Reviews It is important to think of knowledge in a given field as consisting of three layers. First, there are the primary studies that researchers conduct and publish. Second are the reviews of those studies that summarize and offer new interpretations built from and often extending beyond the primary studies. Third, there are the perceptions, conclusions, opinion, and interpretations that are shared informally that become part of the lore of field. In composing a literature review, it is important to note that it is often this third layer of knowledge that is cited as "true" even though it often has only a loose relationship to the primary studies and secondary literature reviews. Given this, while literature reviews are designed to provide an overview and synthesis of pertinent sources you have explored, there are a number of approaches you could adopt depending upon the type of analysis underpinning your study. Types of Literature Reviews Argumentative Review This form examines literature selectively in order to support or refute an argument, deeply imbedded assumption, or philosophical problem already established in the literature. The purpose is to develop a body of literature that establishes a contrarian viewpoint. Given the value-laden nature of some social science research [e. However, note that they can also introduce problems of bias when they are used to make summary claims of the sort found in systematic reviews [see below]. Integrative Review Considered a form of research that reviews, critiques, and synthesizes representative literature on a topic in an integrated way such that new frameworks and perspectives on the topic are generated. The body of literature includes all studies that address related or identical hypotheses or research problems. A well-done integrative review meets the same standards as primary research in regard to clarity, rigor, and replication. This is the most common form of review in the social sciences. Historical Review Few things rest in isolation from historical precedent. Historical literature reviews focus on examining research

throughout a period of time, often starting with the first time an issue, concept, theory, phenomena emerged in the literature, then tracing its evolution within the scholarship of a discipline. The purpose is to place research in a historical context to show familiarity with state-of-the-art developments and to identify the likely directions for future research. Methodological Review A review does not always focus on what someone said [findings], but how they came about saying what they say [method of analysis]. Reviewing methods of analysis provides a framework of understanding at different levels [i. This approach helps highlight ethical issues which you should be aware of and consider as you go through your own study. Systematic Review This form consists of an overview of existing evidence pertinent to a clearly formulated research question, which uses pre-specified and standardized methods to identify and critically appraise relevant research, and to collect, report, and analyze data from the studies that are included in the review. The goal is to deliberately document, critically evaluate, and summarize scientifically all of the research about a clearly defined research problem. Typically it focuses on a very specific empirical question, often posed in a cause-and-effect form, such as "To what extent does A contribute to B? Theoretical Review The purpose of this form is to examine the corpus of theory that has accumulated in regard to an issue, concept, theory, phenomena. The theoretical literature review helps to establish what theories already exist, the relationships between them, to what degree the existing theories have been investigated, and to develop new hypotheses to be tested. Often this form is used to help establish a lack of appropriate theories or reveal that current theories are inadequate for explaining new or emerging research problems. The unit of analysis can focus on a theoretical concept or a whole theory or framework. Sage Publications, ; Kennedy, Mary M. Systematic Reviews in the Social Sciences: Blackwell Publishers, ; Torracro, Richard. Terms, Functions, and Distinctions. Systematic Approaches to a Successful Literature Review. Structure and Writing Style I. Thinking About Your Literature Review The structure of a literature review should include the following: An overview of the subject, issue, or theory under consideration, along with the objectives of the literature review, Division of works under review into themes or categories [e. The critical evaluation of each work should consider: Methodology -- were the techniques used to identify, gather, and analyze the data appropriate to addressing the research problem? Was the sample size appropriate? Were the results effectively interpreted and reported? Does the work ultimately contribute in any significant way to an understanding of the subject? Development of the Literature Review Four Stages 1. Problem formulation -- which topic or field is being examined and what are its component issues? Literature search -- finding materials relevant to the subject being explored. Data evaluation -- determining which literature makes a significant contribution to the understanding of the topic. Analysis and interpretation -- discussing the findings and conclusions of pertinent literature. Consider the following issues before writing the literature review: Clarify If your assignment is not very specific about what form your literature review should take, seek clarification from your professor by asking these questions: Roughly how many sources should I include? What types of sources should I review books, journal articles, websites; scholarly versus popular sources? Should I summarize, synthesize, or critique sources by discussing a common theme or issue? Should I evaluate the sources? Find Models Use the exercise of reviewing the literature to examine how authors in your discipline or area of interest have composed their literature review sections. Read them to get a sense of the types of themes you might want to look for in your own research or to identify ways to organize your final review. Narrow the Topic The narrower your topic, the easier it will be to limit the number of sources you need to read in order to obtain a good survey of relevant resources. A good strategy is to begin by searching the HOMER catalog for books about the topic and review the table of contents for chapters that focuses on specific issues. You can also review the indexes of books to find references to specific issues that can serve as the focus of your research. For example, a book surveying the history of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict may include a chapter on the role Egypt has played in mediating the conflict, or look in the index for the pages where Egypt is mentioned in the text. Consider Whether Your Sources are Current Some disciplines require that you use information that is as current as possible. This is particularly true in disciplines in medicine and the sciences where research conducted becomes obsolete very

quickly as new discoveries are made. However, when writing a review in the social sciences, a survey of the history of the literature may be required. In other words, a complete understanding the research problem requires you to deliberately examine how knowledge and perspectives have changed over time. Sort through other current bibliographies or literature reviews in the field to get a sense of what your discipline expects. You can also use this method to explore what is considered by scholars to be a "hot topic" and what is not. Ways to Organize Your Literature Review Chronology of Events If your review follows the chronological method, you could write about the materials according to when they were published. This approach should only be followed if a clear path of research building on previous research can be identified and that these trends follow a clear chronological order of development. For example, a literature review that focuses on continuing research about the emergence of German economic power after the fall of the Soviet Union. By Publication Order your sources by publication chronology, then, only if the order demonstrates a more important trend. However, progression of time may still be an important factor in a thematic review. The only difference here between a "chronological" and a "thematic" approach is what is emphasized the most: Note however that more authentic thematic reviews tend to break away from chronological order. A review organized in this manner would shift between time periods within each section according to the point made. Methodological A methodological approach focuses on the methods utilized by the researcher. For the Internet in American presidential politics project, one methodological approach would be to look at cultural differences between the portrayal of American presidents on American, British, and French websites. Or the review might focus on the fundraising impact of the Internet on a particular political party.

Chapter 5 : Writing the Literature Review

Literature reviews, meta-analyses, research articles, and theory pieces. Literature Reviews and Meta-Analyses Literature reviews and meta-analyses are both considered "review articles" and are similar in.

Double space; include heading on the first page top left ; place shortened title and page number in the header of every page top right ; see Format Instructions Title: First draft to be copied and pasted into a forum window; final draft to be submitted as an uploaded file on Canvas. Student Sample Literature Review The Literature Review consists of an introduction, summary of scholarly sources, a discussion and evaluation of the sources including disputes and disagreements , and a conclusion in which you put forth your own potential original research questions that will contribute something new to the available understanding on the topic. A minimum of five scholarly sources not the same ones you used in the Background Essay are required for this essay. At least two of your scholarly articles must come from the online database Academic Search Premier available from the class guide ; other scholarly sources can come from Google Scholar , scholarly book chapters published by university presses , or research studies published by credible organizations. The Literature Review in the Research Process A literature review is a section of a final research report, and can also be a stand-alone essay; both are required for your topic in this class. So you are not going to write an essay on a Shakespearean play or some other literary text. A scholarly literature review is part of any final research study or report since it demonstrates that you are familiar with what other other scholars have already studied and published on your subject, and allows you then to map out what new arena or question you would like to pursue. There is, after all, no point in reinventing the wheel, i. You would lack credibility and appear naive and uninformed if your analysis has already been convincingly put forth or refuted. The purpose of a literature review is fourfold: The first is to summarize and assess the state of existing knowledge on your narrowed topic. What knowledge exists and is generally accepted with regard to your topic? Are there important differences or disagreements among scholars? Are there significant problems or limitations with any of the research studies? Which research methods were employed in the various research studies, which were not, and with what consequences? What questions remain unanswered? What aspects or approaches seem relatively unexplored? Through the process of reviewing existing knowledge you will also develop a more nuanced understanding of your topic, the second reason for conducting a literature review. This new understanding leads to the third reason, to raise questions for further research. In other words, what are you left wondering? What questions or aspects of the issue do you find have been unanswered, underexplored or overlooked? How would our understanding be improved by pursuing those questions or angles? At the end of this process, you will hopefully find that you can identify several potential research questions. The final purpose of the literature review, based on the sources that have been assessed and the new questions that have been raised, is to identify one specific and significant research question that identifies a gap in the current state of knowledge or analysis about your topic. This research question will drive your research from this point forward as you build towards the Final Research Article, in which you present an argument that attempts to answer your own research question. Review the Assignments page to get a sense of how this assignment fits in with the other major assignments this quarter, namely, the Background Essay and the Final Research Article. Remember that you will continue learning about your research topic throughout the quarter, and you will revise this essay to include as a section in your Final Research Article. Though the research process is recursive and, frankly, messy by nature, it is helpful to visualize and organize your progress through the various stages. Required Elements of the Literature Review Length: At least five-six pages of APA-manuscript text not including the References page. See the Holman Library Class Guide for this course. At least five scholarly articles must be different from those you used in the BE , from which you quote at least once. At least two articles must come from the electronic database such as Academic Search Premier select "peer-reviewed" from the search screens of these databases. Others can come from Google Scholar , scholarly

books, or research studies from credible organizations. See the Scholarly Sources webpage for a fuller discussion of the different kinds of sources. Of the five required sources, one of them can be a scholarly article from Rereading America if it is relevant for your topic and research question no newspaper articles, informational websites, Wikipedia, etc. At least two of your sources must be no older than two years. The sources should be diverse; you should not have more than two of the five articles from the same author or periodical; if you do have more than two from the same author or periodical, then you should have more than the minimum five sources. Ideally, your collection of scholarly sources should include a variety of social science disciplines as well as different research methods. Abstracts and summaries of articles are not sufficient by themselves; you must have access to the entire article. When you find interesting abstracts on the internet, you can use Interlibrary Loan to request the full-text articles or books from Holman Library. The introduction presents your narrowed topic or area of inquiry, whether from the conclusion of your Background Essay or based on a later formulation, and an overview of the various subtopics, issues, and problems that scholarly researchers have studied which will also be reflected in the topic sentences of your Summary paragraphs. Also include a thesis statement that provides your evaluation of the state of current knowledge and of what needs further study, which should anticipate the specific research question you will arrive at in the end. The summary-of-sources section presents the research, knowledge, and analysis that the literature offers concerning your narrowed research topic. Each Summary paragraph should have a clear topic sentence that clarifies the scholarly research on a particular subtopic you will be presenting. The paragraphs in this section should be organized according to the issues or aspects studied, the accepted interpretations or theories, the disputed claims, and any unanswered questions. Do not simply summarize each source in separate paragraphs. The paragraphs in your summary should focus on specific issues, not necessarily on individual authors. For example, if you were studying prison reform, one paragraph might present what three scholars have reported regarding education programs in prison, even though one or more of those authors might show up again in another paragraph on visitation rights. If a paragraph happens to focus on only one author or article, make sure this is for a good reason, for example, the article represents the authoritative discussion of a particular issue; in such a case, the content of that paragraph should be limited to the issue and not turn into a general summary of the article. This section is your discussion and evaluation of the articles from your summary section and not your discussion of the issues themselves. Instead, you are interpreting and evaluating the knowledge presented in the summary section in order to raise questions for further research gaps in knowledge. As you present your evaluation, do so cautiously with thorough analysis and explanation. As you discuss and evaluate the knowledge and issues with regard to your narrowed topic, raise questions for further study along the way. Refer directly to all of the authors from your Summary section. Please note that even though you may take issue with aspects of the research and findings in your sources, it is very rare for the discussion to include a complete dismissal of any one source. If you read a source and find that it has nothing or little of value to offer on your topic and research question, then do not include it in the literature review in the first place. By choosing to include sources in your literature review, you imply that you have already judged them to offer something that is worth consideration. Further, it is important to distinguish between evaluation for analytical purposes and evaluation for entertainment purposes. You should not be concerned with whether the material you have reviewed is entertaining. The purpose, rather, is to demonstrate how considering various arguments and approaches improves our understanding and engages us in new questions. Proposed Research Question and Significance include section heading: The conclusion synthesizes the knowledge confirmed through the discussion and evaluation section while identifying areas for further research. After reviewing the literature, what do we know? There should be an apparent connection between the new areas of inquiry and the summary of existing knowledge. Bring your conclusion to a close by identifying and discussing the significance of a specific research question that will drive the rest of your research project. The specific research question you present in your conclusion should be somewhat original. Rather the research question should attempt to advance the already-existing knowledge and understanding around your narrowed topic. This can include an

inquiry into causes and effects; the evaluation of already-existing policies, programs or proposals; unforeseen or non-obvious connections and consequences; etc. Try coming up with a single sentence answer hypothesis to your own research question in order to assess its viability and originality. Note that your Final Research Article will ask you to present your further investigation of your research question, and will ask you to develop an academic argument based on your best possible answer to it the hypothesis. References and In-text Citations: An APA-style References page, with all of the sources referred to in your literature review, must be included at the end of your essay. Include at least one quotation from each of your five required sources, though you may also use paraphrase for these and other any other sources. Follow APA guidelines for in-text citations to set up each quotation or citation grammatically with a signal phrase or attributive tag, and include a comment or explanation for each major quoted passage. Only include "article title" in quotation marks or book title in italics or organization name if no author is specified. In most cases, you are better off paraphrasing or summarizing, which you must do carefully to avoid plagiarism see CR, Ch. Quote other authors sparingly and with purpose: Remember that the proper use of citations is a very important part of your grade! Additional Considerations Search Strategies: Whether in the Academic Search Premier database with the scholarly peer reviewed journals box checked from your search window or in Google Scholar , try a wide variety of search terms. For example, combine your topic somewhat narrowed with only one of the following additional search terms at a time: Then conduct even more searches by combining your narrowed topic with one of the following research methods at a time: You may need to place some phrases in quotation marks to signal to the search engines that you are looking for a particular group of words, e. The audience for a literature review is a somewhat hypothetical body of fellow researchers. These are people interested in the same issues and who are usually working in a similar field. Thus, you are expected to use vocabulary appropriate to your subject matter. If you choose to write about this subject, then you are expected to familiarize yourself with that word and others and use them accurately in your explanations and analysis. Note and look up commonly used terms as you run across them in your reading. Consider how they are used in context and with what connotations. Acquiring the vocabulary of the discussion is an important part of being able to express yourself with clarity and precision. Showing that you are conversant with the vocabulary and concepts common to the discussion is also an important part of establishing your authority to analyze the contributions of others. In tone, consider that you are writing for a body of professionals. They want to see that you are reasonably objective. Betraying a strong emotional investment may cast doubt on your credibility. Thus, your tone and style should emphasize that you are interested in furthering understanding rather than establishing that you are right or winning an argument. Moreover, the focus in this essay is not on you; it is on the texts and topic you are analyzing and synthesizing. Therefore, do not use the first person I, me, my, mine.

Chapter 6 : The Elements of a Proposal

WRITING THE CRITIQUE Critical reviews for research are systematic. They begin at the title, and review each section until the reference list at the end. It is useful to ask yourself questions about the purpose of each component of the article, and whether it.

Posted on Dec 7, in Issue 2, December , Volume 11 Naomi Elliott, Trinity College Dublin Agnes Higgins, Trinity College Dublin Abstract Grounded theory research students are frequently faced with the challenge of writing a research proposal and using a theoretical framework as part of the academic requirements for a degree programme. Drawing from personal experiences of two PhD graduates who used classic grounded theory in two different universities, this paper highlights key lessons learnt which may help future students who are setting out to use grounded theory method. It identifies key discussion points that students may find useful when engaging with critical audiences, and defending their grounded theory thesis at final examination. Key discussion points included are: Introduction The aim of this paper is to help grounded theory research students deal with challenges arising from doing grounded theory research within an academic context and meeting the requirements of their degree programmes. Although each grounded theory research project gives rise to a unique set of challenges, when working in an academic environment that is unfamiliar with grounded theory, there are common problems that many students and researchers experience. For students, these are key issues, not only at the start of their research project, but at the end stage when defending their grounded theory thesis at final examination. Key discussion points are also identified that students may use when engaging with critical audiences when discussing grounded theory method with other researchers, writing up the thesis, defending at viva or doing conference presentations. Tensions between Grounded Theory and Traditional Research Approaches Since its introduction by Glaser and Strauss in , grounded theory is increasingly being used as a research method in diverse areas. However, the hegemony of traditional research approach gives rise to difficulties for those researchers who wish to pursue an approach that is outside the traditional research conventions. Many of the tensions between grounded theory and traditional research stem from differences that are rooted in the differences between inductive and deductive enquiry. By contrast, traditional research provides for deductive enquiry, a means of proving or disproving existing theory and requires researchers to identify the research problem from the extant literature. The traditional research process begins with a literature review, which is used to inform the research question and theoretical framework that ultimately guides data collection and analysis. At doctoral level, consideration of the theoretical framework underpinning the research study may also be needed in order to satisfy research supervisors and degree requirements. Developing a Proposal to meet Academic Requirements A key challenge facing research students is how to develop a research proposal that meets academic requirements. At doctoral level, this is critical, as generating new knowledge is a criterion for the award of a PhD e. It also helps researchers to narrow the focus of the topic, define the research question, select a theoretical framework, and justify the research methodology. A critical review of the literature is used to generate the research question and consequently, for many students, precedes the selection of a research methodology. In other words, students complete a literature review for the purpose of generating a research question, and it is at this stage they are in a position to select an appropriate methodology to answer the research question. It was only after the required research proposal is completed and grounded theory methodology is selected as the most appropriate methodology that they become PhD grounded theory research students. In order to provide a justification for the research proposal, a requirement for registration, a systematic analysis of the decision-making literature was carried out to determine what was already known and what was not known. The potential risk that the review of the clinical decision-making literature could colour data analysis was recognised. Strategies that enable researchers stay close to the data are critical if the potential bias from a literature review is to be avoided. What category does this incident indicate? As coding progressed, in vivo codes were eventually superseded by analyst specified categories.

However, in vivo codes served an important function in the early stages of data analysis by keeping the researcher close to the data. Being aware that the risk of literature colouring data analysis was greatest when coding the initial interview transcripts, Elliott did a review of her early codes and memos to check if they were linked to the literature. The timing of this review was important, and carried out after the grounded theory had been generated. In so doing, the researcher was not influenced by the literature during the analytic process and theory generation. This review showed that very few codes were linked to the decision-making literature, and as data gathering and analysis progressed, these early codes were superseded by new codes. Gradually, issues relating to the nurse-patient relationship became the focus of data analysis. The link between the nurse-patient relationship and clinical decision-making had not been identified previously in the literature. Although the process of reviewing codes for similarities against preliminary literature reviews is not commonly reported in grounded theory research literature, it provided a useful means of demonstrating to any critic that the theory and its constituent components were grounded in the data. In summary, although Elliott carried out a critical review of the decision-making literature as part of justifying her PhD research proposal, the literature was not used to inform interview questions. And [sic] what property of what category does this incident indicate? Being convinced that sexuality was an ever present issue within nurse-client relationships; Higgins was interested in how nurses coped, addressed and responded to issues of sexuality within clinical practice. Similarly to Elliott, a detailed review of both nursing and mental health literature was conducted, under the mentorship of a librarian, to ensure that nothing of importance was omitted. This strategy was employed not just for academic registration, but to enhance the likelihood of receiving national funding for the study. The literature review suggested that limited research was conducted in the area, and no framework or model existed that explained or aided understanding of the phenomenon of interest. Glaser, on their respective method. Classic grounded theory was selected for a number of reasons. Secondly, the classic approach, although no less rigorous, seemed flexible enough to allow freedom to follow leads and use a variety of data collection methods, as ideas emerged. Thirdly, the notion of finding a latent pattern of behaviour also fitted with her idea of developing a theory of practice Glaser, ; ; ; ; As part of the research proposal for funding, Higgins developed an interview schedule consisting of a list of possible questions for discussion. Following a workshop with Dr. Consequently, the real issues would become obscured. As the study unfolded and categories began to be developed, questions aimed at identifying properties of categories were identified and explored in subsequent interviews. In this way, the interviews gradually became more focused as the emerging concepts determined both the questions asked and the development of a theoretical sample. Once coding of data commences, the aim is to get the best concept that fits and authentically reflects the data, as opposed to developing concepts by conjecture or importing received concepts from the literature. While these concepts did emerge, they only accounted for a small amount of the final theory. Throughout the analysis a combination of in vivo codes come from the language of the participants , and in vitro codes constructed by the researcher to reflect the data were used. Once the grounded theory concepts were identified, they were modified, sharpened and verified throughout the data collection and analysis phase of the study and concepts that best fitted the data were selected. Similarly, categories, properties and their relationships were checked repeatedly, using the constant comparative process and theoretically sampling, to see if they patterned out in both new data and in previously collected data. This self-correcting process ensured that pet ideas and assumptions were not imposed. Glaser and Strauss acknowledge that no researcher can erase from their mind all the literature or theory they know before beginning research. Another strategy used was peer debriefing. This approach helped identify ungrounded assumptions prior to commencing and throughout the study; thus, stopping the creative mind from being a conjecturing mind Glaser, Conceptual ideas may be conjectured from the literature and superimposed, as opposed to emerging from the data. Since the main concern of the participant cannot be known beforehand, neither can one know the pertinent literature to review. Once the main process has emerged and theory development is at a stage that literature will not derail the researcher from seeing what is going on in the data, the required literature becomes apparent and is reviewed. In keeping with the maxim all

is data; the literature is then treated like any other source of data, and woven into the theory in the constant comparative process. Although discourse on the place and role of literature in grounded theory research is important, what is missing is a discussion about other key determinants of data gathering and analysis. As such, key determinants that directly influence the process are, the questions used to collect data, and the questions asked of the data during the analysis. Researchers bring their own mix of theoretical, academic, professional and personal knowledge into the research field, so the crux of the issue is what questions are used in gathering data and later, what questions are asked of the data during analysis. Grounded theory research students can demonstrate this by specifying what questions were used to gather data, and how data analysis informed the subsequent interview questions. Importantly, the logic of the line of inquiry can be demonstrated by tracing the progressive modification of interview questions from the initial interview questions to those used in the final interview. Finally, this issue needs to be discussed in the context of differences between inductive and deductive enquiry. What Theoretical Framework is Underpinning your Study? For Anfara and Mertz, theoretical frameworks are not synonymous with methodological issues e. By contrast others, such as Wu and Volker , adopt a broader view of theoretical framework, and recommend that researchers articulate an understanding of the philosophical and theoretical underpinnings of the research approach they are using. Given the predominant view in the literature that asserts a link between grounded theory and symbolic interactionism, Elliott initially reasoned to her supervisor that symbolic interactionism Blumer, was an appropriate theoretical framework for her study. However, it was only after the grounded theory was developed, when Elliott critically examined her theory to determine how symbolic interactionism had influenced its development that she realised it had not. It became apparent that data gathering and analysis had focused on how advanced practitioners resolved their main concerns when making clinical decisions for patients without influence from symbolic interactionism. Grounded theory methodology does not require symbolic interactionism. The theoretical discussion which characterises a doctoral thesis can be achieved after the grounded theory has been developed, when the new theory is critically discussed with the relevant extant literature. The key issue, therefore, is how can grounded theory researchers know what theories are relevant until their grounded theory has been developed? If grounded theory research students are asked to discuss the issue of theoretical frameworks early in their PhD, perhaps one way of demonstrating that they are theoretically aware is to discuss the theory of grounded theory, in other words the epistemology and the inductive approach to generating new theory. Although a preliminary review of relevant literature and theories e. Foucault theory of power was conducted prior to the enquiry, they were not used as a theoretical framework to guide the study but, as Glaser suggested, to help develop theoretical sensitivity. Theoretical sensitivity is the ability to sense the subtleties of the data. The following memo was recorded six month after Higgins had commenced her study. Just realising what was happening in a recent seminar when I presented my research. In addition to enhancing her analytical skills, this approach also provided her with some insights into the theoretical codes other theorists used to weave their theory together, and enhanced her understanding of the variety of theoretical codes discussed by Glaser in his text on theoretical coding Glaser, There is no doubt that the role of existing theory in grounded theory differs from that of the traditional research approaches. This is not to suggest, however, that the generation of a grounded theory proceeds in isolation of existing theory, or that a grounded theory is atheoretical. What Glaser objects to, is the selection of a theoretical framework prior to commencing a grounded theory study, and using theory to preconceptualise the problem or concepts. However, Glaser does advise the researcher to read in areas other than the substantive area throughout the study. Theoretical sensitivity can also be gained by a preliminary review of the literature in the substantive area, or from personal experience in the clinical field. However, a distinction must be made between using sensitising concepts to help sharpen ones awareness, and using theoretical concepts to impose a framework on the data. Grounded theory research students can demonstrate scholarliness by addressing the issue of theory from a research-theory perspective, as opposed to a theory-research perspective. In addition, research students need to address the distinction between inductive and deductive enquiry, and acknowledge the subtle

interaction between induction and deduction within classic grounded theory. Although classic grounded theory is primarily an inductive methodology, in that it commences with the data and builds a theory based on the systematic analysis of the data, to classify it as wholly inductive is to ignore its deductive element as one theoretically samples. Thus, the researcher starts by coding, conceptualising and generating hypothesis about the relationship between concepts, and then begins to deduce where more data can be found theoretical sampling for comparative purposes. Thus, grounded theory is both inductive and deductive, with deduction primarily in the service of induction. The logic and interaction between inductive and deductive enquiry can be demonstrated by tracing how concepts and theory were generated from raw data and importantly, by demonstrating how grounded theory methods, such as theoretically sampling and constant comparative analysis, are used to test emergent concepts throughout the research process. Conclusion Preparing a research proposal and using a theoretical framework to underpin a study are two key challenges for many grounded theory researchers in academic environments. These issues usually present in the early stages of the research process yet, they are relevant at the end stage when students are required to defend their choice of methodology at examination, or at research conferences. The lessons learnt from the experiences of two PhD graduates, who survived using grounded theory in an academic world, provide future students with key discussion points to consider when engaging with critical audiences, and discussing grounded theory methods with other non-grounded theory researchers. Grounded theory researchers can demonstrate academic scholarliness by focusing on the following four key discussion points: