

RESEARCH METHODS IN COUNSELLING: LITERATURE REVIEW

25TH MARCH 2019



AIMS

- Literature Review
- Choosing a topic
- Guidance
- Project Proposal – Oral Presentation Assessment

THE LITERATURE REVIEW.....



- A focused reading with a SPECIFIC purpose.....

WHAT IS A LITERATURE REVIEW?

A literature review is:

A systematic, explicit, and reproducible method for identifying, evaluating, and synthesising the existing body of completed and recorded work produced by researchers, scholars, and practitioners'

(Fink, 2005)



WHAT IS A LITERATURE REVIEW?

A literature review is :

'A summary of previous research on a topic. The literature review surveys scholarly articles, books, and other sources relevant to a particular area of research or interest. Within the review the author provides a description, summary and critical evaluation of each source, i.e. the strengths and weaknesses. The literature review may also identify gaps or controversies in the literature and topics needing further research.

(Camden Carroll Library, 2016)



WHAT IS A LITERATURE REVIEW NOT?

- An annotated bibliography
- Just a descriptive list
- NOT a basic summative report of everything you're read on the topic- you need to be *saying* something

WHY IS A LITERATURE REVIEW IMPORTANT??!



- The purpose of the lit review is to convey to the reader previous knowledge and facts established on a topic, their strengths and weaknesses;
- Allows the reader to be updated with the state of research in a field and any contradictions that may exist with other studies;
- Places the research in the context of its contribution to the understanding of the subject under review;
- Identifies new ways to interpret and sheds light on any gaps in previous research
- Gives an opportunity to see what has and what has not been investigated!

MORE ON WHY A LITERATURE REVIEW IS IMPORTANT



- Enables us to learn how others have defined and measured key concepts;
- Allows us to discover how our topic of research is related to the work of others;
- Place's one's original or in this case, independent work, in the context of the extant literature.....

TIP

- *You aren't expected to come up with something completely original, but you are expected to independently research your chosen topic using relevant material already in the field. It is this synthesis of research that makes a successful project.....*

APPROACHING A LITERATURE REVIEW



- To complete a literature review requires planning, time, reading, writing, drafting, reflection and editing.
- A successful literature review has a firm idea of the research problem and an understanding of the research framework/paradigm.
- In order to refine the research problem, conduct preliminary research which will help you narrow your focus and identify key search terms.

APPROACHING THE LITERATURE REVIEW



- You are expected to 'place' your research in the existing academic literature.
- Simply describing the literature should be avoided. A critical and analytical judgement which demonstrates how/where your work is best placed as well as work that needs developing is essential.
- Your work should contribute to existing literature in the field.
- Ensure consideration is given to the methodological and/or theoretical arguments that inform the literature.
- Be aware of how research paradigms influence the research.

DEVELOPING YOUR ARGUMENT



This takes PLANNING!

- Survey and critique the literature (more on that in a bit);
- *'You must build a case for what is known about your topic and determine how this knowledge addresses the research question'* (Machi and McEvoy, 2009)

DEVELOP TWO TYPES OF ARGUMENT

Academic writing style



1. Argument of discovery: develop findings that present the current state of knowledge about your research interest
2. Argument of advocacy: analyse and critique the knowledge gained from developing the argument of discovery to answer the research question.....

MORE ARGUMENT DEVELOPMENT

- Analyse the claims within the lit to develop your arguments
- Claim- the argument's declaration or assertion
- Evidence- data that define and support the claim

Types of claims:

Fact
Worth
Policy
Concept
Interpretation



REMEMBER!



You must present all sides of a question; your argument must be balanced!

READING AND RESEARCHING- SOME GUIDANCE:

Collect and read material. Summarise sources- ask yourself:

- Who is the author?
- What is the author's main purpose?
- What is the author's theoretical perspective? Research methodology?
- Who is the intended audience?
- What is the principal point, conclusion, thesis, contention, or question?
- How is the author's position supported?
- How does this study relate to other studies of the problem or topic?
- What does this study add to your project?
- Select only relevant books and articles.



GETTING DOWN TO IT- THE FOUR ANALYSIS TASKS OF THE LITERATURE REVIEW.....

Summarise

Synthesise

Critique

Compare

SO, THE LITERATURE REVIEW.....

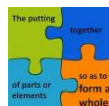


- Goes beyond simply listing relevant literature;
- Is a critical essay;
- Assesses the range of literature available;
- Is a critical summary of the literature;
- Examines the background against which your research interest is set.

SUMMARY AND SYNTHESIS

In your own words, summarise and/or synthesise the key findings relevant to your study:

- What do we know about the immediate area?
- What are the key arguments, key characteristics, key concepts or key figures?
- What are the existing debates/theories?
- What common methodologies are used?



EXAMPLES OF LANGUAGE FOR SUMMARY AND SYNTHESIS:

- Elkins (2009) has demonstrated...
- Early work by Holmes, South, and Graves (1989) was concerned with...
- Elsa and Stern (2010) compared algorithms for handling...
- Additional work by Kara et al., (2007) and Alan and Parry (2010) deals with...



EXAMPLE: SUMMARY AND SYNTHESIS

'Piaget's theory or 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 behaviours, including artistic ones such as drawing, as evidence of how children think and what children do as they progress beyond developmental milestones into and through stages of development.'

COMPARISON AND CRITIQUE

Evaluates the strengths and weaknesses of the work:

- How do the different studies relate? What is new, different, or controversial?
- What views need further testing?
- What evidence is lacking, inconclusive, contradicting, or too limited?
- What research designs or methods seem unsatisfactory?



EXAMPLES OF LANGUAGE FOR COMPARISON AND CRITIQUE:

- In this ambitious but flawed study, Jones and Wang (2011)...
- These general results, reflecting the cyclical nature of the flow of goods, are similar to those reported by Rosenblatt and Roll (2014)...

[illegible]

EXAMPLE: COMPARISON AND CRITIQUE

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

[illegible]

EVALUATIVE ADJECTIVES

Unusual
Small
Simple
Exploratory
Limited
Restricted
Flawed



Complex
Competent
Important
Innovative
Impressive
Useful
Careful

[illegible]

IN SUMMARY:



As you read, try to see the 'big picture'- your literature review should provide an overview of the state of research.

- Include only those source materials that help you shape your argument. *Resist the temptation* to include everything you've read!
 - Balance summary and analysis as you write.
- Keep in mind your purpose for writing:**
- How will this review benefit readers?
 - How does this review contribute to your study?
 - Be meticulous about citations.

NEXT WEEK

- Project Proposal – Oral Presentation Guidance
