

**Innovate, Educate, and Transform**



# **The Literature Review**

Presented

by

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# Where to Start?

- **You will be provided a starting point or theme for your inquiry.**
- **Key articles will be provided to start your search.**

**Start with the articles provided and identify who they cite in their discussion relevant to your area of interest. Go to the reference list and find the article – read the article to see if it is a fit.**



# Google Scholar

- **Your best friend is Google Scholar.**  
<http://scholar.google.com/>
- **First check your settings under Scholar Preferences.**
  - Select Search Articles under Collections
  - Enter University of Southern California in the Find Library Box and then select it.
  - Select Show links to import citations into RefWorks. RefWorks is free through the USC Library.
  - Select Save Preferences



# Google Scholar-Save Searches

- **An important part of searching is to save the key words and phrases as used in the search for future use. Use a word document to keep track of how you search for key information.**
  - **You can copy and paste your list into a work document or print to pdf.**
  - **There are a couple of ways to start.**
    - **Enter the Author and Year for the article you are looking for or the name of the article.**
    - **You can download the pdf or look for it in the USC system.**
    - **You can see who cited the article for similar articles. This tab is located just below the article description.**
    - **You can search related articles. This tab is located just below the article description.**
    - **You can import citation information into RefWorks using the tab below the article description.**
    - **Select current sources.**
- **Again—Keep track of search lists.**



# Google Scholar-Advanced Search

- **Using the Advanced Scholar Search will help narrow your results**
- **You can select specific key words or phrases (Some articles list key words in the abstract)**
- **Try and narrow your search to the last 5 years enter the years in the date boxes. Click on since 2009 for current articles**
- **In the text box for your search words placed between “quotation marks” will be searched together. This is an important feature which will narrow your results considerably.**
- **Click on Cited By and related articles**
- **Again—Keep track of search lists and how you search for information.**

# Find Thesis & Dissertation



- **Go to USC Website**
- **Select Popular Links**
- **Select Libraries**
- **Select Database Quick Links**
- **Select Find Dissertations and Theses**
  - Search by theme
  - Search by Chair
- **Again—Keep track of search lists and how you search for information.**



# Document Delivery

- **Go to USC Website**
- **Select Popular Links**
- **Select Libraries**
- **Under Library Services -Select Interlibrary loan and document delivery**
- **You will need to register**
- **They will send the document via pdf to our email address**
- **Questions about document delivery? Email them at [idd@usc.edu](mailto:idd@usc.edu), or call them at (213) 740-4020.**



## For additional library assistance

- **Resources** Melanee Vicedo from the library has provided a list of resources . Contact at [vicedo@usc.edu](mailto:vicedo@usc.edu) or call (213) 740 0545
- LibGuide @ <http://libguides.usc.edu/education>



# What is a literature review?

In terms of a literature review, "the literature" means the works you consult in order to understand and investigate your research problem.



# Why write a review?

- The literature review is a critical examination of existing research that is significant to your project.
- You should *evaluate* what has already been done, show the *relationships* between different work, and show how it relates to *your* project.
- A Review of Literature is **not** a summary or an abstract of articles. It is an **analysis and synthesis** of the source materials, written in a specific style which provides a focus for the study and takes into account both the theoretical and empirical issues.



# Purpose of the Literature Review

- Focus the purpose of your study more precisely
- Identify the key variables and concepts in your study and how they're related
  - Identifying relationships between ideas and practice
  - Relate ideas and theory to applications
- Establish the context of the topic or problem i.e. places the research in a historical context
- Develop a conceptual/theoretical framework
- Determine the relationship of your topic relative to current and past studies
- Form a basis for determining the significance of your study



# What literature should you review?

- Journal articles
- Books
- Conference proceedings
- Government/corporate reports
- Theses and dissertations
- Internet

What are important aspects of these sources you need to consider?

# Critical Review of Sources



For each source you include in your literature review, ask yourself:

- Has the author formulated a problem/issue?
- Is it clearly defined? Is the significance (scope, relevance) clearly established?
- Could the problem have been approached more effectively from another perspective?
- What is the author's theoretical framework (e.g. psychological, developmental, feminist)?
- What were the findings? What are the strengths and limitations?
- In what ways does this book or article contribute to our understanding of the problem under study and in what ways is it useful for practice?



# Selecting Sources

## 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 focus of the dissertation.
- Always ask how each source helps support the need for and the significance of your study.



# Use of Evidence

- **Use evidence**

Remember that **your interpretation of the available sources must be backed up with evidence** to show that what you are saying is valid. Avoid making generalizations without supporting research as evidence.

- **Avoid Excessive Quoting**

Excessive quoting breaks the flow of the chapter and disrupts your “voice.” Before including a quotation, ask yourself if the quote is really necessary and whether a summary or paraphrase could still convey the same information.



# Structure of Chapter Two

**Chapter Organization** - Consider the most effective way of presenting the information. The chapter should include a general introduction, the body of the chapter (sections of your review), and a conclusion or summary section.

- ***Introduction:*** Gives a brief idea of *the topics to be covered* in the chapter as well as the general *organization of the information*.
- ***Body:*** Contains your discussion of sources and the sections are organized either chronologically, thematically, or methodologically. Take the time to *outline the organization of the body* so that you have an idea of what topics you want to cover.
- ***Conclusions/Summary:*** Discuss what you have drawn from reviewing literature so far. A discussion of your study based on the evidence presented. Where might the discussion proceed? Should set the stage for Chapter 3 the how of the study.



# Writing the Literature Review

- **Summarize and Synthesize**

Remember to summarize and synthesize your sources throughout the review. You should go beyond just providing a summary of related research. Discuss the significance of previous research and how it relates to your own study.

- First, tell us why you choose a group of articles
- Review the articles
- Then, tell us what conclusions can be drawn



# Tips for Success

- Be Efficient-Organization is critical to efficiency of time.
- Have a Method to your Madness
  - Reference List
  - Annotated Bibliography
  - Spreadsheet
- Two Computer Screens-Efficiency of Time
- PDF of Articles
- Google Docs, Drop Box, Flash Drive (multiple copies of your drafts)
- Books – Mixed Methods, Quantitative, and Qualitative

APA July 09, They Say I Say, Dissertation Process



# Thank You

## What are your questions?

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For additional resources - <http://dissertationedd.usc.edu/>

DSC contact information – [rsoedsc@rossier.usc.edu](mailto:rsoedsc@rossier.usc.edu) or (213)740-8099