Your Literature Review Plan

As part of your pre-work for this session, you should have completed the Literature Review Tutorial:

Finding Resources for Your Literature Review: Leaving No Stone Unturned

Top Three Reasons to Do Your Literature Review FIRST

1. Let your question emerge from your study of the literature.

   You may have a good idea of what your question is; however, you will have a better idea once you have studied the literature. You may even make some surprising discoveries.

2. You will need evidence to support your assertions in Chapter 1.

   The sections in Chapter 1, such as justification for your research and its significance, why the problem is important, and how your research contributes to the field of knowledge will all require evidence.

3. You will have to justify the methodology you are using in Chapter 3.

   Part of providing the evidence as to why your methodology is appropriate for your research problem will come from reviewing methodologies used in past studies on your topic.

Five Research Techniques You Should Already Have

To review these techniques – See the Library’s LibGuides page

- Keyword Searching (including Controlled Vocabulary and Searching by Author)
- Bibliographic Mining and Cited Reference Searching (including Google Scholar)
- Searching by Methodology
- Using Dissertations
- Finding Tests and Measures
1. Literature Search Process

Find the Gaps  ➔  Get the Research

MASTERY

Synthesize and Map the Literature  ➔  Analyze for Themes and People

2. Organizational Systems

**RefWorks**
*Library Home ➔ RefWorks*

☐ Set up a RefWorks Account to store articles

**Database Research Log**
*Library Home ➔ Guides and Tutorials ➔ Resources for Doctoral Learners*

☐ Start keeping a careful **Search Log** of your literature exploration

3. Preliminary Literature Review Plan

Preliminary Research Idea:

___________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________
Where does your current research question sit?

BROAD TOPIC AREA

____________________      ___________________      ____________________

____________________      ___________________      ____________________

____________________      ___________________      ____________________

NARROW QUESTION

Preliminary Outline of Literature Review:
*Think subsections and broader focus areas of your research idea*

____________________      ___________________      ____________________

____________________      ___________________      ____________________

____________________      ___________________      ____________________

☐ Review the types of resources and their role in the dissertation lit. review:
*Primary, Secondary, and Tertiary Resources*

Library Home → Guides and Tutorials → Resources for Doctoral Learners → Finding Resources for Your Literature Review → Primary, Secondary, and Tertiary Resources

☐ Do you know how your field developed surrounding your research question?

If not, review tertiary and secondary sources. They will point you to important research articles.
A Comprehensive Literature Review includes searching for mostly primary resources in:

- Multiple Journal Databases
- Book Databases
- Dissertation Databases
- Sources outside the Library

Formulate a Search Strategy
*Take one of your subsections from above:

Break your topic or subsections down into individual aspects or keywords:

__________________________  __________________________  __________________________  __________________________

Brainstorm additional synonyms and related keywords for each aspect:

__________________________  __________________________  __________________________  __________________________
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- Read article abstracts for the keywords and discipline-specific jargon that authors and scholars are using in their publications.

- Continue adding words that come up frequently in your searching to your **Search Log**. Include the dates that you discovered and used these search terms.

*The key is to conduct separate searches using as many alternative words as possible. This is one way to document and assure yourself you have conducted a through review of the literature.*

- Check the **Thesaurus** or **Subject Terms** link in each database you are searching to find appropriate search terms. Add these, with dates, to your **Search Log**.
List Subjects and Descriptors you find in the database Thesaurus:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exact Phrase</th>
<th>Database 1</th>
<th>Database 2</th>
<th>Database 3</th>
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Search for Articles

Create an initial list of databases that seem appropriate for your research topic:

Core Databases (in your field) | Databases in other/related subjects
---|---
1. _______________________ | 1. _______________________ 
2. _______________________ | 2. _______________________ 
3. _______________________ | 3. _______________________ 
4. _______________________ | 4. _______________________ 

For a refresher on conducting keyword searches in the article databases, review the Keyword Searching for the Literature Review tutorial.

Search for Dissertations

Find dissertations in the Dissertations & Theses Full Text database.

Using Dissertations as Resources:
Ch. 2 - The Literature Review and Reference List
Ch. 3 - Methodology
Ch. 5 - Considerations for Future Research
Organization - Find dissertations on your topic and review the headings they have chosen for different parts of their literature review.

To learn more about finding and using dissertations in your research, please review the Finding and Using Dissertations in Research tutorial.
Search for Books

On the Web
Websites that provide a good overview of all the books that may be available on a particular subject.

WorldCat - http://worldcat.org
Use WorldCat to find print books in local university and public libraries.

Google Books - http://books.google.com
Use Google Books to view a book’s table of contents or retrieve a limited preview.

In Capella Library’s E-book Databases
Available on the Library’s Articles, Books, and More page, search by subject to find full-text books for online viewing:

    NetLibrary
    Ebrary
    PsycBooks

Search for an Instrument

Capella Library has two instrument databases (available on the Library’s Articles, Books, and More page) where you can find the titles, reviews, validity and reliability information, and publication information of published tests and surveys. (Note: you will NOT find a full-text copy of an instrument in these databases.)

Published Instruments
    Mental Measurements Yearbook
    Health & Psychosocial Instruments

Unpublished Instruments
If you cannot locate a published instrument, search Dissertations and Theses Full Text for your topic to see the types of instruments others have used.

You can find full-text copies of instruments by searching the title of the instrument in Dissertations and Theses Full Text. If available, a copy of the instrument will be in the appendix of the dissertation.
Other Search Techniques

Searching by methodology for articles and books on my topic:

Review the **Searching by Methodology** tutorial.
Library Home ➔ Guides and Tutorials ➔ Resources for Doctoral Learners ➔ Finding Resources for Your Literature Review ➔ Searching Techniques (tab)

Tracing key or seminal articles backwards and forwards in time:

Review the **Bibliographic Mining and Cited Reference Searching** tutorial.
Library Home ➔ Guides and Tutorials ➔ Resources for Doctoral Learners ➔ Finding Resources for Your Literature Review ➔ Searching Techniques (tab)

Review the **Google Scholar and the Capella Library** tutorial.
Library Home ➔ Guides and Tutorials ➔ Resources for Doctoral Learners

3. Analyze your Resources for Themes and People

**Scholarly Research Log**
Library Home ➔ Guides and Tutorials ➔ Resources for Doctoral Learners
Use the Excel spreadsheet to record the theories, methods, findings, etc. of articles you have read. Sort the spreadsheet in several ways to find themes and authors.

**RefWorks Search**
Library Home ➔ RefWorks ➔ RefWorks Advanced Features
Once you have gathered many articles. Use RefWorks search feature as a tool for identifying recurring authors, themes, and publications.
Mapping the Literature

Comprehensive Exams

Many times you will use the literature review approach in answering your comprehensive exam questions. All of the research techniques covered in this session and your previous Library colloquium sessions will be helpful in searching for information for your exams.

As a reminder you are allowed to contact the Library during your exam to get help with keywords, databases, and search techniques and suggestions to find information on a particular topic.
Mastery Checklist –

*Is your Literature Review comprehensive?*

- [ ] Found all alternative terms
- [ ] Searched in all appropriate article databases with journals that cover my topic
- [ ] Reviewed dissertation research
- [ ] Looked for review information if I am using an instrument
- [ ] Found information regarding my chosen methodology
- [ ] Traced key articles back and forwards in time