LITERATURE REVIEWS

What does the document do?

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OBJECTIVES

• To have you understand what the genre does.
• To have you start to know how to organize it.

Session Outline

• Introduction
• Approach to analyzing structure
• What is a lit review?
• Where do you start?
• How do you keep track of sources?
• How do you know when you are done?
• Exercise
LITERATURE REVIEW

Often directions will read as follows:

- **Length:** 15-30 pages
- **Content:** A comprehensive and critical review of relevant literature identifying strengths, gaps, and limitations in extant research.
- **The literature review should build an argument for the entire body of work covered in the thesis (i.e., rationale for all manuscripts described in the thesis).**
- **Manuscript Style Thesis Requirements**

*From: School of Kinesiology and Health Studies Queen’s University May 2012*
APPROACH TO ANALYZING STRUCTURE: REVERSE OUTLINE
WHAT IS A LIT REVIEW?

- Discusses published information
- Looks at a particular subject area (a problem)
- Limits itself by topic and/or time period
- Uses an organizational pattern
- Usually is both a summary and a synthesis of ideas/arguments
- Varies in length
- Provides a background and a platform from which to jump off into your topic

(It justifies why you would want to spend time working on this problem or question!)
IT MUST ...

- Be organized and related to the thesis or research question
- Synthesize results into a summary of what is known and what isn’t known
- Identify the gap in the field(s)
- Identify areas of controversy or interest
- Develop questions that need work/research (your work)

Adapted from [www.utoronto.ca/writing/litrev.html](http://www.utoronto.ca/writing/litrev.html) (Taylor and Procter, 2006)
RHETORICAL STRATEGIES

• Tell us what are you interested in
• Define concepts (How have definitions/understandings evolved?)
• Show differences between your work and what has been done
• Convince us that what you are doing is different (original, worthwhile)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Literature Review Sections</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Introduction               | Aim of the review  
Why is the subject interesting or relevant?  
Scale or scope of the review  
What is included or excluded?  
Contains definitions  
Explains organization of the review |
| Body                       | Describes methods used (frameworks) of research read  
Contains conceptional evolution (how has the thinking changed?)  
Contains themes (what has been studied? What has been found? What conclusions have they come to?)  
Links themes together |
| Conclusion                 | Conclusion reflects the purpose of the paper (what were you asking?)  
Key points are summarized  
**Key gaps are identified**  
Outlines areas for future research |

Adapted from Jesson et al., 2011
RESOURCES
HTTP://WWW.SPORTSCI.ORG/JOUR/9901/WGHREVIEW.HTML
So Where Do You Start?

1. Find models of lit reviews (in your discipline)

2. Narrow your research topic (limit the idea) – think about aspects, definitions, and so on.

GO SEE YOUR SUBJECT LIBRARIAN

Best advice
SO WHERE DO YOU START? (CONTINUED)

3. Read the literature with the research question in mind (e.g., What did this study tell me about my topic? How did they study the topic? What did they leave out or not cover?)

4. Create an outline – get feedback
HOW DO YOU KEEP TRACK OF SOURCES?

• RefWorks or Endnote – also MSWord

• Make comments within the notes – stay focused on your area of interest

• Use Insert/Comment while writing/annotate the PDFs

• Check at the end to ensure proper handling of source material
ASSUMPTIONS IN MS about these teams:

- Teams in the research seem to be uniformly self-directed (the reference to external communication may suggest this idea because outside the team units are thought to be a factor to study. The team is pictured as working 100% of the time on the innovation project (always referred to in that way) not as in my study team a situation where the members spend time on the team’s task but are also working with others on other things.
- Consequences – these self-directed teams have a flattened organizational decision making structure and consensus is important.
- They need higher levels of information with greater depth from across the organization. That information needs to be understood by diverse groups – a challenge.
- Tension is greater in these teams – MS is interested in finding better ways to manage the teams and their work. Peter Drucker’s work (‘Management by Objectives’) has seen management move to a more goal-oriented decision making – strategic thinking about what needs to be done. The cross-functional teams fit into this new thinking.]


**New Product Development**

This author was reviewing the literature on CF teams looking for the factors in making them effective. He offers a justification for the use of these teams in business (p. 222) – feels that they are essential in product innovation teams. It is commonly accepted that these teams lead to increased levels of product success [high quality, timely entry into the market, competitive]. He notes that few studies look at the specific characteristics in the design and development of products.
KINDS OF LITERATURE REVIEWS IN TERMS OF FORMAT

The “paper” literature review

- Write the document as if you were writing a paper (have an identified focus)
- Use headings and sub-headings to organize your sub-topics/themes
- Group your readings (the insights/methodologies) together and discuss what has already been done on the topic and how well

Big questions:
- What has been done?
- Has it been well done?
- What will your study contribute?

Convince us that your idea is worth pursuing!
KINDS OF LITERATURE REVIEWS...

Part of the introduction or an initial section of an article or proposal

• Write the section as an introduction to the topic
• Use headings and sub-headings to organize your sub-topics
• Group your readings (the insights/methodologies) together and discuss what has already been done on the topic and how well

• Big questions:
  • What has been done?
  • Has it been well done?
  • What will your study contribute?

• Convince us that your idea was worth pursuing!
COMMON PROBLEMS

- No clear aim, purpose or focus
- Just a list of readings near the topic – poor search techniques, not organized, not systematic
- No awareness of audience
- Little awareness of the differences between fields
- Little attempt to synthesize
- No understanding of what happened in the journal article or book – an empirical study, an opinion piece, a meta-analysis, a qualitative study, and so on
- Tendency to generalize ideas/conflate
- Poor organization in the writing
- Not convincing

Adapted from (and added to) Zorn & Campbell, 2006
EXERCISE: ASSESSING LIT REVIEWS
HOW DO YOU KNOW WHEN YOU ARE DONE? IF YOU HAVE ....

- Positioned your research question in the discipline (you’ve discussed what has already been done on this question)

- Convinced the reader that you know where you are going on this question

- Fulfilled all the requirements of the assignment as detailed by your department (word count, type of review)

- Spent time reviewing and revising your work

[And you will revisit the literature review when the study is done and you have your findings.]
RESOURCES

• Your thesis supervisor
• Your discipline’s librarian and the Writing Centre
• Books, articles
• Internet sites such as:
  http://www.utoronto.ca/writing/litrev.html
  http://www.languages.ait.ac.th/EL2LIT.HTM
  http://www.unc.edu/depts/wcweb/handouts/literature_review.html
  http://owl.english.purdue.edu/workshops/hypertext/apa/interact/lit/index.html

OBJECTIVES

• To have you understand what the genre does.
• To have you start to know how to organize it.
FURTHER READINGS

- http://www.texashste.com/documents/curriculum/scientific_research_design/the_scientific_literature_review.pdf
- http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/advice/specific-types-of-writing/literature-review
Thank you!
References


*And various websites seen on the slides*
WELL WRITTEN REVIEWS

• Introduction – overview, objectives & thesis statement

• Themes/aspects – develop the thesis by grouping material so as to explore the topic and evaluate what has already been done (use good topic sentences for sections and paragraphs)

• Evaluation (sum up) – what has been done and well done and what hasn’t?

• Conclusion – identify gaps

• *Adapted from* Zorn & Campbell, 2006