

Steps to Complete Your Literature Review:

1. Choose an educational topic that you are interested in studying (you've done this!).
2. Formulate an inquiry question that specifically describes what you would like to know about your educational topic (You can always refine your inquiry questions after you know more about your area through reading the literature).
3. Do the library search and locate journals that include your topic's information (You learned how to do this during our library training session).
4. Find articles, read the abstracts and skim the articles to determine if they correspond well to your topic AND inquiry question.
5. Select at least 5 peer-reviewed journal articles and photocopy them for your project.
6. Read your articles and begin to sort and classify them *according to their findings*.
7. Organize your articles by sorting and classifying their findings in a meaningful way, always considering your original topic and inquiry question.
8. Write an outline for your literature review.
9. Write your review.
10. Revise your review.

Guidelines for Writing Literature Review

1. *Introduction* (without this heading)

Write an introduction paragraph for your review. This paragraph

- a. states the topic and inquiry questions for this review
- b. tells the reader specific information on how many articles you reviewed and how you sorted the articles into common themes based on findings (results).

Tips: Establish your inquiry questions in broader context; make sure the articles selected all relate to the initial inquiry question; lay the groundwork as to the direction of the article.

2. *Body* (without this heading)

Before you begin this section, be sure that you have sorted your articles into different themes based on the articles' *findings (sometimes called results)*. After you sort your articles, it is important to give your sorted groups a descriptive name. The names of the sorted articles will become your headings for each of the paragraphs that you write in the body of your review. The body of your literature review will include,

- a. Theme 1: a paragraph or several paragraphs that describe the first theme that you identified and compare, contrast and/or connect the articles you've selected.
- b. Theme 2: a paragraph or several paragraphs that describes the second theme that you identified and compare, contrast and/or connect the articles you've selected.
- d. Theme 3: a paragraph or several paragraphs that describes the third theme that you identified and compare, contrast and/or connect the articles you've selected.

... ..

Tips: Thoughtfully compare and contrast the findings/results of articles and connect them to one another; organize your review using subheadings and organize your review suitably considering the contents of the selected articles; use transitional phrases to tie sections and adjacent

paragraphs together throughout the text; cover the appropriate content in consideration in depth without being redundant; cite sources when specific statements are made; adopt a crisp, clear, and succinct writing style; incorporate the active voice when appropriate and supports ideas with examples; proofread to eliminate grammatical, spelling and/or punctuation errors;.

3 *Summary*

This is the last paragraph of your literature review. In this paragraph, it is important to briefly summarize the main findings from the articles that you reviewed and to point out how your inquiry questions were answered or not answered, what the gap is (what if my questions are all answered – you then need to identify new inquiries so that you will contribute to the field)..

Tips: Draw succinct and precise conclusions that summarize the knowledge found from the review, and relate the knowledge gain to the inquiry question.

4. *References*

This is the last pages of your review. It serves as a listing of all references that you mentioned in your paper. Please make sure that only references cited in your paper will be listed here. Please use APA style when completing this list.