

Conducting a Literature Review

Level 1: Introduction/Exposure (Introduction to Sociology, Psychology, or Criminal Justice)

Topic: How to conduct a literature review of refereed research journal articles and identify the research knowledge gaps for a potential research project.

Learning Outcomes: By the end of this module, students will be able to:

- (1) obtain online refereed research journal articles on a topic related to one's research interests.
- (2) identify the components used in the research journal article genre.
- (3) read and understand a research journal article.

Time (approximate):

Instructor Presentation	10 minutes
Student Exercise/Activity	20 minutes

Reading Suggestions:

Caron, P. G. "How to write a research paper and a literature review paper."
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J_dKLcXBFjw

Google search shows handouts from several universities.

Instructor's Notes and Student Exercise/Activity:

Students may wish to learn more about a topic. One of their first steps would be to list the questions they'd like to have answered. They may be excited to start a research project to answer these questions by interviewing people or conducting a questionnaire. But what if other researchers already have answered these questions? The student can save much time, energy, and expense by checking to see what research already has been done.

To find out what research already has been done on the topic, students should conduct a "literature review." This means that they will search for and read articles that have been published in "refereed research journals." What are they? When researchers complete a study, they will write their results in a standard, scientific format.

The standard, scientific format is a genre of literature. An article should include the following elements:

- (1) the purpose and objective of the study
- (2) a description of what already is known about their topic based on previous studies (the literature review)
- (3) a discussion of the theory that helped to explain the study
- (4) often, hypotheses of expected results based on theory and/or the results of previous studies
- (5) the research methods they used to conduct their study
- (6) the findings of their study
- (7) a discussion of how their study's findings compared with those of other studies

The researcher's article is sent to the editor of a journal related to their topic. The editor sends the article to other scholars who have knowledge about the topic and ask them to review the article. The editor does not tell the reviewers the name of the researcher so the process is "blind" - confidential and unbiased. Once the article meets the standards of the editor and the reviewers, it is published in the journal and becomes part of the "literature" in the field of study.

Others may refer to the article by the authors' last names and the date of publication. For example, if Mary Smith and Bill Jones had a research article published in 2015, the shorthand way of referring to their article would be (Smith & Jones 2015).

<u>Exercise #1:</u>			
<p>1. Think of a topic you'd like to study. For example, Indian reservation housing or businesses.</p> <p>2. Go to Google Scholar on the internet to search for publications on the topic. You can type your topic into the box to see publications related to your topic. You will find refereed research journal articles, books, and other publications. For now, we want to focus on the research journal articles</p>			
Components of research journal article genre	research journal.	research journal.	research journal.
Objective 3. Read/understand a journal article	<input type="checkbox"/> Read but did not understand the journal article.	<input type="checkbox"/> Read but partially understood the journal article.	<input type="checkbox"/> Read and understood the journal article.

Assessment/Scoring Rubric:

Model example of Exercise #1 at the “excellent” level:

(Kalley)

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