

## Conducting a Literature Review

### Level 3: Advanced Application/Applied Project (SS/PSY ### Research Methods in Behavioral Sciences)

**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) construct a written overview of the research knowledge gaps after having conducted a review of the research journal articles related to one's research interests.

**Time (approximate):**

Instructor Presentation	10 minutes
Student Exercise/Activity	60-90 minutes

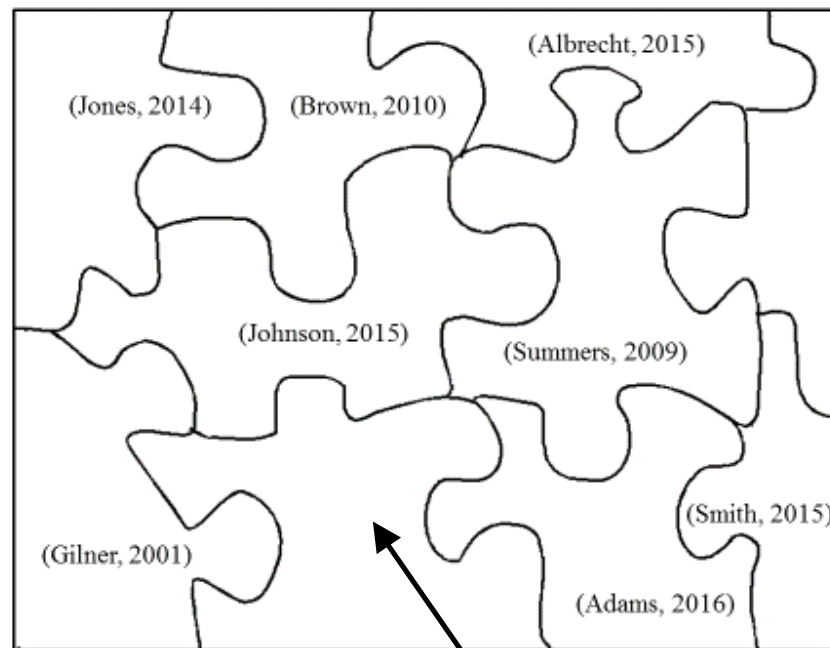
**Reading Suggestions:**

Caron, P. G. "How to write a research paper and a literature review paper."  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J\\_dKLcXBFjw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J_dKLcXBFjw)

Google search shows handouts from several universities.

### Instructor's Notes and Student Exercise/Activity:

The literature review may be used to answer the research questions students initially asked. If all of their questions are adequately answered, they can write the results similar to writing a standard college term paper. But what if questions remain unanswered? They may have found a “gap” in the research literature that would suggest a need for additional research. One way to think about the gap in the research literature is to use a jig-saw puzzle illustration. The findings of each journal article is a piece in the puzzle. The more puzzle pieces that are fitted together, the more a picture becomes evident, that is, the more we know about the topic in question. But what happens if there is a missing piece in the puzzle? That is the “gap” in the literature where more research is needed. And that “gap” becomes the place where the students may wish to conduct their studies.



The “gap” in the research literature

The gap in the research literature typically is a three-to-four sentence paragraph that describes what we still don't know about the research question. What part of the question remains unanswered? Are there certain populations about whom we still don't have answers? Are there certain conditions that weren't addressed? What NEW questions emerged as a result of the literature review?

Exercise #3.

(1) Let's continue with the research questions we explored in Exercise #2: What factors affect school success on Indian reservations? To what degree do age, gender, parents' income, and culture impact Indian children's academic success? But this time, do an online search to find at least three other journal articles.

(2) Read the three articles.

(3) In a three to four sentence paragraph, write what each article was about, the methods

**Assessment/Scoring Rubric:**

	<b>Needs Improvement 1</b>	<b>Satisfactory 2</b>	<b>Excellent 3</b>
Objective 1. Note gaps in the literature	<input type="checkbox"/> Article reviews were incomplete. <input type="checkbox"/> Review failed to include introduction and/or gaps paragraph. <input type="checkbox"/> Writing, grammar, spelling needs work.	<input type="checkbox"/> Article reviews were partially complete. <input type="checkbox"/> Review included introduction and gaps paragraph. <input type="checkbox"/> Writing, grammar, spelling were good.	<input type="checkbox"/> Article reviews were complete. <input type="checkbox"/> Review included introduction and conclusion. <input type="checkbox"/> Writing, grammar, spelling were very good.

**Model example of Exercise #3 at the “excellent” level:**

**(Kalley)**

**NOTE: This material is based upon work supported by the National Science Foundation under Grant No. HRD-1361649.**