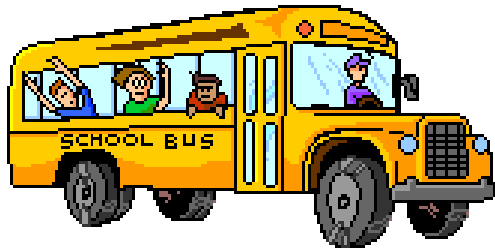


# **SP\_IRS Introduction to Research in Special and Inclusive Education**

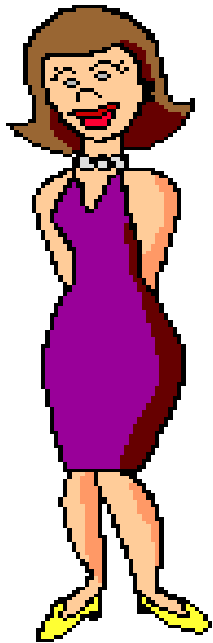
**Lecture 3: Literature Review**

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# Welcome



# Presentation Outline



- First step in the Research and Inquiry Process
- Literature Review



# First step in the Research and Inquiry Process

- Focus Question.
  1. How do researchers select a research topic?
  2. What processes do researchers engage with as they review the literature to position their research
  3. How do researchers develop research questions and hypothesis.

# Focusing the study

- A wide variety of research genres exist to guide the conduct of research in a responsible and effective manner.

This can be achieved

- a sound theoretical basis
- Extensive review of work that has been done before

# Choosing an inquiry topic

- For people who are new to educational research, choosing a topic can be a seemingly insurmountable problem
- Choosing a research topic at times can take lots and lots of time, frustration and confusion
- Be simple, concise and coherent start with a significant educational problem.
- The real problems in your own classrooms

- Identifying a problem is the first step in finding a solution.
- Research usually begins with a very broad idea of the problem

# Visualising (or conceptualising) your research

- Use a concept map for your research topic
- It will make you explore the dimensions of your problem.

(types, categories, what it means, where it occurs , etc.) and you will have a better conception of the problem and all its facets

You can also use concept mapping software, such as inspiration or smart ideas



- As researcher you must explore what is in your own mind about your research interest.
- Once you have an idea it is important to read what others have already found about the problem and this is done through literature review.

# Literature Review

- The reasons why literature review is a critical part of the research process.
- The purpose of a well- executed literature review
  - To identify gaps in the literature;
  - To avoid reinventing the wheel ;
  - To carry on from where others have already reached

- To identify other people working in the same fields;
- To increase your breadth of knowledge of your subject area;
- To identify seminal works in your area;
- To provide the intellectual context for your own work, enabling you to position your project relative to other work;

- To identify opposing views;
- To put your work into perspective;
- To identify information and ideas relevant to your project; and
- To identify methods that could be relevant to your project.

Take note that literature review is something that is done throughout the entire research study.

# What is a review of the literature?

- ▣ An account of what has been published on a topic by accredited scholars and researchers.
- ▣ More often it is part of the introduction to an essay, research report, or thesis.
- ▣ In writing the literature review, your purpose is to:
  - convey to your reader what knowledge and ideas have been established on a topic, and
  - what their strengths and weaknesses are.
- ▣ As a piece of writing, the literature review must be defined by a guiding concept (e.g., your research objective(s), the problem or issue you are discussing or your argumentative thesis). It is not just a descriptive list of the material available, or a set of summaries.

# What is a review of the literature?

## Cont...

- Besides enlarging your knowledge about the topic, writing a literature review lets you gain and demonstrate skills in two areas:
  - **information seeking**: - the ability to scan the literature efficiently, using manual or computerized methods, to identify a set of useful articles and books
  - **critical appraisal**: - the ability to apply principles of analysis to identify unbiased and valid studies.

# Questions about each book or article to include

- ▣ **Ask yourself questions like these about each book or article you include:**
  - Has the author formulated a problem/issue?
  - Is it clearly defined? Is its significance (scope, severity, relevance) clearly established?
  - Could the problem have been approached more effectively from another perspective?
  - What is the author's research methodology & orientation (e.g., interpretive, critical science, combination)?

# Finding literature

- Define area of interest
- Find the relevant literature and read
- Locate the key researchers working and writing in the area
- Locate the key research studies that have impacted on the area of study or issue
- Find central sources and locate original sources rather than secondary description of findings



# The two sources

- Primary sources- A first- hand account by the researcher of what occurred, usually reported in an article or book.
- Secondary sources- An interpretation of other peoples research and thus a second hand account of what occurred.

There are many ways to approach the literature review and fortunately there are tools that can assist in this important stage.

# What must a literature review do?

## ▣ A literature review must do these things:

- should have an introduction stating briefly the areas or themes to be touched in the chapter
- should contain theme areas or sub-topics related to the research topic under investigation.
- weaving of theme areas in such a way so that there is flow of ideas from one theme to the next while reading
- be organized around and related directly to the thesis or research question you are developing
- synthesize results into a summary of what is and is not known
- identify areas of controversy in the literature and come up with your own views
- formulate questions that need further research

# Important questions to ask in doing Literature Review

## ▣ Ask yourself questions like these:

- What is the **specific thesis, problem, or research question** that my literature review helps to define?
- What **type** of literature review am I conducting? Am I looking at issues of theory? methodology? policy? quantitative research (e.g. on the effectiveness of a new procedure)? qualitative research (e.g., studies )?
- What is the **scope** of my literature review? What types of publications am I using (e.g., journals, books, government documents, popular media)? What discipline am I working in (e.g., nursing psychology, sociology, medicine)?

# Important questions to ask in doing Literature Review Cont...

- How good was my **information seeking**? Has my search been wide enough to ensure I've found all the relevant material? Has it been narrow enough to exclude irrelevant material? Is the number of sources I've used appropriate for the length of my paper?
- Have I **critically analysed** the literature I use? Do I follow through a set of concepts and questions, comparing items to each other in the ways they deal with them? Instead of just listing and summarizing items, do I assess them, discussing strengths and weaknesses, giving my own views?
- Have I cited and discussed studies **contrary** to my perspective?
- Will the reader find my literature review **relevant, appropriate, and useful**?

# Questions about each book or article to include

- ▣ **Ask yourself questions like these about each book or article you include:**
  - Has the author formulated a problem/issue?
  - Is it clearly defined? Is its significance (scope, severity, relevance) clearly established?
  - Could the problem have been approached more effectively from another perspective?
  - What is the author's research methodology & orientation (e.g., interpretive, critical science, combination)?

# Questions about each book or article to include Cont...

- What is the author's theoretical framework (e.g., psychological, developmental, feminist)?
- What is the relationship between the theoretical and research perspectives?
- Has the author evaluated the literature relevant to the problem/issue? Does the author include literature taking positions she or he does not agree with?
- In a research study, how good are the basic components of the study design (e.g., population, intervention, outcome)? How accurate and valid are the measurements? Is the analysis of the data accurate and relevant to the research question? Are the conclusions validly based upon the data and analysis?

# Questions about each book or article to include Cont...

- Is there an objective basis to the reasoning, or is the author merely "proving" what he or she already believes?
- How does the author structure the argument? Can you "deconstruct" the flow of the argument to see whether or where it breaks down logically (e.g., in establishing cause-effect relationships)?
- In what ways does this book or article contribute to our understanding of the problem under study, and in what ways is it useful for practice? What are the strengths and limitations?
- How does this book or article relate to the specific thesis or question I am developing?

# Tools to assist in finding literature

- Library catalogues
- Databases
- Search engines
- People , listserve
- Colleagues and fellow students



# Getting started on writing a literature review

1. Assemble a collection of papers to read that look interesting and are related to your topic.
2. Choose one article from the collection of papers and decide to use it or not if its useful  
enter in the table below

Reference	In text reference	Idea
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		

- Read the paper carefully and think about why it is useful for your study. You can also use dot forms and later derive a paragraph.

# Tools to assist in writing the literature review

- Writing it aloud
- Avoid momentary blocks

# Tools to assist with referencing

- When you down load readings or information
- Look at cite of the reference is given fill it in the table mentioned previously.

# Critiquing literature

- Who are the authors of this piece?
- What do you know about them?
- What is the perspective of the writer?
- Why does the site exist?
- How old is the material?
- Is there reliable evidence to support the authors contentions?

# Final Notes

- ▣ Remember, a literature review is a piece of **discursive prose**, not a list describing or summarizing one piece of literature after another.
- ▣ It's usually a bad sign to see every paragraph beginning with the name of a researcher. Instead, organize the literature review into sections that present **themes** or **identify trends, including relevant theory**.
- ▣ You are not trying to list all the material published, but to synthesize and evaluate it according to the guiding concept of your thesis or research question

# Activity

- Do the focus questions?
- Select a topic that interest you and complete a search for relevant literature by using each of these sources indicated in this chapter. Select a minimum of four relevant article and read each one carefully creating dot points or using the table. Are these common areas across all four sources? How can you compare and contrast ideas the four articles you selected?