3 Simple Tips for Expanding Your Literature Review

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What we’re covering today

• Conducting citation chaining
• Mining author networks
• Saving searches and setting search alerts
• BONUS – Strategies for planning and organizing a literature review
But first...Library fellowships!

• We offer numerous Fellows for graduate students:
  o Berry IJC Fellowship
  o CDIL/COGS Graduate Student Fellowship
  o Gary E. and Carolyn J. Strong Special Collections Fellowship
  o Julie and David Levine Data Hub Fellowship (New!)
Tip 1: Conducting citation chaining

• Citation chaining/searching is:
  o A strategy in which you use a single source to find related sources

• Citation chaining/searching helps you:
  o Trace the roots of important ideas
  o Discover how a topic has changed over time
Tip 1: Conducting citation chaining

• Two types of citation chaining/searching:
  o Backward citation chaining/searching
    ▪ Finding additional sources in reference lists
  o Forward citation chaining/searching
    ▪ Finding sources that cited your original source
Tip 2: Mining author networks

• Mining author networks
  o Who is publishing research on a particular topic?
  o Who are their co-authors on related papers?

• Two resources for mining author networks:
  o Web of Science Core Collection
  o Google Scholar
Tip 3: Saving searches and setting alerts

- Saved searches = Permalinks

- Types of alerts
  - Search alert
  - Citation alert
  - Journal alert
Strategies for planning and organizing a literature review

• What is a literature review?
  o An up-to-date / current overview of research on a particular topic

• What is the purpose of a literature review?
  o Demonstrate that an author understands how their research fits within and expands the body of work on a topic
  o Establish facts or best practices within a body of literature
  o Identify gaps in the research
Strategies for planning and organizing a literature review

• How do you determine the appropriate scope for a literature review?
  o A few questions you can ask yourself, include:
    ▪ How comprehensive does it need to be?
    ▪ Will it include relevant material regardless of date, or focus only on a specific time frame?
    ▪ Will it include sources from other, related disciplines?
    ▪ How have others in my discipline written their literature reviews?
Strategies for planning and organizing a literature review

• Still need ideas of ways to organize a literature review?
  o Consider...
    ▪ Theme
    ▪ Broad to specific
    ▪ Methodology/method/theory
    ▪ Trends based on time
    ▪ Publication date
Strategies for planning and organizing a literature review

• Theme
  o Example: Youth substance use/abuse prevention
    ▪ School-based programs
    ▪ Family-based programs
    ▪ Religious-based programs

Strategies for planning and organizing a literature review

• Broad to specific
  o Example: Grazing management practices in riparian areas
    ▪ General grazing management practices across areas
      • Facilitating practices in riparian areas
        o Herding
        o Stock water development
        o Barrier / fencing

Strategies for planning and organizing a literature review

• Methodology/method/theory
  o Example: Workers’ intention to leave their jobs before and after the Covid-19 pandemic
  o 3 types of research (for example):
    ▪ Those that did an analysis of economic or labor statistics
    ▪ Those that did original surveys of workers
    ▪ Those that did interviews with workers
Strategies for planning and organizing a literature review

- Trends based on time
  - Example: Physical and outfit characteristics of female superheroes and villains
    - 1940 – 1959
    - 1960 – 1979
    - 1980 – 1999
    - 2000 – 2009
    - 2010 – Present
Strategies for planning and organizing a literature review

- Publication Date
  - Example: Climate change scenarios and guidance
    - 1980s
    - 1990s
    - 2000s
    - 2010s
    - 2020s
Strategies for planning and organizing a literature review

• How can you make connections between the sources you find?
  o Summarizing vs. synthesizing
    ▪ Step-by-step synthesis
    ▪ Synthesis matrix
Strategies for planning and organizing a literature review

• Step-by-step synthesis

  1. Read your sources several times
  2. Take notes on every source
  3. Identify relevant concepts and supporting sources
  4. Restructure your notes by concept
  5. Organize your concepts into an outline

Strategies for planning and organizing a literature review

• Synthesis matrix – can help you:
  o “[...][R]ecord the main points of each source and document how sources relate to each other” (Johns Hopkins Sheridan Libraries, 2019)
A SAMPLE SYNTHESIS MATRIX
Topic: Anxiety in Graduate Students

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<td>Multiple Roles</td>
<td>Students can be blackballed in departments because those within the department can be very critical</td>
<td>Classroom contests to debate arguments and reading assignments could lead to extreme anxiety</td>
<td>Personal relationships and connections suffer, socializing is not a priority</td>
<td>Instructor feedback can be overwhelming, particularly when instructors use red ink when giving feedback</td>
<td>Graduate students often have problems juggling academic responsibilities, research, and financial responsibilities</td>
<td>Limited support and interactions with supervisors</td>
<td>Managing and working with challenging students in the classroom can contribute to stress/anxiety</td>
<td>Statistics and research-focused courses can be overwhelming and produce anxiety/procrastination</td>
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<td>Relationships</td>
<td>Graduate students, especially doctoral students, are also expected to teach</td>
<td>Graduate student socialization is unique in that not only does the student need to transition into the role as a student, but they must also be socialized into the profession</td>
<td>Graduate students report feeling pressure to prioritize academic roles over health, financial security, and personal relationships</td>
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The writer has included the names of the author(s) and the year. This provides all the information needed for APA in-text citations. For MLA, include author(s) and page number; for Chicago Style, include author(s), year, and page number. Format your matrix according to your assignment instructions.

There are some blanks in the matrix, as not all resources will discuss every identified theme.
Strategies for planning and organizing a literature review

- Synthesis matrix template
Strategies for planning and organizing a literature review

• When do you stop searching for literature?
  o There is no “one-size fits all” answer
  o This will be informed by your topic, your discipline, guidance from your advisor or the journal publisher, etc.
Strategies for planning and organizing a literature review

• When do you stop searching for literature?
  o Ask yourself if you have:
    ▪ Searched within all relevant resources
    ▪ Utilized various search strategies and keywords
    ▪ Achieved saturation = seeing the same findings and sources repeatedly
    ▪ Found enough sources to justify that your new research is necessary
Fall 2022 Graduate Student Essentials

When: Tuesdays from 12:30pm – 1:30pm
Where: Library first floor classroom (Room 120) and live via Zoom

September 6: Essential Library Skills to Ace Graduate School
September 13: 7 Tips To Make Your Data Management Life Easier
September 20: 3 Simple Tips for Expanding Your Literature Review
September 27: Supercharging Your Scholarly Presence in 3 Easy Steps
October 4: Web Mapping for Every Discipline – How to Use ArcGIS Online