

Centra Library Services

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Literature Reviews for Evidence-Based and Research Project Proposals

What is a literature review?

The literature review is a necessary step in the focus and design of an evidence-based (EB) or research project. In a description from The Writing Center, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill:

The literature review ... usually has an organizational pattern and combines both summary and synthesis. A summary is a recap of the important information of the source, but a synthesis is a re-organization, or a re-shuffling, of that information. ("Literature Reviews," para. 5)

The literature review shows the relationship between the published literature and the project topic.

What is the purpose of a literature review?

The literature review shows the existing body of knowledge about a topic. It places the project topic within the context of relevant articles and other supporting materials. The literature review helps determine if there is sufficient consensus and evidence to implement a change (EB project) or a gap or lack of knowledge that could be addressed in a research project.

Steps to the Written Literature:

Literature Searching

Pre-search

- State your EB or research question
- Consider how broad or narrow is the topic
- Write down words related to the topic. Consider synonyms, acronyms. Include any PICOT components as relevant:
 - P = Patient/Population (patient group or other groups) OR Problem
 - I = Intervention
 - C = Comparison or current practice
 - O = Expected outcome
 - T = Time (to achieve outcome) / also Type of study (what kind would best answer the question)
- Select the database(s) to search. Most often, it will be (1) CINAHL Complete, (2) MEDLINE Complete, and (3) Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews as needed.

Searching

- See Step-by-step guides under Training and Tutorials on the Centra Library Services page.
- For help, contact Jana Liebermann jana.liebermann@centrahealth.com 434-200-3147.

Selecting the Most Relevant Search Results for Closer Scrutiny

Date: Accepted scope for clinical information is the previous five years, but start with the most recent. For non-clinical topics, such as teamwork or communication, older articles may be relevant.

Journal: The journal should be peer-reviewed; the highest level is double-blind.

Core Nursing: With a search results, the “core nursing” limiter will target articles in important, major nursing journals. Most of the library’s nursing subscriptions are for core nursing journals.

Types of sources: Both have valuable information for gathering a knowledge base.

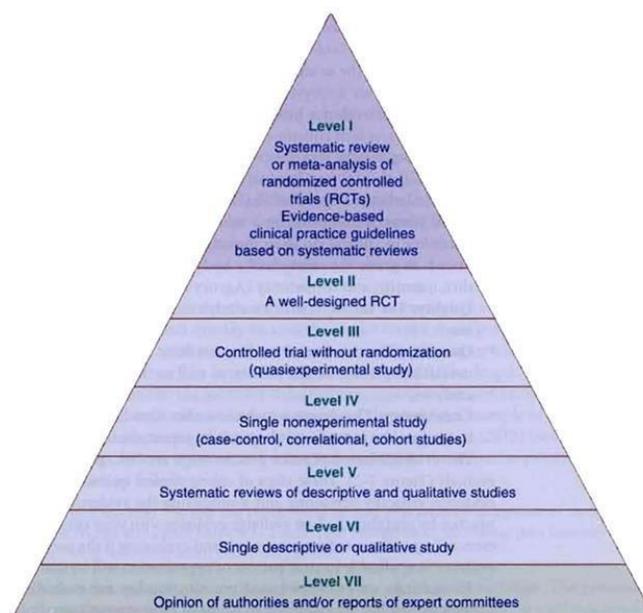
- Primary Sources: Articles that report study findings. There are many kinds of studies: quantitative, qualitative, descriptive
- Secondary Sources: Literature review articles, including systematic reviews and meta-analyses

Full-Text Availability: If an article is not immediately available in full-text through a pdf or link, contact Claire Meissner to request it through interlibrary loan.

Analyzing, Evaluating, Critiquing Articles

See “Framework for How to Read and Critique a Research Study” on the CSCH Research Council page, under Proposal Forms and Instructions.

Levels of Evidence:



Levels of the evidence: Pyramid [Evidence hierarchy for rating levels of evidence associated with a study's design, from LoBiondo-Wood & Haber (2014). *Nursing Research: Methods and Critical Appraisal for Evidence-Based Practice*. St. Louis: Elsevier.]

Writing the Literature Review

Organization

It is useful to divide the literature review into paragraphs with transitions between paragraphs so that the synthesized information flows.

Thematic: Most appropriate for most proposals because the articles are discussed around the project's EB/research topic

Synthesis:

- Group related articles (for example, similarities in evaluating pain, providing patient education).
- Include only the most important points that relate to the project.
- Tie the articles in each group to each other and to the aims of the proposed project.
- Use quotations selectively, if at all.
- Relate entire literature review to proposed EBP or research project.
- Avoid summarizing each article individually, which is more like an annotated bibliography.

Reviewing the Written Literature Review

It is a good idea to put the review aside before looking it over; waiting a day works well.

Give to someone not involved in the project to proofread and provide feedback

Meaning: Check that you have said what you intended and explained your points. Look at both sentence and paragraph levels. Read out loud for sense, missing words, awkward wording.

Proofreading

- Grammar: subject-verb combination, pronouns and what they refer to, possessives (its vs. it's)
- Punctuation:
 - , **and**, **but**, **or** when joining two independent clauses that could stand alone
 - , before the last item on the list is optional, but be consistent in using or not using it
 - ; when joining two independent clauses that could stand alone without **and**/**but**/**or**
 - punctuation within quotation marks
- Spelling: Spell check is a useful tool, but it doesn't catch a wrong word spelled correctly. For example, typographical errors **an** for **and** / **then** for **the** / **their** for **there**.

- APA Format
 - Refer to the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*, 6th ed., 2010, for correct formatting of citations and reference lists. There are print copies in the LGH Library; for online help, go to the American Psychological Association APA Style website: www.apastyle.org.
 - See the table below for examples of in-text citations within the literature review (and any other sections of the proposal).

Basic APA, 6th ed., Citation Styles

Type of Citation	Appearance: Beginning of sentence; first mention in text	Appearance: Beginning of sentence; subsequent mention in text	Appearance: End of sentence; first mention in text	Appearance: End of sentence; subsequent mention in text
One work/ one author	Hammett (2016)	Hammett (2016)	(Hammett, 2016)	(Hammett, 2016)
One work/ two authors	Christie and Sayers (2013)	Christie and Sayers (2013)	(Christie & Sayers, 2013)	(Christie & Sayers, 1999)
One work/ three authors	Grimes, Marsh, and Cain (2015)	Grimes et al. (2015)	(Grimes, Marsh, & Cain, 2015)	(Grimes et al., 2015)
One work/ four authors	Parris, Peters, Todd, and Chandler (2016)	Parris et al. (2016)	(Parris, Peters, Todd, & Chandler, 2016)	(Parris et al., 2016)
One work/ five authors	Doyle, Collins, Beaton, Penny, and Tey, (2013)	Doyle et al. (2013)	(Doyle, Collins, Beaton, Penny, & Tey, 2013)	(Doyle et al., 2013)
One work/ six authors	Evanovich et al. (2017)	Evanovich et al. (2017)	(Evanovich et al., 2017)	(Evanovich et al., 2017)