

Literature Review Prezi Script—Grad school version

Welcome: Welcome to the University of West Georgia Office of Research and Sponsored Project's How to Write a Literature Review. I am Dr. Julie Hawk, Research Development Coordinator at the ORSP.

About/Intro Slide:

Literature Reviews for grant proposals, in particular, can be tricky because they often require you to do research that is outside your primary discipline. This presentation will introduce you to databases that you might find useful for the kind of grant proposals that faculty at UWG are well-positioned to write. Additionally, the presentation will take you through the process of rhetorically positioning your own voice and the need for your research within the larger research-based conversation.

Databases 1: Chances are, you're used to the databases in your specific discipline and field, but you don't often explore databases outside of that. Stepping outside of your comfort zone a bit on this, however, can greatly increase the chances of finding the research that you need when you have to think more broadly than your specific discipline. Indeed, getting used to a range of databases will make you a stronger researcher within your discipline as well.

Databases 2: Choosing the Right Database: The best person to explain the way databases work is always going to be a librarian, so please watch this short video provided by the Ingram Library.

Databases 3: Takeaways: Remember that Databases can be either deep or broad. Broad databases give you a small sampling of many things. Deep databases allow you to investigate a narrowed topic thoroughly. The type and depth of research you are doing will dictate what database characteristics matter most to you. It is a good idea to become adept at using the databases of your discipline, but also to familiarize yourself with databases outside of the discipline for those times when your research might go beyond your discipline's constraints. Finally, one of the best resources any researcher has is the subject librarians. They know a good deal about the disciplines under their purview, but more importantly, they know research strategies that promote efficient and thorough research.

Annotated Bibliographies 1: A good literature review often starts with a carefully constructed annotated bibliography. The following information will cover some strategies to help develop annotated bibliographies that will, it's true, be more work at the front end, but far less work at the back end. If you're willing to put in extra time in the beginning stages of your research, the drafting of the literature review itself will be much faster.

Annotated Bibliographies 2: Good Annotations: Good annotations should accomplish several things, all while being as succinct as possible. The main purpose of an annotation is to gather the necessary information about the central argument of the source text, along with a brief accounting of the evidence used to support that argument, under the citation for that source. That way, everything you need to know about the text when it comes time to cite it is one place. Going beyond that, however, a strong annotation should also provide a little of your own commentary that offers a bit of analysis of the source as well as an articulation of where this source fits into your research and how you plan to use it in your own argument. As such, you should think of an annotated bibliography as an ever-evolving document. It should grow with your argument as it informs your other research and your own argument and is turn informed by those things. Like writing itself, this process is a recursive one.

Annotated Bibliographies 3: Different Approaches to Annotations There are several ways to approach writing annotations for annotated bibliographies. When writing one for your own preparation for writing a literature review, you can approach it in whatever way seems to fit your own writing process

most closely. If you like formulas as a way to train, consider using a Rhetorical Précis first. You don't want to stop here, as this format does not allow for your own commentary or for adding additional material, such as quotations from the text, but learning how to write a precis does help you learn to get a source for the important information more quickly and efficiently, and it does get you well on your way to a thorough and succinct annotation. A Rhetorical Précis has only four sentences, but each sentence must do very specific work:

Sentence 1: Includes the author, genre, title, date (in parentheses), followed by a rhetorically accurate verb (asserts, argues, implies, etc) and a THAT clause that contains the central argument of the source text

Sentence 2: Includes the way the author develops the argument and supports the thesis (usually in chronological order, but it does not have to be)

Sentence 3: Includes the author's purpose followed by an IN ORDER TO phrase

Sentence 4: Includes a description of the intended audience and/or how the author relates to her audience (a brief analysis of tone works here)

If you like to be more free-form in your drafting, simply include that information and the rest of the information that makes for a good annotation in your own words, plus include any direct quotations (properly cited) that you think you might use. Do note, however, that all of the information in a precis should also be in a free-form annotation, though the citation does take care of the publication information, so you do not need to include that again in the annotation itself.

Annotated Bibliographies 4: Rhetorical Précis: An Example: Please read the example rhetorical precis carefully and note how each sentence follows the formula laid out on the last slide. The words and phrases in bold point towards the specific aspects of the formula for each sentence. This formulaic approach to summarizing a text is of course somewhat limited, but practicing this method does help you become more efficient at getting to the crux of a source's argument.

Annotated Bibliographies 5: Standard Annotations: An Example: Please read the example standard annotation here and note that this is merely one way to approach it. Note also that it includes direct quotations that encapsulate key components of the text so that as you write your literature review, you might pull directly from your annotation to pepper in key quotes. Be sure to cite them carefully here so that you don't have to go hunting for that information later. For an entire book-length project, I usually have a much longer entry than this, and I will include more quotations. You should use your own judgment about how much detail to provide in terms of direct quotations and explanations of evidence as long as the key components—the same ones you would include in a rhetorical precis—are there.

Situating Your Research 1: Once you have gathered all your research, read and annotated it thoroughly, and are ready to put together your literature review, think about your overall purpose, your audience, your place in the scholarly conversation, and the ways in which your research might fill a research gap. This graphic from Karen Kelsky's website, *The Professor is In*, shows what she calls a "Foolproof Research Proposal Template." While this template is specific to grant-funded research proposals, the ideas therein are translatable to any kind of research. When writing a paper for a class or a thesis or dissertation, you certainly won't be asking for money, which means you won't need to worry about the budget (and probably the timeline), but the rest is applicable. The point of scholarship is to fill in gaps in knowledge, and the creation of new knowledge leads to the creation of new gaps. That means there is always room for more research. As you write your literature review, you need to have that broader purpose in mind.

Always think rhetorically about your own writing and research in order to create the most persuasive and logical argument possible.

Situating Your Research 2: Source Material: The next two slides will take you through an exercise in synthesizing sources in a way that centers your argument and keeps your own purpose in mind while using rhetorical moves at the sentence level to position those source texts in conversation with each other.. First, read these two quotations from texts about High Impact Educational Practices, the first from the seminal text on them from the man who coined the phrase, and the second a much more recent publication highlighting the implementation of High Impact Educational practices at one institution. As you read these, think about how they talk to each other. How are they similar? What are some important differences?

Situating Your Research 3: Integrating Your Source Material: This synthesis highlights the key differences between these two texts: the effect of high impact educational practices on students, as George D. Kuh underscores, and the effect of those practices on faculty, as Cassidy and Theobald point out. Putting these two texts in conversation, then, allows you to speak about high impact educational practices on BOTH students and faculty in ways that open up a space for new research. In this example, assume a grant-funded project that is looking specifically at some aspect of that interplay between faculty and students engaged in high impact educational practices. Note some of the rhetorical moves that highlight specific things. The very first sentence signals that you know the history of the scholarly conversation just by using the term “landmark study.” The direct quotation from Kuh is followed by an explanation and application of that quotation to the project at hand and then by a pivot to the second source. After the quotation from the second source, it once again moves to contextualizing the secondary research in the terms of the research project being undertaken. This rhetorical positioning keeps the reader mindful that the author’s purpose is firmly on her own research, even while she is engaging in a review of the relevant literature.

Conclusion: If, after viewing this presentation, you have further questions or would simply like to talk about the information here, feel free to send me an email at jhawk@westga.edu. Thanks for watching!