Day 2: Accessing Scholarly Literature

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| Day 3 Specific Learning Outcomes |
| 1. **Identify genres of scholarly writing** |
| 1. **Appraise the utility of various genres of scholarly writing** |
| 1. **Become familiar with the TWU library and available resources** |
| 1. **Become proficient in using electronic search engines** |
| 1. **Prepare to conduct a library search of precedent literature on a selected topic by identifying a research interest.** |

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| Book/Article | Author | Pages |
| *Understanding Research* | Plano-Clark & Creswell (2015) | 79-83 |
| Research Tutorial  (optional) | Badke | *http://acts.twu.ca/Library/*  *textbook.htm* |

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| Class Announcement: Transition & New Focus |
| **Day 2 is focused on gaining familiarity with various genres of scholarly literature, getting a sense of how these genres contribute to your own scholarly endeavors, and in gaining first-hand experience in locating and organizing relevant scholarly literature. Two of the major assignments in this course, and indeed, a major element of LDRS 697/698, hinge on your ability to conduct a review of precedent literature. We will break this formidable task down into two assignments that build on each other. Assignment #3 will focus on locating and organizing appropriate literature, and Assignment #4 will focus on your synthesis of the literature you located for Assignment #3. Although these assignments will not come due until the later in this course, our work today is the foundation for those assignments.** |

Notes: Accessing Scholarly Literature

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| Theme, Theorists & Concepts |
| * Clarifying Your Personal Research Interest |
| * Accessing Scholarly Literature |
| * Utilizing Scholarly Literature |

**Clarifying Your Research Interest[[1]](#footnote-1)**

We want to revisit one last time the vitally important matter of clarifying your research interest.

As we saw on Day 1, the Master of Arts in Leadership program values the application of best practices to your personal professional practice. Before we get into some of the concrete realities of accessing scholarly literature, we need to pause and give time for you to reflect on and articulate some issues that are salient in your personal professional life and practice. The following questions will begin to guide the process.

* **Significant Question:** What are the “significant questions that can be answered empirically” (Gall, Gall & Borg 2007, p. 35) relevant to you in your professional life? State a research problem in complete, grammatical sentences. In stating your research problem, consider the following:

• Is my statement sufficiently broad? Is it clear how the general area of study will be limited or focused?

• Does the problem have the potential for providing important and useful answers and information?

* **Research Approach:** Based on your reading of Plano-Clark & Creswell, do you think your problem statement lends itself more to qualitative or quantitative research (for data-based approaches) or to more conceptual research reports? Defend your position.
* **Literature Review:** What broad fields of social science do you anticipate might inform your problem statement? What key words would you begin to with as you conduct a literature search?
* **Purpose for Research:** Working with Plano-Clark & Creswell’s definition of research purpose, suggest some focused questions that will serve to guide your upcoming review of precedent literature.

**Accessing Scholarly Literature**

A thorough review of precedent literature is a demanding task, and requires you to make a number of informed decisions that, at this stage of the course, would be difficult for you to do. That is why this course is structured in such a way that Assignments 7 and 8 together serve as the capstone to this course.

Plano-Clark and Creswell’s (2015) Chapter 4 provides detailed information regarding the role of a literature review in a research report as well describing the process of conducting a literature review in a simple framework of four interrelated steps: (a) identify key terms; (b) use search strategies to locate literature; (c) select relevant documents that are of good quality; and (d) take notes on the key aspects of each selected document (Plano-Clark & Creswell, 2015, p. 126). We will follow a similar process in this course and courses to follow.

* *Plan and Organize*. Organizing tools are important both to streamline your literature search and to summarize and synthesize. As you begin your literature search (library books, readings and books you have received for your MA in Leadership course work, online periodicals, internet search), organize your search into general topic areas and more specific keywords. Plano-Clark & Creswell’s (2015) notion of a *literature map* fits with this phase (p. 137). Specifically, the content of the organizational boxes are highly related to the questions and key words that guided the literature search.

We need to interject something about genres of scholarly literature here. Figure 1.3 on page 10 of Plano-Clark and Creswell (2015) gives a useful general categorization of scholarly literature. As you look at this chart, notice the inverse relationship between the timing and standards of quality scales. Usually, dissertations or conference papers are where you first find new ideas expressed. This was certainly the case with Appreciative Inquiry. The whole notion burst on the scene with David Cooperrider’s 1986 dissertation entitled *Appreciative inquiry: Toward a methodology for understanding and enhancing organizational innovation*.

A usual next step is to take a dissertation and either break it down into a series of journal articles or to adapt the dissertation to fit the length of a journal article. Keep in mind this rough time line: By the time a dissertation is successfully defended, the actual research may have been conducted several years prior. It could easily take another three years for a journal article to make it through the peer-reviewed process and actually come to print. This would mean that the actual research referenced in the journal article could well be at least five years old. Then, it could easily take another five years for high quality publishers to work through their review processes and bring something to print. This is especially true of such publishers as Jossey-Bass. What you gain by this is that anything that Jossey-Bass prints is pretty much guaranteed to be high quality. Similarly for anything published by the Harvard Business School. Obviously, what you lose in this is cutting edge thought.

As you approach various genres of scholarly literature, remind yourself of the relative advantages and disadvantages of each.

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| **GENRE** | **ADVANTAGES** | **DISADVANTAGES** | **UTILITY** |
| Summaries (Encyclopedia’s and handbooks) | Generally highest quality (be careful of Wikipedia!!). | Tend to be dated. | Valuable for establishing a general working knowledge of the field. |
| Books | Generally highest quality. | Can be dated. | Valuable for establishing mainstream thought. Most foundational literature is found in books. |
| Journal Articles | Generally high quality (peer-reviewed). Provide clearer description of actual research processes as told from the researcher’s perspective. Generally more current than books and summaries. | Generally will not give a full development of application and implications. | Represent the best available balance between quality and currency. |
| Early Stage (conference papers, dissertations, newsletters, personal web pages, etc.) | Most current. Cutting edge ideas are found here. | Little review for quality (dissertations are usually an exception, but even that varies between institutions). Ideas usually not well developed. | Valuable for establishing trends in current thought. Use cautiously. |

* *TWU Library Resources*. If you have not accessed the TWU library, do so now. It is available at: <http://www.twu.ca/library> Identify which databases are most relevant to your search. Look through the subject index to identify keywords close to your topic (each database uses subject headings specific to it). Look for articles that are close to your topic. When you find such an article or study, examine the descriptors used for that article, and conduct a search using these keywords. A review of references used in related articles may provide you with other important resources. Visit the helpful online version of Professor Badke’s text regarding library searches available at: <http://acts.twu.ca/Library/research500.htm>.

[](http://www.acts.twu.ca/lbr/3rdedCover.htm)

**Utilizing Scholarly Literature**

* *Track*. Keep track of your literature search strategy and results! The simplest way to do this is to set up a chart that documents the search engine, search words, collapsing of search categories, and results. This way you will not be repeating your searches, wondering whether you tried a certain combination of search words, or a certain search engine. For example,

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| **Search Engine/Database** | **Search Words** | **# of Hits** | **Results** | **Comments** |
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As a TWU student you also have access to ***RefWorks.*** RefWorks is a web-based bibliography and database manager that allows users to create a personal database by importing references from text files or online databases. You can use these references in writing your papers or for personal use. Be aware that RefWorks must be learned (which may take a considerable time investment on your part), *and the results still must be checked for APA 6 conformity*.

* *Select the Documents for Review*. After you have the results from your database searches, you need to select documents for your literature review. Begin by reviewing the titles and abstracts. For those articles that you deem worthwhile, skim the article itself to determine if it is relevant to your topic.
* *Summarize in a Review Matrix*. As you collect relevant literature enter it into a summary chart (review matrix) that will be useful to present your literature search at a glance. The following chart might provide a template for this summary:

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| **Reference:**  (Cite full reference in APA 6 format for a reference list.) |
| **Research Problem:**  (Describe the research problem and relevant background. Include page references for both your summaries and direct quotations.) |
| **Purpose, Research Questions, or Hypothesis:**  (Describe the purpose, research questions and hypothesis (quantitative research). Include page references for both your summaries and direct quotations.) |
| **Data Collection Procedure:**  (Describe the researcher collected data. Include page references for both your summaries and direct quotations.) |
| **Results or Findings:**  (Describe the research results or findings. Include page references for both your summaries and direct quotations.) |

* *Tips to Remember*. Keep the following key points in mind as you summarize the literature you have deemed relevant to your topic.
  + List only the most pertinent points about the article and the topic. Too much information in the review matrix will decrease its usefulness at this stage.
  + The reason for using a review matrix is to create order out of chaos! You are dealing with large amounts of information spread across many sources with too many details to remember.
* *Synthesize and Critique*. This will begin in Assignment #7 and will all come together in Assignment #8, Formal Literature Review which will be due a week after this course ends. A precedent literature review is a summary of the “state of knowledge” in a given area. It involves abstracting key relevant articles and books, and synthesizing concepts and findings for critical (i.e., careful and judicious) application to given problem situations. In other words, a good review of precedent literature is a synthesis of what current scholarly literature has to say regarding a given problem, presented in a coherent and compelling manner. An integral step in this is to effectively summarize scholarly literature.

An effective summary and critique of an article or book will:

* + Mention the problem being addressed.
  + State the central purpose or focus of the study.
  + Briefly state information about the sample, population, or participants.
  + Review key results that relate to your problem or topic.
  + Point out any flaws or shortcomings in study methodology or reasoning, logic, or force of argument.
* *How Much Is Enough*? When doing a review of precedent literature, it may be difficult to determine how much literature to review. To provide some guidance in this decision, consider the main variables of interest, or main subtopics, and include literature on these topics.
  + Review the scholarly literature pertaining to each identified topic.
  + Provide a summary of the literature that highlights the most important studies or articles, captures major themes in what you have reviewed, and articulates how your research interest intersects with this literature (e.g., why we need to know more, or why the literature needs to be applied in a particular context). In essence, you want to include a summary statement of the state of knowledge in the area you are examining.
  + Keep going until you sense that you have represented fairly the current field of literature. A good indication that you have done that is when you find authors essentially re-stating but not really advancing knowledge in the field. In other words, you have hit saturation.
* *APA Formatting and Referencing*. A basic tenet in reviewing literature is to use an appropriate and consistent reference style. The American Psychological Association (APA) style has been selected as the style to be used in the MA in Leadership program (exceptions may be made in consultation with your advisor if you are writing in a discipline that uses another style). Creswell (2003) notes that the most important style considerations involve use of in-text citations, end-of-text references, headings, and figures and tables. Writing your literature review will give you ample opportunity to familiarize yourself with the basics of APA referencing. You will need to cite sources appropriately in the text (see pp.174-179 in your APA 6 Handbook) and list sources on a reference list (See APA 6 pp.180 ff). Direct quotations follow particular conventions (see beginning p. 170) and formatting (see APA 6 pp. 91-92). Those new to academic writing often wonder when to cite a source. Leedy and Ormrod (2010) give the apt advice of “give credit where credit is due” (p. 80). When in doubt, give credit.

**References:**

Plano-Clark, V., Creswell, J. (2015). *Understanding research: A consumer’s guide* (2nd ed.)*.* Boston, MA: Pearson

Creswell, J. (2003). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Gall, M., Gall, J. & Borg, W. (2007). *Educational research.* Boston, MA: Pearson.

Leedy, P., & Ormrod, J. (2010). *Practical research: Planning and design* (9th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

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| Assignment Instructions |
| **There is no assignment given today. However, you are encouraged to look at the previews of Assignments 3and 4 provided on the links under today in MyCourses.**   |  | | --- | | Assignment Instructions (Preview) | | **Assignment #3—Literature Review Search Component Steps**   1. Write your problem statement in at most a few concise sentences (or question format). 2. Identify the searchable keywords and domains of social science that arise from your problem statement. 3. Locate 15 scholarly sources that are potentially relevant to your Literature Review in Assignment 3. Include at least two each of the following: books or e-books, journal articles, web-based documents. Build an exhaustive reference list of the sources you have used, formatted to APA 6 format requirements. Also, be sure this entire document is APA6 format compliant.   In several appropriately cited paragraphs each, do the following: (a) present a working knowledge summary of your topic (the basic facts required to make someone familiar with the topic to a limited extent) based on what you have discovered about the topic from your initial investigations of literature and (b) what the major issues and questions are that are being asked in the field. Finally, (c) present a brief statement outlining your personal professional interest in this topic. In essence, you are presenting a *working knowledge summary* of your topic (the basic facts required to make someone familiar with the topic to a limited extent) *based on what you have discovered about the topic from your own experiences and from the reference sources*. You will want to *superficially* describe the relevant issues subsumed in your problem statement, including the urgency, the controversies, and anything else that will convince your reader that your problem statement is worthwhile pursuing. Again, be sure to cite appropriately.  **Assignment # 4 –Formal Literature Review**  In this assignment you will demonstrate your scholarly inquiry learning by writing a graduate-level literature review. Assignment #3 is focused on the professional interest you have identified and defined in this course and extends the work you did in Assignment #2. Assignment #3 will be your analysis and synthesis of the literature you previously located that is relevant to your research problem. You will now create a synthetic summary of the findings of your review of precedent literature in scholarly prose, fully APA 6 format compliant. The main body of text should be in the 2500-3000 word range (around 10 pages) exclusive of any title page or references.  Plano-Clark and Creswell suggest that you might wish to do this on a study-by-study approach, or a thematic approach (2010, p. 128-132). Because the number of research studies involved, I suggest that you follow a thematic approach. The final section of this document should be an exhaustive reference list of the sources you have used, formatted to APA 6 format requirements. Further details including the assignment rubric are provided in the Assignment 4 Template document available in MyCourses.  References  Plano-Clark, V. & Creswell, J. (2010). *Understanding research: A consumer’s guide.* Boston, MA: Merrill. | |

1. © David Williaume 2016 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)