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HANOI UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Technical Writing and Presentation Basic Writing

SOICT - 2020

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Introduction

- The aim of this module is to:
 - develop knowledge about literature reviews
 - develop language skills needed to produce a literature review in English for a research project and/or journal article.
- It begins with a focus on the purposes of a literature review. It then looks at the relationship between annotated bibliographies and literature reviews.
- The main focus is to explore ways of reading and writing about academic literature.
- It will develop skills for drawing on current research to write your own critical commentary of relevant literature.

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Learning Outcomes

- understand that the key purposes of a literature review
 - to situate your research within the relevant knowledge in the field
 - to demonstrate how your research will add knowledge in a particular field.
- understand the relationship between an annotated bibliography and a literature review
- understand how to extract key ideas, analyse and synthesise research literature.
- move from description to analysis to critical commentary of current research literature.
- become familiar with the vocabulary that expresses judgment and evaluation.

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Structure of the module

- What is a literature review?
- What is an annotated bibliography?
- Reading research literature to extract key ideas.
- Developing an annotated bibliography.
- Writing literature reviews - language of judgment and evaluation.
- Ways of writing about research literature.

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Introducing literature reviews

- What is a literature review?
- What are its main purposes?
- Where do you typically find the literature review in a journal article?
- Where is a literature review located in other research texts?

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Activity 1 continued

A literature review is a **description** and **analysis** of the literature relevant to a particular field or topic.

It is a **critical assessment** of the relevant literature and the **evaluation** of these sources in relation to the research being proposed.

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Importance of reading research literature

- To understand the key concepts, terminologies, ideas, theories and practices in the field
- To become familiar with the main issues/problems/theories
- To become familiar with the key researchers in the field
- To establish the state of knowledge in the field
- To find 'gaps' in the field, or create a research space.

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Where is the literature review located in a research text?

- A literature review usually occurs as a section of a paper or report following the Introduction.
- However, parts of the literature review can be integrated into other sections of the paper or report.
- You should check the conventions for the publications you are writing for.

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Reading research texts

- **Who** wrote the text and what are the author's qualifications?
- **When** was it written?
- **Who** is it for?
- **What** is the main genre or main purpose? Sub-genres?
- **Why** was the study carried out?
- **What** is the author's main point, or thesis?
- **How** has the author collected the data?
- **What** are the findings?
- **What** relevant sources does the author use?
- **What** limits did the author place on the study?
- **What** aspects are relevant to your research question/area?
- **What** is your evaluation of the text?

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Typical stages in writing a literature review

- Select a topic
- Search the literature and select what to read
- Read the relevant texts
- Develop an annotated bibliography
- Develop your argument about the literature and relevant to your topic/research question(s)
- Write the review synthesising and critiquing the literature
- Integrate your own considered position

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What a literature review does

Your literature review needs to demonstrate that you have:

- understood and critically analysed relevant literature
- established the significance of your research
- shown how your work uses and builds on previous work
- shown how your work can be differentiated from previous work
- used the literature to identify knowledge gaps and to refine your research question/s

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Introducing annotated bibliographies

- What is an annotated bibliography?
- What are its main purposes?

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An annotated bibliography is

An annotated bibliography is a **descriptive** and **evaluative list** of citations for books, articles, or other documents.

It includes the **citation** (author details, year of publication, title of the work, edition – if relevant, publisher, place of publication), followed by a brief paragraph (the annotation) **summarising** then **evaluating** the work in terms of the **accuracy, quality, and relevance** of that source.

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Understanding Differences

A **literature review** is an integrated discussion of references where you compare and contrast ideas, theories, viewpoints, methods etc from a number of sources. You must comment on and evaluate what you have read in your own academic voice.

An annotated bibliography is a list of specific references with some evaluative comments. It is for your own use in carrying out and writing up your research.

A **reference list** is a list of the sources you have referred to or cited in your research text. It appears at the end of your research text.

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Purposes of annotated bibliographies

- To familiarise yourself with the material available on a particular topic.
- To demonstrate the quality and depth of reading that you have done.
- To exemplify the scope of sources available—such as journals, books, web sites and magazine articles.
- To highlight sources that may be of interest to other readers and researchers.
- To explore and organise sources for further research, e.g. as the first step toward a literature review.

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What is included

- **Full bibliographical details** of the text according to a particular referencing system
- **Summary** of the main points, identifying the particular theoretical or political perspective on which it is based. Include a comment on methods. Be concise.
- **Critique** involving a brief evaluation that includes: Who is the intended audience? On what assumptions is it based? What are the limitations? Does it have a particular bias? Is it useful for me? How?

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An example

Citation

Bloggs, J.(1995). *Understanding the Reading Process*. Saints Publishing, Sydney.

Summary

This text takes a psycholinguistic view of the reading process, describing the stages through which an individual moves in gaining control and independence in reading. Evidence from extensive research with children and adults learning to read is presented in anecdotal examples which **add interest** to the theoretical explanations.

Critique

This is an **easy-to-read** text describing the reading process which is **clearly** formatted for the new teacher. However, by not including more recent theories of reading that contest many of its claims, it offers a **limited view** of the reading process

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Adding more depth

For **describing**: annotations usually

- **summarise** the subject of the source
- **outline** the author's **argument**, **methodology** and **conclusions**.

For **critiquing**: annotations may focus on

- the author's **argument** (persuasive? didactic?)
- the **reliability** of the evidence
- its **relationship** to other critics
- its **contribution** to the field of research
- its **relationship** or **connection** to the research area or question

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Contents

Read the annotated bibliography example 1a.

The text can be broken up into 8 sections. Insert numbers 1-8 into the text where appropriate.

- 1.Citation
- 2.Introduction
- 3.Aims and Research Methods
- 4.Scope
- 5.Usefulness (to your research/to a particular topic)
- 6.Limitations
- 7.Conclusions
- 8.Reflections (explain how this work illuminates your topic or how it will fit in with your research)

From web search annotated bibliography, then, student.unsw.edu.au

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Writing your annotated bibliography

- Using an article from your discipline or field that you have brought to the class, draft an annotated bibliography entry.
- Refer to the examples we have looked at in the class so far as a guide.
- Do not worry too much about grammar at this point.

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From Annotated Bibliography to Literature Review

An annotated bibliography examines one reference at a time and moves from description to some analysis and critique, whereas a literature review examines a range of references foregrounding synthesis and critique. A literature review should:

- **Analyse**
- **Synthesise**
- **Critique**

What do you understand by each of these terms?

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A common problem

A common problem with literature reviews is that there is too much summary and description and not enough **synthesis and critique**.

For example:

Brown and Tang (2016) argue that Yeo and Pope (2017) examine ... (**summary**)

Whereas Brown and Tang (2016) argue Yeo and Pope (2017) **disagree** and suggest that (**synthesis**)

I **agree** with Yeo and Pope (2017) when they argue The **limitations** of Brown and Tang's (2016) methodology can be seen in.....their choice of **only** five participants to interview. (**critique**)

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Synthesising

Your literature review will contain considerable analysis of what you have read. In writing up the analysis you bring together other researchers' work making relationships between and among their ideas to produce new ideas.

Language that demonstrates synthesis in a literature review explicitly draws attention to relationships between and among ideas, theories, findings etc by different researchers.

There are many ways to do this, for example:

- **Whereas** X argues... Y suggests a **different** cause which is ...
- X claims ... which **differs** from both Y and Z in that ...
- X's research **builds on and expands** Y's initial work by ...

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Critique: Expressing Judgment and Evaluation

- One **limitation** of X's argument is... X's discussion is **superficial**...
- X's interviews were **thorough**...
- X carried out an **impressive** number of observations...
- X presents evidence in a **logical and coherent** discussion of ...
- Even though X's methodology is **sound**, the conclusions she draws **do not follow**... The experiment was **poorly** constructed...
- X's research demonstrates a **sophisticated** engagement with the literature...

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Academic voice

- Your literature review must contain the language of **judgment and evaluation**. The language of judgment and evaluation demonstrates how writers position themselves in the text – any word or phrase that indicates the **writer's attitude** to what is in the research literature.
- Your literature review must be written in your **own academic voice**. This means that your ideas about the literature, how bits of the literature relate to each other, and how useful they are for you must be foregrounded.

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Justifying your critique

It is **not** enough to express judgment and evaluation when discussing what you have read. You need to give reasons for your critique. The following examples illustrate this:

- X's discussion is **superficial...in that he does not take account of...**
- X's interviews were **thorough....She ensured that she...**
- X **managed to interview all the..**
- X carried out an **impressive** number of observations...; **he managed to interview all the..**
- X presents evidence in a **logical and coherent** discussion of ... She **begins with ... moves to ... and then...**

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Literature Review Examples 1 and 2

Read the literature review Examples 1 **and** 2, and in pairs, focusing on the language of critique and synthesis, discuss the language features of each example and answer the following questions for each of the examples:

- Are there any problems with it?
- What else needs to be included to improve this review?
- What are the purposes of the underlined first and last sentences of the introductory paragraph in example 1?

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Literature Review Example 1

Re-read example 1.

There is an opportunity to synthesise these summaries. In pairs, suggest linking words and phrases or other ways that could help to compare and contrast or relate the different summaries. Eg.

Whereas Kelly and Clay identify two classes of emergence , Guild reviews three types of emergence They differ in that

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Literature Review: verbs to introduce others' work

Note the **verbs** chosen to introduce the work of a number of researchers in example 1 and 2.

describes	identify	argue	shows	lists
reviews	considers	suggests	discusses	
states	distinguishes	advocates	submits	
claiming	elaborated	highlight	looks at	

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Literature Review Example 3

This literature review extract discusses some of the literature in the journal article: *Health Experts' Views on the Role of News Media*.

- Read the final paragraph (first paragraph p 261 Book of Reading AE6).
- Discuss its structure and use of language, especially in the first and last sentences.
- Discuss how the different literature is drawn together.
- Discuss where and how judgment and evaluation occurs.

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Different ways of writing literature reviews

There are different ways of presenting literature reviews in research publications. These include:

- Organisation by themes using subheadings
- Discussion of literature integrated throughout the publication
- A separate section following the Introduction

The structure and organisation of a literature review will depend on the kind of publication, its length, the conventions of similar publications.

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Literature Review of 2 articles

Using two of the articles you have brought to the class, draft a literature review that **analyses, compares/contrasts and critiques** their ideas, theories etc

Use the language of **judgment and evaluation** so that your own academic voice is predominant.

Use **linking words and phrases** to make your text cohesive.

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Software programs

There are software programs that automatically format in-text citations and end-of-paper reference lists in your chosen style (eg APA, AGPS, MLA, Chicago, etc). They can also be used as a personal data base to organise any of your academic references and your annotated bibliography.

Endnote is one of the most widely-used programs.

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Literature review websites

Search the web to find:

- examples of guides to writing literature reviews – these are usually on university websites
- examples of literature reviews in your field or discipline if possible.

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Extension activity

Look up the information sheets produced by the University of New England (UNE) on *Writing an annotated bibliography*.

Go to section 4 *Examples of Annotated Bibliography Entries*
Read the Table.

Go back to the draft of an annotated bibliography entry you began earlier and develop it further. You may wish to use some of the sentence structures from the table.

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Extension activity

Select 3 articles (from the web or ones you have brought to the class) and read them carefully.

- Write an annotated bibliography entry for each.
- Use the bibliographic entries to draft a literature review of the 3 articles ensuring you use the language of analysis, synthesis and critique.

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