



SFB/Transregio 266

ACCOUNTING FOR TRANSPARENCY

Research on Corporate Transparency

Element 1: How to Find and Read Research

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This used to be hard...



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... and sort of still is

Nowadays, multiple bibliographic databases exist that make finding inter-connected references much easier:

- Open to all (aka you are the product): <https://scholar.google.com>
- Commercial (much cleaner but also more limited data)
 - Elsevier Scopus <https://www.scopus.com/>
 - Clarivate Analytics Web of Science: <https://login.webofknowledge.com>

- 1 Search for key terms.
- 2 Make sure that you identify a topical study that is very well-cited and published in a reputable journal.
- 3 Read abstract: Does it fit what you have in mind? If yes, then read the Introduction. Try to adjust your terminology. Have you been using the right keywords?
- 4 Browse through the studies that cite your key study. You will most likely identify some current work that is also well-cited and ideally reviews the literature of the field that you want to familiarize yourself with in depth. Maybe you even identify a dedicated literature review study (like this week's reading) – These papers are good candidates for a first thorough read.

Reading a paper

- Most papers are organized so that the abstract communicates the main points of the paper and the introduction summarizes the whole paper and puts it into perspective
- Thus, read the abstract first to decide whether the paper is useful for you
- If yes, read the introduction very carefully and ideally in one go. After that think about whether you understand the argument developed by the authors.
- Most likely, you will have some questions with regards to the argument. Use the reminder of the paper to address these questions. This might imply reading the full paper but often it does not.
- When you struggle with the setting, method, and/or terminology, try to identify secondary resources that help you.
- After reading the paper, put it away and try to write down a few sentences describing
 - what the research question of the paper is,
 - which setting and constructs it uses,
 - how it addresses its research question,
 - what its main findings are and
 - which questions/thoughts you have after reading the paper

Rinse and repeat...

I know it sounds patronizing but I am yet to meet an impactful researcher that is not well-read. Especially during your PhD, you should devote a lot of time to reading.

Try to connect the dots. How do literatures connect across fields/paradigms? Do you sense gaps in the literature?

Talk about it. We memorize complex content much better when we present and discuss it with others. If your program does not offer a reading group or journal club, consider setting one up.