

Online Commentary for *Telling a Research Story: Writing a Literature Review*

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Before we get to the actual commentaries on the tasks, a few preliminary remarks would seem to be in order.

1. Regular users of the textbook (whether teachers, tutors, or independent scholars) may find it more convenient to print out this Commentary.
2. As always, we urge selective use of the material in the book because many will find that not all tasks and activities are directly relevant to their working situations; instructors, in particular, may wish to opt for a different order of the material, and may well find it helpful on occasion to bring in supplementary texts.
3. For quite a number of the commentaries, we offer the perspective of our research assistant, Vera Irwin, who, at the time of writing, is completing her dissertation in linguistics. We have adopted this policy in order to better establish a *dialogue* between the tasks and the users of the book. And here it is important to remember that Vera's perspective is that of somebody on the borderland between the social sciences and the humanities. If your research is situated elsewhere, such as on the borderland between medicine and engineering, your own perspective will often be different. Hence, we hope an enlightening 'conversation' between the two perspectives will emerge.
4. An online commentary on the University of Michigan Press website is obviously a more flexible document than a printed volume. We welcome your comments and suggestions, which we may be able to incorporate in occasional updates. We can be most easily reached at cfeak@umich.edu or jmswales@umich.edu.

Orientations

Task One

General questions on literature reviews: Commentary by Vera Irwin

1. For my field of Sociolinguistics, there are no strict guidelines whether the literature should be reviewed in a separate chapter, a subsection of a chapter, or throughout the text. In fact, there is a wide variety of ways dissertation authors in Linguistics incorporate the review of the literature into their work. In many cases, two approaches seem to be used at the same time: While there is a chapter or subsection entitled Literature Review, authors also provide review of other work throughout the text, especially in the introductory chapters. As for the question of personal preference versus the preference of your advisor and/or committee members, it might be wise to find out your advisor's expectations on the form of the review before you begin your work.
2. In the field of Sociolinguistics, articles generally treat the literature review as part of the text, incorporating the survey of the current and/or influential research throughout the body of the article, usually toward the beginning. If the article has separate sections, the literature tends to be addressed in the first introductory section.
3. Currently, I am working on the literature review for my dissertation that deals with questions of language and ethnic identity in migration. I feel that my literature review will have a good mixture of the functions identified by Noguchi. This hybrid approach seems necessary in order for the literature review to accomplish a number of functions, such as to position my research within the larger field, to explain where it stands in relation to many other studies on language and ethnicity, and in order to show its relevance and novelty. I also feel that the approaches mentioned here could play an important role at very specific parts of dissertation, and not only be confined to the chapter entitled Literature Review. For example, an issue-focused discussion seems to be suitable for an introductory chapter because it can help to identify a potential gap in the field. A historical type of review and what Noguchi calls Current Work might both be necessary when defining

fundamental theoretical concepts in the field to show how they have developed over time and how they are treated in the current studies in the field (in my case, defining such concepts as *ethnicity* or *identity* might be the case where the two approaches would need to be combined).

4. As a graduate student in the field of Linguistics, I have had experience only with the first type of literature review: All the reviews I've encountered in dissertations, research articles, or elsewhere were narrative reviews. The literature reviews that I have written as parts of course papers or larger research papers were all of a narrative nature.
5. If my dissertation literature review can accomplish what this quote is saying, I will be very pleased.

Task Two

Which points are relevant for the writing of your literature review?

Vera responds again.

- ___ 1. The preparation of a literature review is a three-step process: finding the relevant literature, reading, and then writing up the review.

This seems rather unrealistic for both article and dissertation for a couple of reasons: first, I found it much easier to write small sections of a potential literature review as I read rather than waiting until I was done with all the reading. Second, as my research developed, I felt a need to go back and find more literature to add to the existing body of relevant research. This way, it has been a “back-and-forth” process rather than a three-step one.

- ___ 2. Your literature review should discuss problems and/or controversies within your field.

In the case of a dissertation or research article it is very possible that the literature review would highlight a very specific controversy within the field if the research itself later suggests ways to address or overcome it. This can help to position a particular piece of research within a larger field.

As for addressing major problems and controversies in the discipline, in my experience, it is more typical in European schol-

arly traditions to address larger questions before turning to your specific topic in a piece of research. In the United States, the advisors (and readers) seem to prefer a more focused approach and expect a survey of literature that provides only a very focused overview of the issues directly relevant to the present study.

- ____ 3. Your literature review needs to explain clearly which potential areas for inclusion have not been covered in the review and why they have been omitted.

This would make sense for a dissertation if you deliberately don't include some of the branches of literature and only cover a specific topic. In this case you can anticipate that the readers will have questions about such decision. In a shorter article, the readers are not likely to assume that your literature review will cover a wide selection of literature before turning to your specific research.

- ____ 4. Your literature review should focus on very recent publications because they are likely the most relevant.

I believe this will depend on the field, the focus, and the type of the study. Although looking only at recent publications might make more sense for a relatively new or a fast developing field, research in other fields can benefit from a deeper look into the research history on a specific topic. A dissertation might be expected to look more deeply into the past when discussing relevant literature than a research article.

- ____ 5. Your literature review should be as long as possible in order to persuade your reader that you have read very widely.

No. In a research article, a long literature review will not be possible just because of the space limits. In case of a dissertation, in my opinion, *thorough* does not mean "long." Especially in the case of LRs that look at a large number of sources, it is critical to organize them in such a way as to present a manageable and logical overview of the important points without making the LR too long.

- ___ 6. Your literature review should help reveal gaps in the existing body of research.

Again, it depends. If your research is indeed filling a gap in an existing body of research, then it would be wise to make it clear to the reader in both research article and dissertation alike.

- ___ 7. Your literature review should critically evaluate each piece of work you discuss.

No. In both research article and dissertation alike, a detailed critical evaluation of each research piece would make a literature review too long, too boring, and not to the point. Instead, a good literature review should deal with aspects of the existing studies that are directly relevant for the current research and help the author to make their own case.

- ___ 8. An overall chronological ordering of the literature is a good approach.

While it can work in some cases, this should not be the default approach for organizing the literature in an LR. It is important to order the literature in a way that will help the reader to see the major developments of the field, organizing it in a logical manner, be it chronologically or according to a type of study, position of the author on a specific issue, type of methodology used, etc.

- ___ 9. Your literature review can safely ignore work not in your immediate discipline.

No, especially today when more and more researchers turn to interdisciplinary projects. It would be wise for a researcher to check whether the object of his/her study had been researched in related disciplines, especially when attempting to survey the literature for such extensive pieces of research as dissertations.

- ___ 10. Your literature review can help you discover conceptual traditions and frameworks that have been used to examine problems as well as help you show how your work might contribute to a cumulative scholarly or research process.

Yes, for both research articles and dissertations.

Task Three

Research Priorities

After some discussion, we divided the six areas in this manner.

HP 1. Significant discoveries or findings in your research area

HP 2. Significant and relevant concepts, models, and theories

HP 3. Relevant methodologies in your research area

HP 4. Gaps and needs in your field

LP 5. The relationship between your field and other

LP 6. The early history of your research area

Vera reported to us that for her own research dealing with language and ethnic identity, she would find it useful to address a specific *issue* and also to discuss the way this issue had been (or hadn't been) treated from the *historical* perspective, thus highlighting the need to (re-)address it.

Task Four

Citation theories: Vera responds again.

1. The least relevant for me are:

Theory 4 (citations as the reward system). This is probably because of a lack of experience. It is unlikely that as a graduate student or junior researcher you have published enough to be cited. This view of citation use was unfamiliar to me.

Theory 2 (showing respect for other scholars). Most of the time, advisors seem to steer graduate students toward more concise writing, in which citations are expected to do more than just show respect for previous research. The main functions would rather be establishing a research space, orienting the reader toward relevant work, and helping to add more authority to the author's own writing.

2. Theory 4 was an unfamiliar perspective for me.
3. There is probably not one straight answer to this question because depending on the course or discipline you would want to highlight

different functions of citations. Maybe something along the following lines: *Because you are not doing your own research in a vacuum, you need to show what has or has not been done in the field, and where your own research will fit into this picture.*

Task Five

Scholar or researcher?

1. Vera reported that it is hard to speak for everyone because the balance between being a scholar and/or researcher will vary greatly depending on the field, institutional affiliation, seniority of the student/researcher, as well as personal interests and preferences. One can assume, however, that in faster developing technological fields there will be more stress on innovative research and less attention to the older pieces of research that have become outdated. In others, such as humanities, a more traditional scholarly approach to a literature review might be expected. In addition, as we saw in Task Two, the approach to reviewing the relevant literature might depend on a specific piece of research (such as a shorter research article vs. a dissertation or book).
2. Vera's advisor distinguished between a junior researcher *per se* (scholar before researcher) and a junior scholar working on a specific project (Maxwell's position).
3. Vera referred to a potential difference between fast moving and more traditional disciplines. Chris and John noted that students working as members of research groups could rely on the director of the group for insight into the literature.

A note on Malcolm Ashmore

Malcolm Ashmore defended his PhD thesis in 1985 at the University of York (United Kingdom). The work was entitled "The Reflexive Thesis: Wrighting Sociology of Scientific Knowledge," and, as the title suggests, his research area is sociology. The dissertation was published four years later. Ashmore deliberately switches the genres around: The opening chapter takes the form of an introductory lecture by the candidate with the advisor/supervisor sitting at the back; the LR second chapter is cast as a 60-page encyclopedia on the topic with entries

for people, terms, and schools; and the final chapter takes the form of a transcript of a mock dissertation defense. A flavor of Ashmore can be sensed from this opening to his endnotes.

Chapter One

Welcome to the notes. I hope you will visit this section of the text regularly. Quite a lot will be going on here and it would be a shame to miss it all. But to get to the business of this particular note: May I ask by which route you arrived at Chapter One, note 1? (227)

Task Six

Professor commentaries on literature reviews

1. Vera noted: Although, I never had to do a literature review as a fulfillment of a course requirement, I would imagine that both Comment a and b could be unreasonable as a criticism for such a piece of work. It sounds to me that both *letting the reader know where you stand* and *showing how previous research informs your work* would be more relevant to an LR as a part of a dissertation.
2. Vera noted: Not yet.
3. Vera observed: Both Comments d and e could potentially be relevant for my attempts to write an LR for my dissertation. I find it hard to find and describe higher-level themes and issues that would logically connect different pieces of research, especially when the literature (as in my case) comes from different fields (sociology, ethnic studies, and linguistics).
4. Chris and John's observation: Some of our students report criticisms regarding style and failure to include certain literature.

How Can Order Be Imposed on the Literature?

Task Seven

Reordering the literature: Vera responds again.

Out of the given categories, two seem most useful for grouping the literature in an LR: field and perspective. Looking at different fields could enable the author to see how a specific concept has been treated from different angles or in different disciplines. However, in this case it might be difficult to find a way to connect separate pieces of the LR into one cohesive story. That is why perspective could be a better choice in this case. Juxtaposing different perspectives toward the concept can also help to make the LR more revealing about the current trends and attitudes within the academic community, thus making the LR more exciting for the reader.

Task Eight

Possible categories for organizing the literature

A Physics student stressed theoretical framework; a student in Biostatistics emphasized sample size; a student in Environmental Engineering suggested practical applications; an Economics student stressed modeling approaches. In addition to these, one student in Psychology mentioned competing methodologies and students in Botany and Post-Colonial Literature thought that geographical location might be relevant.

Task Nine

Discourse community review: Vera responds again.

1. a. According to my research, the first paper on the concept of discourse community was published in 1986.

This beginning does not seem to do much for opening the LR. It just seems to indicate that the literature will be organized in terms of chronology.

- b. Many papers have examined the concept of discourse community.

This beginning seems to be too general.

- c. Table 2 provides a listing of 27 studies on the concept of discourse community published between 1989 and 2007.

This seems like a possible way to start an LR: In just one sentence, it provides a framework for the LR and gives a specific outline of the studies that will be addressed. However, it does seem to promise only a list.

- d. The United States has been a leading source of research on the concept of discourse community.

Good. This beginning shows that the author is likely to be familiar with the research on DCs not only in the United States but also elsewhere and is able to compare what has been done around the world. It also shows that the author has a plan for addressing the literature—in this case, organizing it by geographical distribution.

- e. Perspectives on the concept of discourse community vary, depending on the field of study.

It is a good possible beginning, as it shows that the author is familiar with different views on the discourse community and is able to make interdisciplinary comparisons.

- f. There seems to be little consensus as to whether the concept of discourse community is a useful one.

Good. It also shows that the author is familiar with a number of studies that looked at the concept of DC and knows that it is a controversial issue. This beginning seems to indicate that highlighting this disagreement will be the main point of the LR.

2. a. You think that the concept of discourse community may be highly relevant for your research.

We would start with the early positive papers.

- b. You essentially agree with those studies whose stance toward the concept is negative.

In this case it would make sense to start by outlining the unsettled history of the concept, highlighting its weaknesses. One option would

be to discuss Porter (1986) followed by Cooper (1989) and Harris (1989).

- c. You really don't know what you think yet but want (or need) to begin writing anyway.

For a first draft you could simply focus on the history of the concept.

3. a. Are there disciplinary differences in terms of the usefulness of the discourse community concept?

The studies come from a rather wide variety of fields from Technical Communications to Swedish Studies. In this case, one can directly compare the attitudes toward the concept of discourse community that prevail in different disciplines/fields.

- b. How has the concept of discourse community evolved?

Yes, since the studies' timeframe spans over two decades. A more chronological approach to organizing the literature would be possible. Most of the early papers were either for or against. Many later papers take some middle ground.

- c. How might the concept of discourse community contribute to our understanding of written business communications?

The author might look at the ways the concept of discourse community had been used in other disciplines (especially the ones that look at written communication) and see whether any aspects of these approaches can or cannot be applied to the study of written business communication and why. After all, there is much talk these days of different corporate "cultures."

- d. Do bloggers constitute a discourse community?

After the comparison of different definitions and characteristics of discourse community from previous research it is possible to see whether these definitions would work to conceptualize bloggers as a discourse community.

4. a. Not quite. Although it is correct that the author produced three concise paragraphs, the piece does not have an overarching idea that would tie the information in the three paragraphs together. Also, the

fact that the three paragraphs are so concise leaves the reader with a feeling that the author did not take enough time to look more intensely into the literature and provide a deeper and a better integrated analysis of these studies.

- b. Yes, the pieces of information presented in the first paragraph, for example, are a bit unusual. The author just states that these studies have been presented either in the form of an article or a book without giving any indication of why the form of the study would have any significance. For example, it is unclear whether by stating that a number of book-length monographs had looked at this concept, the author implies that the concept has started to attract serious attention within the academic community. However, if there is no particular reason for pointing out the form of recent studies, instead it would be more useful to turn the reader's attention to a more substantial analysis of literature. In fact, it seems like the professor singled out the third paragraph exactly because it is the only one in this draft that provides a deeper analysis of the studies' outcomes, as it attempts a deeper understanding of why the perception of the DC differs from discipline to discipline.
- c. Yes, it does seem like a valid comment, especially because the LR starts with *The 27 selected studies*. In this case, one can anticipate that the reader might have a question on how the literature was selected. In order to "avoid" the discussion of selection criteria, the author could select a different approach to the introduction. Something along the lines of *a number of studies have focused on the concept of DC*, without providing an exact list of the selected studies in the paper, would be a possibility.
- d. It might be a valid comment because the author does not address the question whether the perception of the concept of DC has changed through time. This perspective can add another dimension to the LR, thus potentially making it more multifaceted.
- e. Yes. It is a valid comment as it looks like the author did not take too much time to go beyond the first impression of the literature. The discussion of the stance toward the concept of discourse community seems somewhat oversimplified, and it does not seem that the

author made enough effort to really think about, evaluate, and organize the literature. A more detailed look into each of the fields would make the LR less of a “black-and-white” story. It would be interesting to see, for example, whether the attitudes toward the concept of DC have changed over time or whether the stance seems to be influenced by the country of the study. Also, the current draft provides rather a neutral description of the major trends in the literature on DC. What is missing is the author’s own stance toward the discussion and an indication of why this discussion is relevant to his/her own research.

5. Overall, this draft is an improvement from the first one. First, the author now points out the complexity of the issue, while at the same time giving it a time dimension (thus, responding to the criticism in d above). Instead of merely stating that the studies used in this LR were conducted from 1989 to 2007, the author actually shows that the views on the issue have changed from the earlier studies in 1980s to this day, and also adds a future perspective indicating that the discussion on this issue is still ongoing and current (b and d). Second, instead of just mentioning that the discussed literature is listed in the table, the author actually makes the table “work” for the LR to make the point that the issue is indeed a complex one. Another good move is to mention the geography of the studies, thus adding yet another dimension to the discussion of the DC. Finally, numbering the specific points in the LR (*first*, . . . *second* . . . , etc.) brings more order to the thought process of the author and makes it easier for the reader to follow the discussion.

However, despite all the improvements, this draft still lacks two essential attributes of a good literature review. First, the points made by the author still appear to be somewhat disconnected from each other. The author seems to just list the important issues around the concept of the DC (maybe in response to Comment e?), but does not make an attempt to find connections between them, thus creating a “story” of this particular scholarly discussion. Second, it is still not clear why this particular discussion is relevant for the author’s own research (Comment e) or what the main point is of discussing this literature.

Task Ten

Topics to include in an information overload literature review:

Vera responds again.

1. Yes, especially if the phenomenon has been studied widely in different countries. When looking at a wide selection of approaches to the topic of IO, it should be possible to discover whether at least some attempts to separate high-impact from low-impact causes have been made before.
2. Yes, if this literature is not included, some of the findings that are directly relevant to the author's focus may be overlooked.
3. Probably not.
4. Yes, in order to separate high-impact causes from the low-impact ones, it is important to gather a clear picture of which causes have already been identified in the literature on this subject.
5. Yes, although because symptoms of the IO are not the focus of the present study, this section of the LR can be very brief, clarifying the definition and characteristics of IO before moving on to the causes and countermeasures as the main focus of the research.
6. Probably not, because it may be sufficient to simply address the symptoms of IO without providing a specific example.
7. Probably not.
8. Perhaps.

Getting Started on the Literature Review

Task Eleven

Questions on an opening paragraph of a literature review on IO

1. The overall organization is general to specific, beginning with what is common knowledge.
2. The opening to Sentence 2 summarizes the point in Sentence 1 by using *this* + a noun phrase (*this everyday use of the term*). Notice the very nice contrast between the opening prepositional phrase—*in everyday language*—and *within the research community*. The inclusion of *however* would not likely improve the flow of ideas.
3. First, in Sentence 2 the author lists all the terms that preserve the word *overload* in the second part. The author then gives the terms where the second part of the term is different from the one used in the present research. As for Sentence 3, we're not sure what the organizing principle is. The organizing scheme makes sense to us.
4. *Often* is used to hedge or soften the statement and indicate that other uses also exist. The passive voice is used to avoid having to clarify who exactly is using the term IO in this way.
5. In the first sentence the author refers to a phenomenon of the present, a piece of common knowledge, and thus uses present tense. In the third sentence, he/she describes approaches taken by researchers in the past. However, present perfect is used rather than simple past to stress that these studies still maintain their validity and relevance.
6. A good continuation of this opening would be a look at the common ground among these different approaches: What do all researchers agree on? What are the primary symptoms and causes of this phenomenon that repeat themselves from study to study?

Task Twelve

Questions on a systematic literature review: Vera responds again.

1. I didn't find any systematic reviews. To answer the next question I looked at ten random dissertations in the field of Sociolinguistics and ten research articles in the same field. None of the studies started with a direct justification of the choice of literature they reviewed. From my experience, it is rather uncommon in the field of Linguistics in general to explicitly justify the selection of reviewed literature.

(+) Laying out explicit criteria for the inclusion of studies in the literature review can be potentially advantageous for a piece of research because it can help to clearly define the boundaries of the present study and give specific reasons for not taking into consideration some of the previous research. Leaving out such decisions without justification could prompt unnecessary criticism and questions from the audience.

(-) A negative aspect of such justification could be the fact that it can make a literature review too long, especially if the author is confined by a specific word limit, for example, in a research article.
2. Sometimes such decisions are inevitable because it is not always possible to obtain a good-quality translation of a research article in an unfamiliar language. However, this inevitably limits the scope of the research because it potentially leaves out studies that are directly related to the present research. When leaving out studies in languages other than English, the researchers cannot be sure whether the study they are attempting already had been conducted elsewhere in the world or whether similar studies already yielded results that they could build on. That is why—if possible—the researchers should strive to take into consideration the results of the studies in other languages. John and Chris note that *English in Today's Research World* (2000) discussed a case in dentistry of a claim of a new discovery that was based entirely on the English language literature. A wider search including literature in other languages eventually demonstrated that the “discovery” had already been documented many years earlier.

3. <i>consider</i>	<i>meet (the criteria)</i>
<i>recommend</i>	<i>drop</i>
<i>supplement</i>	<i>except</i>
<i>locate</i>	<i>eliminate</i>
<i>include</i>	<i>narrow (the list)</i>

Some other verbs that can justify the choice of literature are: *select, choose, decide on, pick, exclude, leave out, reject*.

4. *I* might sound too authoritative. This would also put all the responsibility for the selection of studies for the LR (which is a pretty important decision to make) on just one person. If re-written to eliminate the use of *we*, the text can be put into passive voice—for example, *A search was conducted* instead of *I conducted a search*.
5. The literature matrix for this research contains more classification categories than the matrix in the study on discourse community. This high number of categories would allow the author(s) to make a more multi-dimensional comparison of previous studies. The literature review can be organized around several of these categories depending on the primary focus of the research project. For example, if the study introduces a new way of approaching the issue, the LR can focus on the methodology of the previous research and the sample size. If the study is primarily designed to evaluate the effectiveness of motorcycle helmet use, the LR can start by identifying the studies that have recorded whether a helmet was used during an accident, etc. Such a matrix can be very useful for studies that look at experimental settings and would need to evaluate different methodologies, sample sizes, and approaches of previously conducted experiments or surveys.

Task Thirteen

An analysis of a literature section discussing what was included

1. The present perfect shows that the work in Chapter 1 remains highly relevant to the present chapter.
2. Metadiscourse. On the positive side it can add clarity to a text; on the negative side, it can be seen as heavy-handed and obvious, suggesting that readers are not capable of following the discussion or message.
3. Probably the last one; however, the second one is also a possibility.
4. It is more likely that *for my purposes* is meant to indicate that she has good reasons for focusing on particular aspects.
5. Yes, if she continues to explain what she is doing as well as she has done so far.

Task Fourteen

Analysis of a literature review excerpt

1. The author first looks at the work of one pioneering researcher in detail, pointing out six symptoms identified in his study. In Paragraph 2, typical symptoms are summarized. Then, in the third paragraph, the “big question” of the effects of these symptoms is addressed.
2. Both Sentences 1 and 11 are connecting elements between different sections of the literature review. Sentence 1 makes a transition from the issue of causes of IO to its symptoms, while Sentence 11 makes a further connection to the discussion of the countermeasures to IO. Both sentences are using *metadiscoursal* elements as a reader’s guide to what is to come.
3. One of the reasons why Milgram’s work takes such a prominent position in this review is the fact that his work seems to be seminal among other studies addressing IO. The author mentions that Milgram’s study was one of the first that looked in detail at the symptoms of the IO. In fact, the author is citing six different symptoms of IO identified in Milgram’s work alone. In contrast to Milgram, it seems the other studies mentioned later in this section primarily focused on only one specific characteristic of the IO.

4. The author leaves an impression that other studies on the symptoms of IO were not as influential as the study done by Milgram. It is possible that being bound only to organizational context, these studies were smaller in their scope and each of them only addressed one specific issue. It is also possible that although these studies were important to the field in general and need to be mentioned in relation to the current research, they are not quite directly informing the present study. In such case, the author may have decided to include them in the form of a list of relevant literature rather than describing each and every one of them in detail.
5. Including a table might be a good idea especially if the author is reviewing a lot of experimental studies that can be and need to be compared in terms of their sample sizes, methods used, etc. Providing this information in a table format might make it easier for the reader to follow the author's interpretation of the previous studies. However, the usefulness of such an approach to an LR will highly depend on the discipline. One can imagine that in the humanities it might be difficult to come up with a rather concise table that would capture main ideas of the previous literature.
6. There is a small amount of descriptive assessment. For example, we read *one of the first*, *the big question*, and *it is important to*.
7. By including mainly non-integrated citations the way they are presented in this LR, the author seems to indicate that there is a lot of literature on the issue that cannot (or does not need to be) analyzed in detail in this particular literature review. Rather, the author felt it was important to mention the main findings of specific studies as they are relevant to his/her research and then refer the reader to the author in parentheses for detailed information.
8. Vera reports: One example relating to the present volume would be the information overload I have recently felt when trying to define what studies to include into my literature review. The mere availability of a vast number of online resources (including research articles and books) makes it hard to make a decision on when it is necessary to stop browsing the ever-growing list of potential sources and to finally start the actual writing.

Task Fifteen

Mitchell's Satyr literature review

1. Here are some of the possible points.
 - a) Mitchell's Satyr is indeed a highly endangered species because it exhibits the classic signs of potential extinction.
 - b) The preservation of wetlands in the northern United States can benefit preservation of endangered species, including Mitchell's Satyr.
 - c) More research on Mitchell's Satyr is necessary because there are a lot of unanswered questions about this species.
 - d) The federal government, as well as individual states, should spend more resources on preservation of endangered species.
 - e) Usually, it is impossible to pinpoint a single reason for extinction of a species; it is rather a combination of factors.
 - f) Researchers should strive to find new and unconventional ways to protect endangered species, including Mitchell's Satyr, from extinction.
2. Here is one attempt:

As it often happens in the case of extremely rare species, there are many unanswered questions in the research on Mitchell's Satyr. This butterfly is known as one of the rarest in the world, according to the Michigan government website, and there is evidence that its population continues to shrink. After it was eliminated in New Jersey in the 1980s (Glassberg, 1993), this brown butterfly with eyespots and two reddish bands on its underwing became listed among federally endangered species in 1992. Since then it has been a target of preservation efforts on the federal as well as the state level.

Despite these efforts, it is known to exist only in two northern U.S. states of Michigan and Indiana. However, it is not clear how many populations exist in these states today: while Shuey (1997) reports on eleven populations in Michigan and one in northern Indi-

ana, the more recent research (Barton, 2007) mentions 17 and 2 populations respectively. In addition, there had been some disagreement about the reasons for Mitchell's Satyr's vulnerability: Szymanski et al. (2004) mentions isolation of single populations and short flying distance, Glassberg (1993) holds pressure from butterfly collectors accountable for Mitchell's Satyr's extinction in New Jersey, while other research points toward loss of specific wetland habitat for some populations or states that there is no obvious cause of extinction for others (Shuey, 1997).

224 words.

Task Sixteen

Metadiscourse

1. F
2. R
3. F
4. F
5. P
6. A bit of both P and R
7. P
8. F

Task Seventeen

A dissertation overview

1. This overview is stylistically very repetitive. The author uses the same structure introducing all of the sections: *Section 2 describes . . . , Section 3 presents . . . , Section 3 discusses . . . , Section 4 summarizes . . .*
2. Here, the author chose to use passive voice in two of the cases: *In section 3, more recent work . . . is presented*, and *a brief discussion . . . is provided in section 4*. This variation between active and passive voice eliminates the repetitiveness of the first version.

3. Here is one attempt:

This literature review has covered the following ground. Section 2 looked at the early theoretical concept, followed by the more recent approaches to the Fiscal Policy Model in Section 3, which also presented the relevant statistical and computational analysis as well as hypothesis testing and its interpretation. Section 4 summarized findings of these analyses and provided a brief discussion concerning the shortcomings of the methods employed.

Task Eighteen

Citation patterns: For the field of Linguistics, Vera offers these responses.

1. Likely.
2. Somewhat likely. Although they are not common, some authors may decide to provide such quotes. Also, it might depend on the type of writing: While dissertations or other larger works are more likely to include lengthy quotations, these will be less likely in a research article due to its shorter length.
3. Very likely.
4. Very likely.

Task Nineteen

More on citation patterns: Vera responds again.

1. I think quotations and block quotations are not uncommon in my field of Sociolinguistics. However, the preferred choices for citations still seem to be summary/paraphrase and generalization. The choice of citation type might also depend on the personal preferences of the author and the type of text.
2. In Education and Sociology (and to a certain extent Applied Linguistics) there are a lot of “big names,” such as Vygotsky and Bourdieu (respectively). “Big names” tend to encourage direct quotation.

3. The size of the field may be a factor. If a lot had been published on a specific topic, generalizations may allow the author to include a larger amount of literature in the LR without going into detail about specifics of every study. The existence of regular survey articles may also be a factor.

It looks like hard sciences—as opposed to humanities—prefer generalizations over direct quotations. This might be because the authors in hard sciences tend to be more concise and by using generalizations include the most information in the fewest words.

4. Only if it is a very famous quote such as Pasteur’s, “Chance favors the prepared mind.”
5. The type of quotations might be different because dissertations allow for more detailed review of the previous literature than is possible in a short format such as a research article. Therefore, we might expect fewer generalizations summarizing findings of many studies in one sentence. Rather, authors might want to provide summaries/paraphrases of single studies and turn more often to direct quotations.
6. The results from two articles from the field of Sociolinguistics are presented here.

	Quotation	Block Quotation	Summary/ Paraphrase	Generalization
Article 1	4%	—	18%	78%
Article 2	7.5%	7.5%	28%	57%

Task Twenty

Differences between a journal article and a dissertation in terms of citation style preferences

Journal articles are generally aimed at a wider audience than a dissertation. In addition, the length of the journal article might dictate the use of non-integral citations, which are more concise and might help the author to provide more information in a shorter format. Key figures (big names) may attract integral citations, as in the case of Stanley Milgram discussed earlier, but most will be non-integral.

For dissertations, on the other hand, non-integral citations might be helpful if the author strives to review a large number of studies. By summarizing the results from previous works and providing the references in a non-integral way (as opposed to paraphrasing or directly quoting other authors) the dissertation author can demonstrate familiarity with a wide range of studies relevant to his/her own research and the ability to interpret and group together their theoretical stances, methodologies and results. However, as we can see from Table 4, the ways authors cite literature in their work will also highly depend on the conventions of a particular discipline.

Task Twenty-One

Citation verb tense and aspect

Sentence Number	SS or GS	Tense	Verb
2	SS	past	<i>lived</i>
7	SS (although given as one example out of many)	present perfect	<i>has been confined</i>
11	GS	present perfect	<i>have shown</i>
14	SS	past	<i>were found</i>
17	GS	present perfect	<i>has been shown</i>
18	A number of SS work together as GS	present perfect	<i>has been shown</i>
19	SS	present	<i>appears</i>
21	SS	present	<i>is assumed</i>
25	GS	present	<i>suggests</i>
27	SS	past	<i>found</i>
28	SS	past	<i>showed</i>

1. It seems that the authors prefer to use present perfect for citations that introduce findings from multiple studies, even in cases where only one author is cited if his/her findings are representative of the current state

in the field. It looks like in general, present perfect is preferred to demonstrate the state of current research overall, to highlight major trends and tendencies within the field. At the same time, the single study citations almost exclusively use past tense.

2. Three of the citations are in the present tense, two of which are single study citations. Both of these are non-integral (research prominent). Integral single study citations are generally in the past tense.
3. In both Sentences 11 and 18, the author compiles a range of findings from various studies within one sentence while using a single reporting verb. It is interesting that instead of providing one larger group-study citation at the end the author breaks them up, mostly citing single studies with connection to each of the findings. This makes it possible to directly link results from each of the previous studies to the corresponding citation. As a result, the author on the one hand shows familiarity with details of the relevant research and, on the other, finds a very economical but still very manageable way to pack a lot of information into a single sentence.

Task Twenty-Two

Analysis of Table 5

1. Of the thirteen fields, nine used *suggest*; eight used *show* and *find*.
2. *Suggest* and *argue* are both used, but then Philosophy uses verbs of saying. Marketing, on the other hand, uses verbs of showing such as *demonstrate*. The difference is due to the nature of the research carried out in the two fields.
3. The only verb they have in common is the hedged verb *suggest*. The difference in choice of verbs is due to the nature of the fields. Philosophy is largely based on argumentation, while Medicine relies on hard data.
4. Some other possibilities would be: *state*, *question*, *recommend*, *investigate*, *estimate*, *believe*, *recognize*, *predict*, *comment*, *illustrate*, *criticize*, and *indicate*.
5. Vera looked at three articles in Sociolinguistics, and here are the results. The most frequently used reporting verb was *suggest*, which

was used seven times throughout the articles. This outcome did not seem surprising considering the findings of Hyland's study for "softer" sciences. It was followed by *show* (three times), *argue*, *demonstrate*, *call*, and *develop* (each used twice). Other verbs that were used only once included *characterize*, *introduce*, *mention*, *confirm*, *find*, *see*, *construct*, *present*, *explore*, *report*, *point out*, *make an argument*, *state*, *provide*, *identify*, *put*, *tell*, *explain*, *conclude*, *question*, *comment*, *characterize*, *make a point*, *call*, *observe*. Overall, it looked like the choice of the reporting verbs was partly dependent on the author's personal preferences—one article strongly preferred *suggest*, accounting for all but one occurrence of this reporting verb. One of the other authors used reporting verbs only twice throughout the entire article, while the third article used a very wide range of reporting verbs, never repeating any of them twice.

Task Twenty-Three

Ambiguity in citations

1. This citation is ambiguous. It can be read as if Bakker, Memerouti, and Schaufeli are the researchers who actually have investigated the concept of burnout. However, it is possible to understand that they are the authors of a review article that merely pointed out the fact that the concept of burnout has been recently attracting the attention of researchers.
2. In the current form, the three citations are likely to be associated with all three elements. If the author would like to tie each of the elements to one of the citations, he/she could arrange them similarly to Sentences 11 and 18 from Task Twenty-One and provide each of the citations separately following each of the elements.
3. This is unclear from the text. In order to avoid this ambiguity, the author might want to rephrase the citation.

Task Twenty-Four

Ambiguity in citations

The only ambiguous quotes are the first one and possibly Number 6. The rest indicate rather clearly that the author is referring to the original research conducted by the cited authors.

Drafting, Redrafting, and Redrafting Again

Task Twenty-Five

Choosing sources of a literature review on dissertation types

1. The first source (Dissertation Handbook) might be less relevant to this particular section of the literature review because it seems to be quite different from the rest of the readings. Readings B–G all seem to be empirical studies conducted by applied linguists that look at the structures of completed dissertation theses.
2. As one possibility, the author might address the studies conducted in the United States (B and G) first, followed by the research from other countries, such as the U.K. (E), Australia (F), Hong Kong (D), and Sweden (C).
3. As mentioned in 2, it is possible to start with the U.S. studies (B and G) and then go on to research around the world.

First Draft

1. In this draft, the literature is organized according to the chronological principle. However, the approach does not seem to be very productive for organizing this particular LR—except for the year the study was conducted, the author does not try to establish a logical connection between these pieces of research. Thus, this LR is hard to follow because it presents the results of the previous studies in a very unconnected way.
2. Joyce is using integral citations throughout her literature review. Although this allows her to create an appearance of a narrative, the fact that she always starts with the author's name followed by the

reporting verb makes her writing quite repetitive and monotonous (*Dong surveyed . . . , Bunton reports . . .*).

3. Joyce is using the following verbs to introduce the pieces of surveyed research: research *examined*, Dong *surveyed* . . . *found*, Ståhlhammer *found*, Bunton *reports*, Thompson *focused on*, Paltridge *conducted* . . . *found*, and Swales *examined*. Joyce prefers to use the verbs *find* (three times in this draft) and *examine* (used twice), which is quite repetitive for such a short excerpt. Also, she is very consistent in using the same sentence structure as well as the same tense (simple past—referring to the results of single studies), which also contributes to a repetitive style.
4. The word *seem* suggests that the author is not very sure of his or her own findings. It would be advisable to start a literature review with a more assertive sentence that would project more confidence and demonstrate that the author has a good grip on the literature.
5. Using quotation marks around such words as *anthology*, *topic based*, and *topic* suggests that these might be newly emerging terms used by researchers to describe the new non-traditional dissertation formats.
6. The information on single countries might be somewhat over-emphasized. When going into such detail describing findings from each study/country, Joyce seems to miss the more general picture, failing to reveal whether there are overall trends, for example, according to larger regions, disciplines, or whether preferences for one or the other format have changed over time.
7. No, Joyce is merely listing the results of the studies without providing any evaluation of the conducted research. Therefore, it does not become clear how this literature is informing Joyce's own research and what the relevance of the previous findings around the world is for her own study.
8. By this Joyce presumably intends to show that article compilation dissertations are now *officially* accepted.
9. One of the limitations could be that this research addresses only studies conducted in five countries, mostly (or entirely?) surveying dissertations in English. In addition, most of the studies look only at a limited

number of dissertations (Thompson—14, Paltridge—15) while in other cases it is not known how many theses the authors looked at. In addition, each of the studies looked at a specific field or cluster of closely related fields, which makes it hard to compare the studies.

10. No, this review does not provide an indication of how Joyce's own research might contribute to the field. Although it might not be possible in such a small section of the literature review and we might expect this to come up in the following sections, it would be helpful if Joyce would at least give the reader a general idea how this research would be relevant to her own work.

It would be nice to see a second draft that provides some kind of "higher connection" between the studies rather than just a chronological one. It would be nice to see whether the author can identify any trends/development of the dissertation format across countries and disciplines.

Second Draft

1. Reasonable
2. Reasonable
3. Somewhat unreasonable, but it might depend on the author's final choice of what she wants to focus on in her LR
4. Reasonable
5. Reasonable

Third Draft

1. The third draft feels like a big departure from both the first and the second draft. In this version, Joyce seems to strike a good balance between addressing all the studies she wants to include in her LR, while making it possible for the reader to follow the important findings. She makes it clear why it is important to evaluate these studies at this point in her research and where this discussion fits into her dissertation as well as the general academic discussion on the purposes and forms of the doctoral dissertation in general. Most important, Joyce manages to acknowledge

recent trends in the development of the dissertation as a genre in the U.S. and elsewhere, thus demonstrating her competency within the field and her familiarity with its recent developments. We can assume that her advisor was pleased with the new version.

2. She deals first with the United States and then elsewhere. In the second half she evaluates both the quality of the research and the methodologies adopted.
3. There is much subtle evaluation here, as can be seen in Sentences 1, 3, 13, 15, and 18. Most readers particularly like the third paragraph.
4. Both the end of the second paragraph and the third paragraph point out the areas where more research is needed. In this way, Joyce is creating a “research gap” that she might address either in her own study or in the next section of the literature review.
5. The sentences seem to be very useful because they give the reader orientation in the text. Considering the large number of studies that Joyce is discussing (not only in this section of the LR), it is necessary to help the reader to navigate through the text, pointing out the questions and topics that will be addressed in each part of the text.
6. Joyce is using a number of elements to help the reader to follow the flow of her ideas. At the beginning and the end (Sentences 1 and 19), Joyce is using metadiscoursal elements to directly connect this section of the LR to the larger text as she refers to the *previous section* and the *next section*. Also, throughout the text, she is using elements that point to some specific information in the previous sentence, thus picking up this information and developing it further (for example, *This in turn*, *these developments*, and *these studies* in Sentences 2, 3, and 4). Further, some elements help Joyce to signal the relationship between different findings (*however* in Sentence 9 introduces results that contradict previous findings; *in fact* in Sentence 12 strengthens the claim in the previous sentence as it introduces additional evidence in support of this claim). In Sentence 17, *finally* is one of the ways to demonstrate the organization of all the points made by the author.

Taking a Stance toward the Literature

Task Twenty-Six

Your stance toward the literature

1. One *central/key/significant* behavioral finding is that indecisive individuals delay decision-making for a longer time than do decisive ones.
2. The *widespread* nature of natural warning signs of tsunamis poses *significant/major/substantial* challenges to providing useful information to the public. Furthermore, information about these *inconsistent/conflicting* signs makes public education difficult and recommending specific behavioral responses problematic.
3. Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) is *widely / increasingly* flourishing in the United States and in Europe. Westerners believe that TCM presents a completely new frame of reference for treating disease. My review of Traditional Chinese Medicine practices, however, does not support this claim of originality and *clearly* points to *remarkable/striking* similarities between TCM and the once-prevalent pagan (Latin, Paganus, ‘from the country’) beliefs of well-being and safety in pre-Christian Europe.
4. Mobile phones have come to infiltrate *nearly all / almost all aspects of* contemporary life. Such integrations of public and private space have left many of us questioning and reevaluating social norms and boundaries (Ling, 1997). For example, Ling found that 60 percent of mobile phone users, versus 76 percent of nonusers agreed or “tended to agree” with the statement that *the mobile phone disturbs other people* (Ling, 2004, p. 123). There is a *clear / noticeable* disparity plaguing these two parties and an aching for an understanding of just how “intrusive” mobile telephones have become, and, *less importantly / to a lesser extent* how intrusive we should allow them to be.

Task Twenty-Seven

Plagiarism: Vera responds again.

In my view, the line between plagiarism and producing acceptable original work would lie somewhere between Approaches 4 and 5. As a non-native speaker of English, I can clearly see a benefit in using short standard phrases from a number of sources (as in Approach 4). However, such “piecing together” of different strings of language produced by other authors can potentially be overused and cannot be considered original work. The approach outlined in 5 can be viewed as original work, if the author is re-analyzing previous research (and maybe even provides the reader with a reference to the source of the original ideas) rather than consistently rephrasing someone else’s writing as the direct base for the construction of his or her own work. Chris and John, however, believe that Approach 4 is broadly acceptable.

Constructing an Original Discussion of Previous Work: Using Your Own Words

Task Twenty-Eight

Using your own words

1. It is commonly believed that the majority of car accidents occur at high speeds due to the poor road conditions. However, as pointed out by van Zanten (2002), the research demonstrates that the most severe accidents happen on dry roads with a vehicle speed between 60 and 100 km/h.
2. As opposed to the commonly spread belief that high vehicle speeds and poor road conditions should be held responsible for most car accidents, van Zanten (2002) demonstrates that according to research, the most serious crashes occur when the roads are dry and the speed of the vehicle is between 60 and 100 km/h.
3. Important points:
 - The amount of information increases in heavy traffic.
 - The time to process this information and to make a decision is decreasing.
 - At some point, the driver becomes incapable of making an adequate decision.

Relationship between the points:

Cause and effect: The first sentence provides reasons why the driver would fail in making a decision.

Linking phrases:

- therefore
- because of this
- hence
- consequently
- as a result

If we were to switch the two sentences, these linking phrases would also work.

- due to
- because of
- caused by

Synonyms:

increasing → *growing, rising*

traffic → *movement of road vehicles?*

forces → *causes, puts into situation, makes*

process → *deal with*

growing → *increasing*

quicker → *faster*

critical → *dangerous*

situations → *circumstances*

amount → *quantity, volume*

exceed → *go beyond, surpass*

effective → *efficient, successful*

capability → *ability, potential, capacity*

Paraphrase 1

Increases in traffic are causing drivers to deal with larger information volumes while also making faster decisions. Consequently, in critical situations the quantity of information may surpass the driver's processing ability.

Paraphrase 2

As traffic increases, a driver's processing capacity might deteriorate, especially in dangerous circumstances due to the rising amounts of information, accompanied by decreasing decision-making times.

Task Twenty-Nine

A summary and related critique

1. Reasonable. The author discusses Coughlan's and Manduchi's technology in detail. What seems to need improvement is the way he/she is doing it.
2. Reasonable. Indeed, the author is using whole phrases from the original study (for example, *held by the user to find specially designed signs in the environment, detected and located by a computer vision algorithm running on the cell phone*). This can be fixed if the author makes an effort to paraphrase or summarize the finding in his/her own words rather than putting together pieces of original.
3. Unreasonable. First, it is impossible to include all the information from the source into the summary. In the case of the CPU capacity, it seems obvious that a computer's CPU would be bigger than a cell phone CPU. As pretty obvious information, it can be omitted from the summary.
4. Reasonable. Indeed, the summary does not really summarize the original but rather paraphrases it (while still using large pieces of the original's language). A true summary can be expected to be of a shorter length because it would capture the most important information only, omitting the less relevant points.
5. Reasonable. As we have seen from the earlier discussion in this volume, it is important for an author of an LR not only to refer to previous studies, but also establish a connection between the findings of these studies and his/her own research. In order to do this, it is expected that the author will not only summarize previous literature in the LR but also provide an evaluation of the previous work in the light of his/her own research plans.
6. Reasonable. It looks like the author was looking for a synonym for the word *robustly* in the phrase *robustly detected* when trying to paraphrase the original wording in the summary. A better solution seems to be something along the lines of *reliably detected*.

7. Reasonable. Highlighting the strength and advantages of the proposed solution would enable the author to address the issue in Comment 5 as well, as it will allow him/her to show the author's position in relation to the proposed technology.
8. Unreasonable. This is a piece of general knowledge in today's world, where barcodes are used on a daily basis in many situations.

Task Thirty

An analysis of a revised summary

1. Yes. Although shorter, this piece makes it possible for the reader to get a clear picture of Coughlan and Manduchi's innovation.
2. This version does a good job of not repeating the direct wording of the original. The fact that it is a more concise summary rather than just an attempt to paraphrase the whole original piece helps the author to come up with his/her own wording rather than recycle the original language.
3. This draft creates an impression that the author is very familiar with the proposed system because he/she concisely describes its principle and clearly outlines the advantages over potentially more complicated and costly alternatives.
4. The author talks about innovative work, which would be an appropriate attribute if the proposed system is indeed an innovative solution. Further, the author signals his/her positive reception of the proposed technology as he/she talks of *easily created signs, improved guidance, and four important advantages*.
5. Here is one attempt by Vera.

Several researchers have tried to develop wayfinding systems to assist blind or visually impaired individuals. In this quest, the most promising seem to be solutions based on readily available and widely used technologies because they offer several important advantages over new systems: They are less expensive, easily accessible, provide fast and reliable results and do not call special attention

to their users. For example, Coughlan and Manduchi describe an innovative system based on the already existent cell phone technology. In their system, a visually impaired individual uses a camera phone to locate special signs or color targets developed by the researchers. The targets are accompanied by barcodes, which in turn can be recognized by the phone's camera and transformed into an audio signal with corresponding directions to the next target. The signs can be easily reproduced on regular printer paper. Thus, Coughlan and Manduchi's innovation offers a reliable and inexpensive solution to wayfinding for the blind and visually impaired.

Criteria for Evaluating Literature Reviews

Task Thirty-One

Evaluating your literature review

Vera writes that most of the criteria seem to be important for a dissertation or theses in the field of Sociolinguistics, so it would be easier to point out those that might be less relevant. She comments, "I have a feeling that A (justifying criteria for inclusion or exclusion from the review), D (placing the research into a wider historical context of the field), E (enhancing subject vocabulary), and J (rationalizing the practical significance of the research problem) would be the ones least relevant. Criteria H and I might both be of lesser significance for a literature review if the dissertation is not focusing primarily on improving or questioning the methodology of previous studies."

For a research article in Sociolinguistics, Criterion C (placing the topic or problem in the broader scholarly literature), might often be a major objective.

Some Final Thoughts to Consider

Task Thirty-Two

Final thoughts on your literature review

No answer can be furnished here, except by you. By considering these various points as well as those in Table 6, you should be able to critically evaluate your own review and make any improvements needed.