

Reflection Week 3 - Literature Review

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Reflections

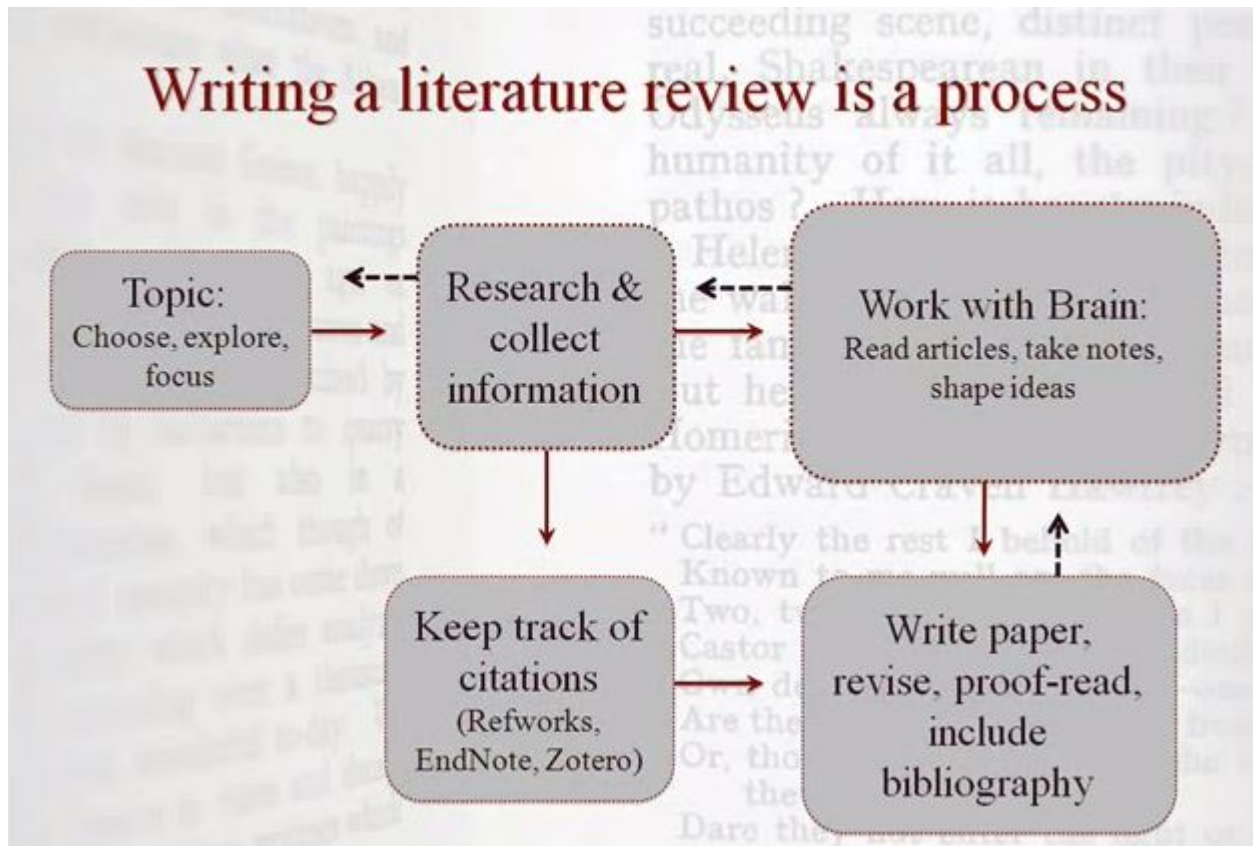


Figure 1: Literature Review

From the assigned video and readings on Literature Reviews, the above image was most impactful to me. The image frames the Literature Review as a process, specifically an ongoing process. Given this perspective, the image connects to a point reflected in a quote from last week's readings— "*Statistics is a science, not a recipe*". Similarly: "*A Literature Review is a process, not a checklist*".

I use the term "*checklist*" in the above quote to emphasize what a Literature Review *is not*, which is to say: A Literature Review isn't done once you've reached *X* number of citations. It isn't done when, for the forests project, one has compiled an exhaustive list of all forestry research exploring estimators. Instead, the Literature Review is "done"—and even then only tentatively—when it outlines a list of *relevant literature* and is able to lead a reader to understand the history of what has been done and what one hopes to accomplish in their research.

The importance of the "*process*" is illustrated by the black dotted lines in the image. These lines represent the cyclical nature of research (which includes the creation of a Literature Review). Though one may interpret

the lines as a sort of “*back-tracking*”, I feel such an interpretation is flawed, and presupposes progress has a positive linear relationship with time, which it is not (always) the case. I would instead argue that “*back-tracking*” through the process of creating a Literature Review is actually a “*refining*” of one’s understanding of the field of research that has been done, in addition to what is to come (hopefully from the research one hopes to conduct).

All this is to say, “*going back to the drawing board*” is an important part of the research process, and is reflected in aspects such as question formulation as well as the Literature Review.

Additionally, I would be remiss not to point out my appreciation for the video and readings. They have further motivated me to take another look at topics and articles already read with a new focus. Driven by this focus, I hope to put special attention to sections of forestry research—the ‘Introduction’, ‘Methodology’, and ‘Conclusion’ sections—to get a more holistic sense of the field of research I hope the team will contribute to. At the expense of sounding trite or repetitive: I’m excited to continue the research process and see what new information I may uncover as I continue building my knowledge of work that has been (and has yet to be) done.