Literature Review Workshop

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Introductions

• Please introduce yourself to the group, including:
  • Your name
  • The department you’re in
  • What kind of project you’re working on
  • What stage of your project you’re at…
Brainstorming!

When you hear the phrase “literature review” what words come to mind?

Any & all!

Good, bad, indifferent…

Please write the words on a note card and Sue will collect them.
What is a Literature (Lit) Review?

- Comprehensive
- Relevant
- Systematic
- Explicit
- Reproducible

Getting Started with Your Lit Review

- What is the **purpose** of this lit review?
- Who is your target **audience**?
- What will the final **product** be?
  - Thesis or dissertation
  - Journal article
  - Grant proposal
Small Group Activity!
Activity: Strategies for Lit Reviews

1. Think about how you have approached a literature review (with a written product) in the past.

2. *Individually*, write down the strategies or tools you have employed for various stages in this process—both successful and not so successful!
Activity: Strategies for Lit Reviews

1. Think about how you have approached a literature review (with a written product) in the past.

2. **Individually**, write down the strategies or tools you employ for various stages in this process—both successful and not so successful!

3. Share with your group some of the strategies you think work best.

4. **As a group**, please create an ideal process for an effective and efficient literature review, and choose one spokesperson.

5. We’ll share ideas with the whole group!

6. Keep track of any new ideas that sound promising.
Using Online Databases

- What is a database?
- Advantages of using multiple databases?
  - Subject specific
  - Multi-disciplinary
  - Searching across databases
- Discovery Tools:
  - UNLV Libraries Quick Search
  - Google Scholar
  - WorldCat
Other Sources

• Standards manuals / handbooks (current and older)
• Government agency technical reports
• Professional association technical reports
• Company and trade association reports
• Others?
Search Strategies

- Keywords
- Author searching
- Footnote chasing / using bibliographies
- Citation tracking (Web of Knowledge & Scopus)
- Tracking where you’ve been
Managing Your Sources

- Bibliographic Management Software
  - Subscription:
    - RefWorks (available UNLV)
    - EndNote (software for purchase)
  - Free
    - Mendeley
    - EndNote Web
    - Zotero (Firefox extension)
    - CiteULike
    - Connotea
Database Search Strategies

- Use the Subject Headings, Database Terms lists
- Look for review articles
- Citation searching (e.g., Web of Knowledge, Scopus)
- Managing the search process
  - Search histories / search log
Keeping Up To Date

- Search history / search log – where and how (what search terms)
- Search alerts - the time dimension
  - Explore each search tool/database for alert tools
  - Create for each fruitful search strategy

Keeping Up To Date

- Several tools are available to keep current on your areas of interest
  - Search alerts in databases
  - Table of Contents (TOC) alerts
  - RSS Feeds for journal and other webpages
  - Social bookmarking (del.icio.us, CiteULike, Connotea)
How to Efficiently Read Technical Material

- Read with your question(s) in mind
- Read papers by section in order of importance (Abstract, Results, Methods, Discussion, Introduction, etc.)
- Finish with an idea of where the authors were headed (Conclusions? Implications?)
- Most importantly, what was the “take home message” for you?
- Re-read as question(s) evolves.
Recognizing Patterns

- Recurring authors
- Recurring institutions, labs
- Recurring settings for experiments/measurements
- Recurring methods or results
- Perhaps create a table to track these data for each article

- Patterns that let you know you are done with your search
  - Law of diminishing returns
  - Materials found are too old
Essential Library Services

- UNLV Libraries home page (http://library.unlv.edu)
- Catalogs to find books/manuals
  - UNLV Libraries Quick Search (limit to books, search, then check option to “Add results beyond your library's collection”)
  - LINK +
- Interlibrary Loan Service to borrow materials not available locally, receive emailed pdf copies of print-only items.
- UNLV subject librarians can help you throughout the process. If you can’t get something, please ask us!
Questions

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Thank You!