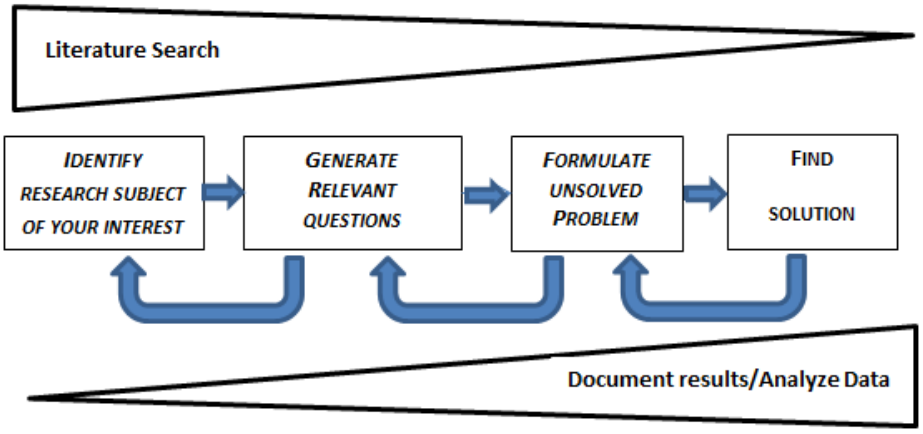
CONDUCTING A LITERATURE REVIEW



Research Process Diagram

Literature Review is…

- Not a descriptive list of the material available;
- Not a set of an annotated bibliographies;
- Not a collection of quotes and paraphrasing from other sources.

Why conduct a literature review?

- To identify other people working in the same fields
- To carry on from where others have already completed their research
- To identify gaps in the research area and put your work into wider perspective

A literature review must

- Synthesize results into a summary of what is and is not known
- Identify areas of controversy in the literature
- Formulate questions for further research

Components of literature review

- **Introduction:** the subject of the literature review
- **Body**: discussion of sources, organized chronologically, thematically, methodologically
- **Conclusion**: discuss what you have drawn from reviewing literature so far
- Optional sections: **Current situation** and **Questions for further research**

This handout is a guide to the content covered during the workshop.

Before you begin, ask yourself and your advisor

- How much literature do I need to look at?
- What are ongoing debates within the topic?
- What is the specific research question that my literature review helps to define?

When working on literature review ask yourself

- What **type** of literature review am I conducting?

  Looking at issues of theory, methodology, policy, quantitative research, qualitative research

- How good is my **information seeking**?

Ask yourself questions about sources:

- Has the author formulated a problem?
- Could the problem have been approached more effectively?
- How accurate and valid are the measurements?
- How does this source relate to the specific thesis or question I am developing?
- Can I offer information about missing aspects?

Working with data:

Data are crucial to scientific argumentation. Researchers/you …

- Assess the quality of data, draw conclusions from them and ponder their implications
- Summarize and synthesize new data with existing information to propose new theories.
- Develop hypotheses from data and test them by comparing their predictions to experimental data.

Principles for use of sources

- **Be selective**: choose the important points in each source that are relevant to your review.
- **Use quotes carefully**: short quotes are preferred.
- **Summarize and synthesize**: State the significance of the study and how it is related to your work.
- **Have your own voice**: Your voice should remain front and center.
- **Document your sources.**
- **Revise** a lot.