



Athabasca
University

CONDUCTING A LITERATURE REVIEW

**Elaine Fabbro, Acting Director
Library Services
Athabasca University Library**

Focused on the future of
learning.

Agenda

- What is a Literature Review?
- Understanding your Research Topic
- Keeping Organized
- Searching
- Critical Reading
- Organizing Your Literature Review
- Writing

Workshop Objectives

- Provide an overview of the literature review process
- Provide strategies for managing elements of the literature review
- Facilitate student engagement in the process

Learning Outcomes

- Raised awareness of entire literature review process
- Developed a ‘toolkit’ of strategies for use at various stages of the literature review
- Encouraged thoughtful engagement with the process

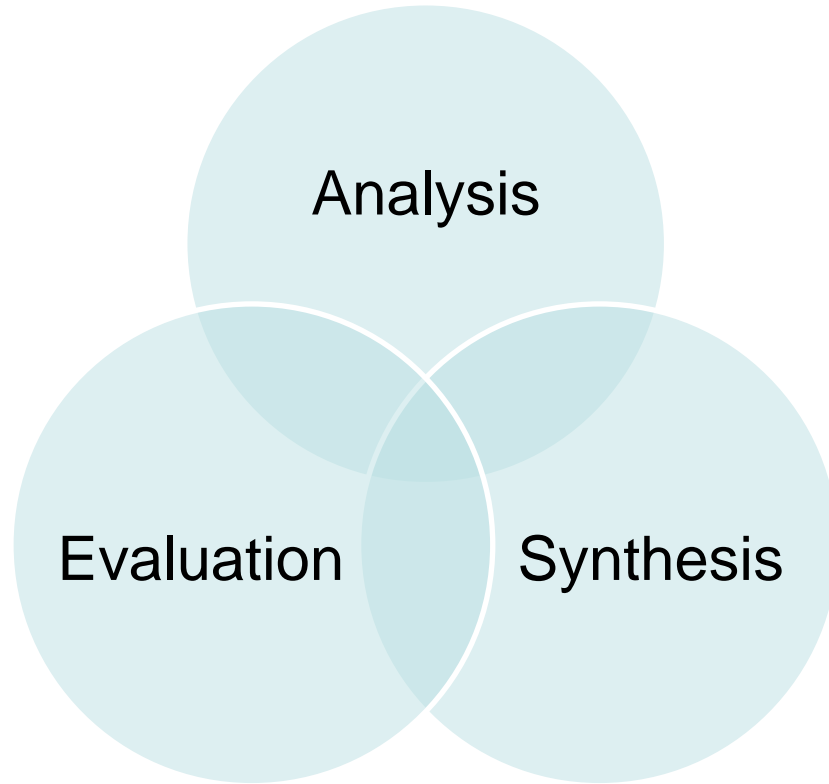
Introductions

- Your program and research topic

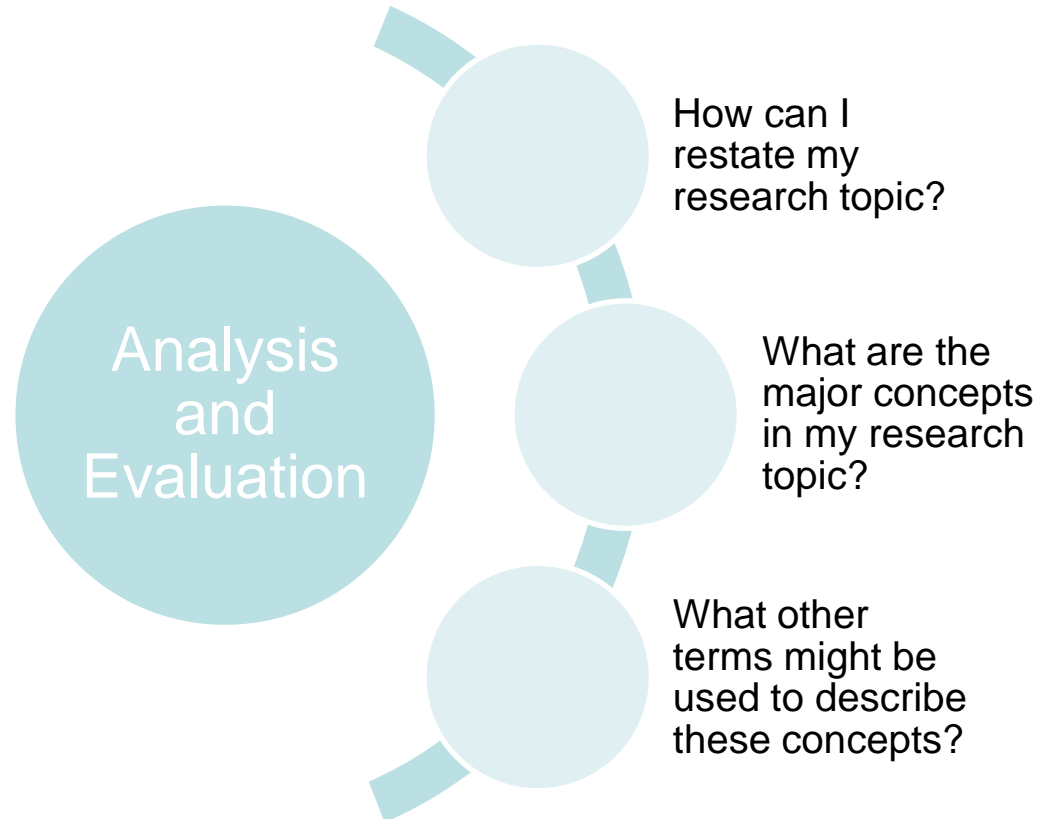
What is a Literature Review?



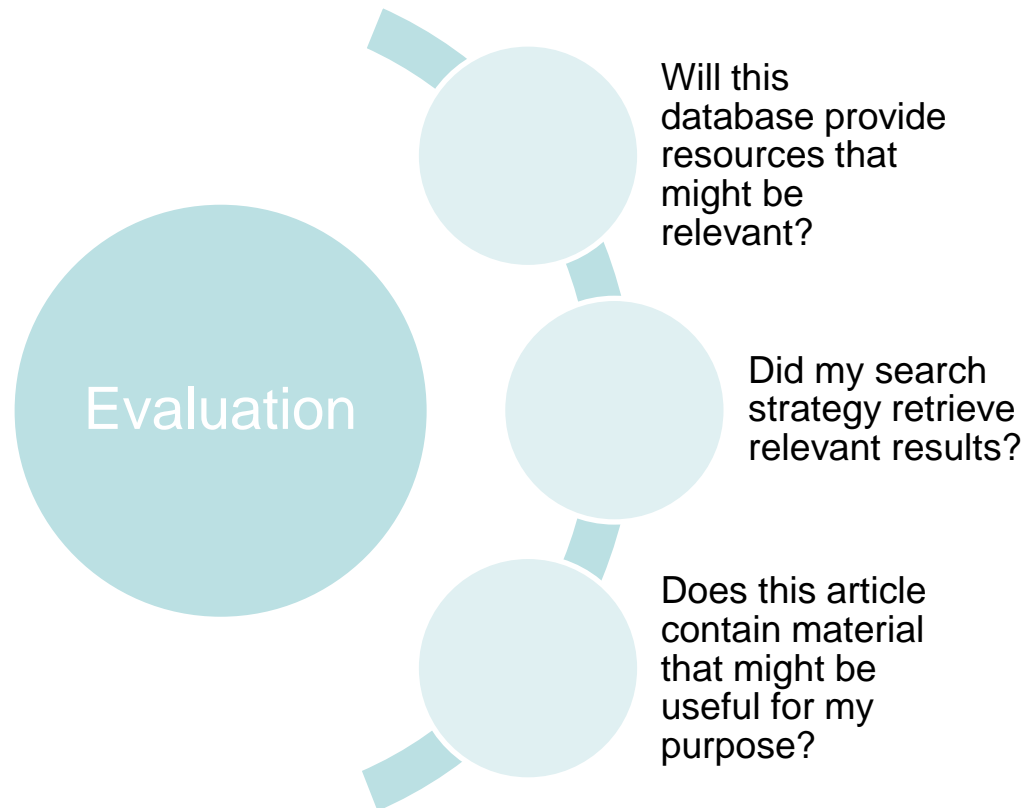
Understanding your Research Topic



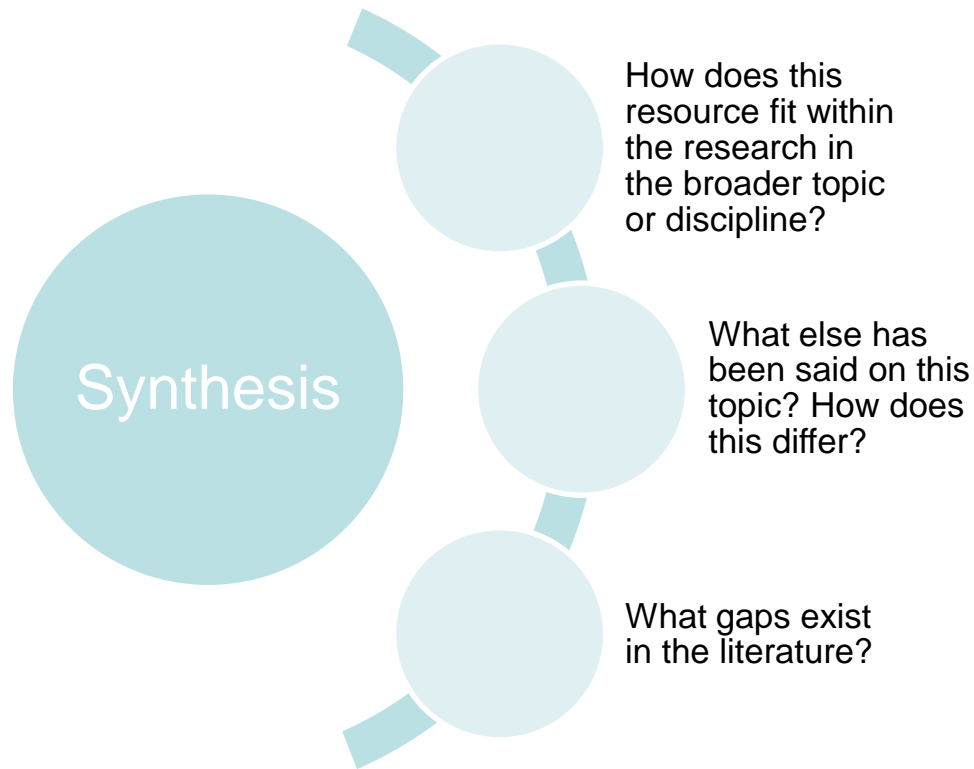
Understanding Your Research Topic



Understanding Your Research Topic



Understanding Your Research Topic



Keep in Mind...

- As You Proceed and Review:
 - Rethink
 - Revise
 - Repeat

Keeping Organized

- What strategies do you use to keep yourselves organized?
- Have you tried using anything that has not worked?

Keeping Organized

- Make a plan for managing the lit review process
- Keep a research journal
- Consider using a citation management tool
- Identify a strategy for taking notes, identifying quotes, and your own thoughts

Research Journal

- What comes to mind when you think of a journal?

Research Journal

Search Terms			
Concept 1	Concept 2	Concept 3	
treating	children	Autism	
treatment	child	Austistic	
cure	youth	Autism Spectrum Disorder	
therapy	infants		
rehabilitation	kids		
Search Strategies			
1 treating and children and autism			
2 (treatment or therapy) and children or infants) and autism			
3 (treatment or cure or rehabilitation) and (child* or youth or kids) and (autism or autistic)			
Databases Searched	Search Strategy Used	# of Results Retrieved	Comments
PsycARTICLES		1	1674 Large number of results, need to narrow search, results do not seem to be specific enough

Citation Management Tools

- Help you to organize large numbers of resources
- Materials may often be imported directly to these resources
- Easy to organize resources into folders
- Easy creation of bibliographies

Taking Notes

- Make note of all citations!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!
- Try to limit use of quotations, unless absolutely essential
- If you must quote it, clearly note it!
- Identify your own thoughts clearly

Identifying Resources to Search

- What types of sources are needed?
 - Books, journal articles, government documents, white papers, etc....
- Library catalogues, journal databases
- Meta-Search Tools:
 - AU Library's Discover or Google Scholar
- Subject Specific Databases
- AU Journal Title List
- Ulrich's
- WorldCat, Books in Print

Questions? Comments?

Searching for Materials

- [Help Centre](#) has tutorials on:
 - Creating search strategies
 - Searching specific Library tools like the catalogue and Discover
- Are there specific questions about searching that I can answer?

Evaluating a Search

- How many results were retrieved? Many? Few? What does that mean? (Good/bad search?)
- What types of results were retrieved? Scholarly, peer reviewed, magazines?
- How recent are the results?
- Do any results appear (at first glance) to be relevant?

Evaluating Resources

- Does the resource answer your question or help you to understand it better?
- Does the resource support your point of view?
- Does the resource cover the right time period?
- Is the resource appropriate to your level?
- Does the resource meet the publication date range if one was specified?
- Is the resource scholarly or peer reviewed or another type of source?
- Does the author of the item appear to be an authority on the topic?

Reading Critically

- What problem or issue is the author addressing?
- Is the problem or issue clearly identified?
- How does the author make their argument (e.g. by appealing to emotion, objectively etc.)
- Is their bias in the argument and what is it?
- How is the argument laid out or structured?
- What contributions does the item make to your specific information need?
- How does this document relate to other literature you have read?

Organizing the Literature Review

- Chronological
- Thematic
- Methodological

Tips on Writing

- Academic voice
- Fairness
- Support all claims with evidence
- Cite all references carefully and accurately

Thank You!

- Questions?

Evaluation

- What did you learn today?
- What did you like about the workshop?
- What recommendations do you have for next time?
- What other concerns do you have about teaching and learning at AU that we could address in a workshop?

Contact Information

- Library Information Desk:
 - library@athabascau.ca
 - 1-800-788-9041, ext. 6254, or 780-675-6254
 - <http://library.athabascau.ca>