Literature

Reviews
Doing a Literature Review

(1) Identify a focused question for the literature review
(2) Locate articles, books, and research reports that address the issue
(3) Read the articles & identify the ones that are most relevant to your question
(4) Construct an orderly system to organize the information you have collected
Literature Reviews

“The *right* way to write a review is to organize common findings or arguments together.”

“The *wrong* way to write a review is to list a series of research reports with a summary of the findings of each.”

-Neuman, p. 78
“The first hurdle [in writing the review] to overcome is thinking something must be perfect just because it has been published.”

-Neuman, p. 77
Reasons for Doing a Literature Review

(1) Demonstrate familiarity with a body of literature & establish credibility

(2) Trace the path of prior research and contextualize your study within it

(3) Integrate & summarize what is known in an area

(4) Learn from others & stimulate new ideas
Appropriate Sources for Literature Reviews

**Best**
- Articles in peer-reviewed academic journals
- Chapters in academic books
- Ph.D. dissertations or M.S. theses

**Good**
- Government reports or documents
- Reports or documents from international organizations (e.g. World Bank, United Nations)
- Reports or documents from advocacy groups (NGOs)
Appropriate Sources for Literature Reviews

Adequate (under particular circumstances)

- Articles from *good* newspapers
- Articles from *reputable* newsmagazines or commentary/opinion journals
- Reputable websites
- Transcripts of broadcast stories

Inappropriate

- Textbooks
- Secondary or tertiary sources
- Unknown websites
- Non-news magazines