

SSW 75100-12

Reading and evaluating literature & literature search for research planning and identification of research problem

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Preparation for our Exercise



Individual and family well-being

- › Ensure healthy development for youth
- › Close the health gap
- › Build healthy relationships to end violence
- › Advance long and productive lives



Stronger social fabric

- › Eradicate social isolation
- › End homelessness
- › Create social responses to a changing environment
- › Harness technology for social good



Just society

- › Eliminate racism
- › Promote smart decarceration
- › Build financial capability and assets for all
- › Reduce extreme economic inequality
- › Achieve equal opportunity and justice

Formulating your research question



- **Two initial steps:**
 - Think about overarching goals of the research project
 - Find and review existing literature on your topic
- **PICO method for refining the research question:**
 - Patient, population, or problem: What are the characteristics of the patient, population, or community? What is the problem you are interested in?
 - Intervention or exposure: What is the intervention? Are you diagnosing, treating, observing, or other?
 - Comparison: What alternatives to your chosen intervention exist? How do they compare to your chosen intervention?
 - Outcome: What are the relevant outcomes? How will they be observed?
- **SPICE method for refining the research question:**
 - **Setting**: Where? (e.g., New York)
 - **Perspective**: Whom? (e.g., adolescents)
 - **Intervention**: What? (e.g., trauma-informed training for teachers)
 - **Comparison**: Compared to what? (e.g., no trauma-informed training for teachers)
 - **Evaluation**: What is the result? (e.g., less instances of punitive responses by teachers)

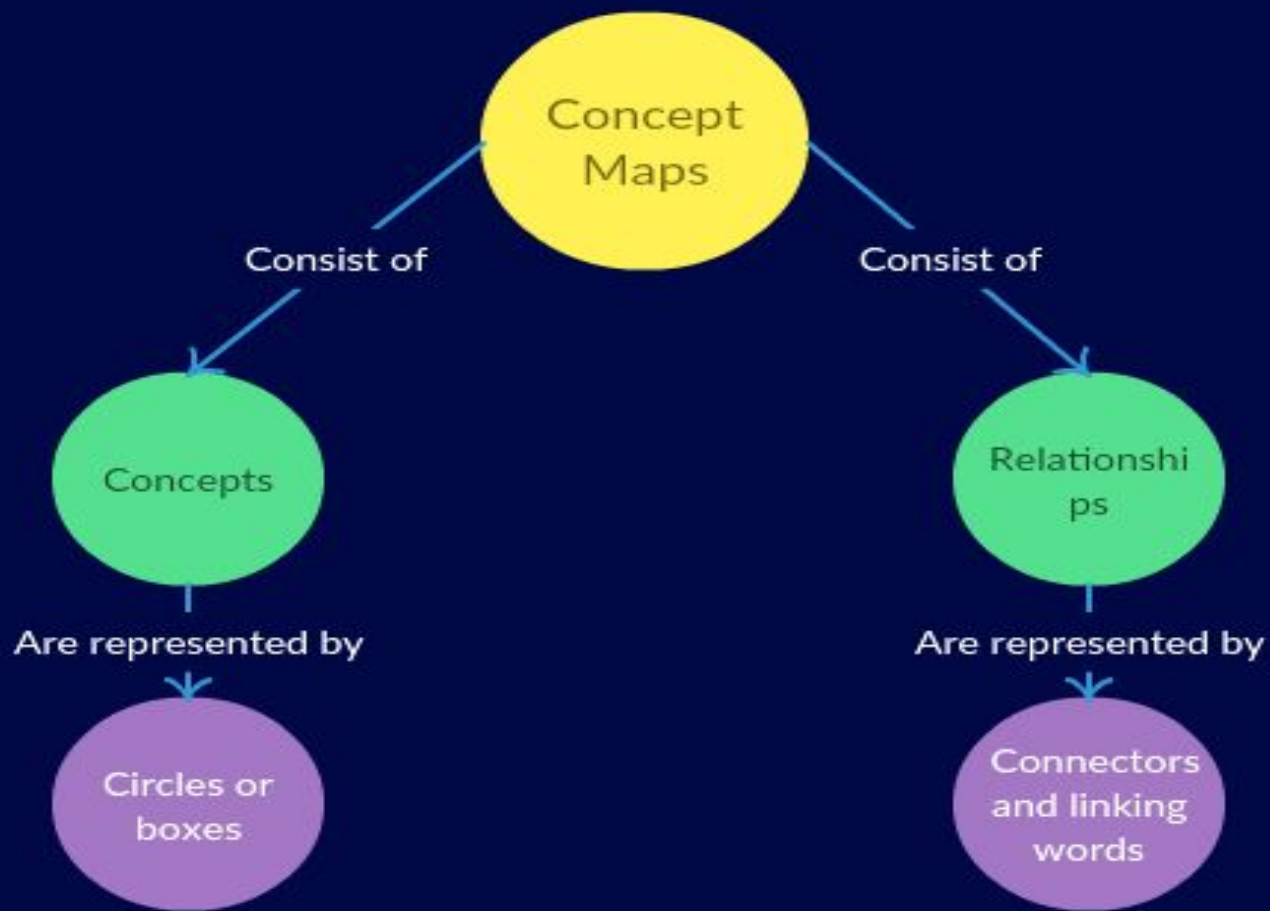
Concept Mapping

- **Concept Mapping:**

- Purpose: To help organize, prioritize, and integrate material into a feasible, interesting, answerable, and clear research area
- Process:
 - Start with broad topic, issue, or problem
 - Write down words, phrases, ideas related to the topic in circles or boxes
 - Draw arrows connecting circles/boxes in order to think about the relationship between them

- Article on using concept mapping as a teaching tool for discussing power, race, oppression, and privilege:

<http://cmc.ihmc.us/cmc2006Papers/cmc2006-p207.pdf>



Literature Search



- **Purpose:**
 - Assist in formulating research question by evaluating available literature, while focusing on gaps in research
- **Types:**
 - Primary literature: publication of “expert’s” new evidence, conclusions, and proposals (usually in peer-reviewed journals)
 - Secondary literature: systematic reviews/meta-analyses that derive from primary literature
 - Tertiary literature: collections that compiled information of primary and secondary literature
- **Where to search:**
 - Search engines, electronic databases, personal knowledge/contacts, physical journals, and others
- **How to search:**
 - Keywords, phrases, boolean operators (e.g., “and,” “or,” etc.), filters (e.g., source type)

Reading Empirical Journal Articles

Main components of empirical articles:

- Abstract
- Introduction (problem statement, literature review)
- Methods (data collection, sample)
- Results
- Discussion/conclusion

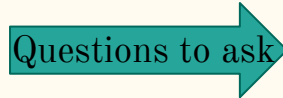


Table 3.1 Questions worth asking while reading research reports

Report section	Questions worth asking
Abstract	What are the key findings? How were those findings reached? What framework does the researcher employ?
Acknowledgments	Who are this study's major stakeholders? Who provided feedback? Who provided support in the form of funding or other resources?
Problem statement (introduction)	How does the author frame their research focus? What other possible ways of framing the problem exist? Why might the author have chosen this particular way of framing the problem?
Literature review (introduction)	How selective does the researcher appear to have been in identifying relevant literature to discuss? Does the review of literature appear appropriately extensive? Does the researcher provide a critical review?
Sample (methods)	Where was the data collected? Did the researcher collect their own data or use someone else's data? What population is the study trying to make claims about, and does the sample represent that population well? What are the sample's major strengths and major weaknesses?
Data collection (methods)	How were the data collected? What do you know about the relative strengths and weaknesses of the method employed? What other methods of data collection might have been employed, and why was this particular method employed? What do you know about the data collection strategy and instruments (e.g., questions asked, locations observed)? What <i>don't</i> you know about the data collection strategy and instruments?
Data analysis (methods)	How were the data analyzed? Is there enough information provided for you to feel confident that the proper analytic procedures were employed accurately?
Results	What are the study's major findings? Are findings linked back to previously described research questions, objectives, hypotheses, and literature? Are sufficient amounts of data (e.g., quotes and observations in qualitative work, statistics in quantitative work) provided in order to support conclusions drawn? Are tables readable?
Discussion/conclusion	Does the author generalize to some population beyond her/his/their sample? How are these claims presented? Are claims made supported by data provided in the results section (e.g., supporting quotes, statistical significance)? Have limitations of the study been fully disclosed and adequately addressed? Are implications sufficiently explored?

Results Section

Confidence Interval: range of values in which the true value is likely to be (ex: date of when to expect first child "we are 95% sure the baby will be born between Aug 1 and Sept 1st")

Statistical Significance: the likelihood that relationships we observe could be caused by something other than chance

is reported in reference to a value, usually 0.05 in the social sciences

P-Value: statistical measure of the probability that there is no relationship between variables

Null Hypothesis: the assumption that no relationship exists between the variables in question



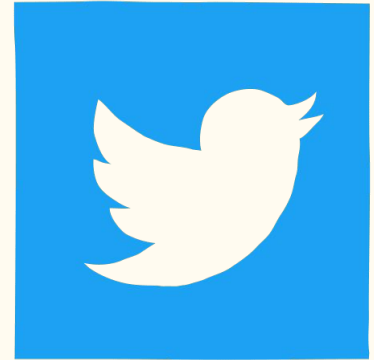
Evaluating Sources

- Is the information outdated?
- How old are the sources used by the author?
- Does the author have the credentials to write on this topic?
- Who published the source?
- Is the source relevant to your topic?
- How important is this source in the literature?
- Is the source accurate?
- Is the source reliable and objective?
- What is the scope of the article?
- How strong is the evidence in the article?



"Being a responsible consumer of research means giving serious thought to and understanding what you do know, what you don't know, what you can know, and what you can't know" (p. 76)

Evaluating Online Sources: Fact, fiction, or something in between?



Sample Research Exercise

Concept Map

Reminder: This is to help us organize, prioritize, and integrate material into a workable research area; one that is interesting, answerable, feasible, objective, scholarly, original, and clear.

References

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