How to do a literature review

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First...

- Know the requirements/expectations...
  - PhD Dissertation
  - MA/BA Thesis
  - Review Paper
  - Manuscript
  - Advisor/Instructor’s expectations
- Always annotate...
Finding Sources: Index Searching

• Experiment with terms to adjust the range of your searches. Vary:
  ○ Filters (author, title, abstract, keyword, subject, source, date)
  ○ Specificity and number of terms (AND and OR operators)
  ○ Databases

• Scan abstracts for:
  ○ Empirical findings that shed light on your questions
  ○ Discussions that contribute to your theory of the phenomenon
  ○ Designs, measures, or procedures that you may use in your study
  ○ Analytic methods that you may use with your data.

• Reverse search for authors, journals, terms, etc. that you encounter in your searches
Finding Sources: Consultations

By and large: use PsychINFO and/or Google Scholar
Seek advice about important sources from:

- Your Advisor(s)
- Faculty with relevant expertise
- Peers and other students with relevant expertise
- Your research lab
- Yourself – the literature that actually inspires you and your work is the most important to integrate and cite.
Finding Sources: Reviews and References

Follow the literature trails outlined in related:

- Literature reviews
- Review articles
- Reference sections
- Always use original sources
  - Peer reviewed articles
Reading Literature

- Read and think about the theory, methods, and findings of closely related, highly influential, or particularly good research.
- Learn to skim some repetitive elements of reports that are a part of a particular research tradition.
- Learn to selectively read research that is distantly related to your topic.
Annotating

- Reference everything – create a running of list of APA style references; create a system and stick to it.
- Summarize your sources – the length of your summary should be proportional to the importance of the source (anywhere from one word, to several paragraphs)
- Include in your notes direct (and properly referenced) quotes, graphs, tables, etc. that you think you will use in your review.
- Start organizing your sources from the beginning (by theme, author, time period, etc.)
Knowing When to Stop

- **Coverage** – when you have *adequately* represented a set of *relevant* literatures (using exemplar reviews as a guide), nested by ranges of relevance (more coverage for more closely related work)

- **Saturation** – when you start to encounter few, if any, new relevant sources

- **Contribution** – when you understand exactly how you are contributing to (extending, amending, enriching) an existing literature (or multiple literatures)
Tell a story – by analyzing and synthesizing relevant existing research and theory – whose inevitable conclusion is that your study is an important contribution to a specific literature.
How do you analyze the research?

- Organize and integrate it under a clear, coherent theoretical framework:
  - Model your phenomenon and the framework will emerge as you modify it in light of the existing research (diagramming can be helpful)
  - Try to succinctly express what is generally true (“what we know”) of your phenomenon
  - Evaluate and critique existing literature from a particular perspective
How do you synthesize the information?

- **Start with your destination: be clear about why your study is important:**
  - Are there important unexamined features of your phenomenon that your research will help us understand?
  - Are there problems or limitations in the existing research that your project will address?
  - Does your research address an important phenomenon that has never been studied?
  - Are you employing a new approach to research in your area, one that promises to teach us something new about your phenomenon?
How do you synthesize the information?

- Organize studies into bodies of research and into general themes
  - Think about how different studies relate to each other and try to characterize the general conclusions (or limitations) of a whole body of research. Possible groupings:
    - The same author or group of authors
    - Written in the same time period
    - Published in the same journal
    - Employ similar methods or theoretical orientations
    - Construct the problem in similar ways
    - Draw similar conclusions
  - Continually group, compare, and contrast bodies of research and characterize general themes that emerge
How do you synthesize the information?

- Build a narrative that leads to your conclusion:
  - Create an organic order for your analyses – in terms of the changes in a field over time, or in terms of the elements in your model of the phenomenon, etc.
  - Direct your analysis towards your primary conclusion – the importance of your study
  - Most authors start with the general relevant literature, narrowing to the specific topic and eventually concluding with a description of the current study
Study Overview

- Summarize and synthesize the literature review and connect it to your questions.
  - Make a very clear statement of your research question (describe and justify the theoretical background, the observational procedure, and the analytic procedure of the proposed study)
  - By making direct reference to your literature review, you must demonstrate that your question
    - (a) has not been previously answered, and
    - (b) is worth answering.
- Clearly state your hypotheses or specific questions
Hypotheses or Specific Questions

- For experimental, or related, designs, hypotheses are sentences that predict the relationship between two or more variables (derived directly from the research question). Hypotheses should directly relate to, and refer to, your literature review.

- For more idiographic (qualitative) designs, you may not have a hypothesis. You will provide the specific empirical questions that your analysis will be attempting to answer. These should also directly relate to your literature review.
Logic, Clarity & Coherence

Your literature review should logically flow and be coherent.

At the end of the day, you are attempting to communicate the research to the reader.
Theoretical model – what is my theory about the nature and/or function(s) of my phenomena of interest?

I expect to find __________ because __________.

or

I want to understand __________ because __________.

I expect to find that CEOs will show more psychopathic traits than their employees because
Theoretical model – what is my theory about the nature and/or function(s) of my phenomena of interest?

I expect to find __________ because __________.

or

I want to understand __________ because __________.

I expect to find **that CEOs will show more psychopathic traits than their employees** because **research on successful psychopathy suggests that in highly competitive environments, psychopathic traits confer a competitive advantage.**
Theoretical model – what is my theory about the nature and/or function(s) of my phenomena of interest?

I expect to find __________ because __________.

or

I want to understand __________ because __________.

I expect to find **that CEOs will show more psychopathic traits than their employees** because **research on successful psychopathy suggests that in highly competitive environments, psychopathic traits confer a competitive advantage.**

I want to understand **the unique verbal and gestural characteristics of deception in children** because
**Theoretical Model**

_Theoretical model – what is my theory about the nature and/or function(s) of my phenomena of interest?_

I expect to find ___________ because ___________.

or

I want to understand ___________ because ___________.

I expect to find _that CEOs will show more psychopathic traits than their employees because research on successful psychopathy suggests that in highly competitive environments, psychopathic traits confer a competitive advantage._

I want to understand _the unique verbal and gestural characteristics of deception in children because existing research and theory on deception detection is based exclusively on adult deception and so we know very little about how to detect deception in children._
Observational Procedure

Observational procedure – How can I concretely examine the specific qualities and/or predictions entailed by my theory?

I will collect data to answer my question by ____________ because ____________.

I will collect data to answer my question by **administering anonymous surveys to samples (all including company executives) from 30 publicly traded companies** because
Observational Procedure

Observational procedure – How can I concretely examine the specific qualities and/or predictions entailed by my theory?

I will collect data to answer my question by ____________ because ______________.

I will collect data to answer my question by administering anonymous surveys to samples (all including company executives) from 30 publicly traded companies because well-validated psychopathy measures have been developed and scaled self-report measures allow for standardized comparisons between large groups of individuals.
Observational Procedure – How can I concretely examine the specific qualities and/or predictions entailed by my theory?

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I will collect data to answer my question by video recording a diverse sample of children who will be asked to talk with an adult confederate concerning subjects about which children have been shown to frequently lie because
Observational Procedure

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I will collect data to answer my question by administering anonymous surveys to samples (all including company executives) from 30 publicly traded companies because well-validated psychopathy measures have been developed and scaled self-report measures allow for standardized comparisons between large groups of individuals.

I will collect data to answer my question by video recording a diverse sample of children who will be asked to talk with an adult confederate concerning subjects about which children have been shown to frequently lie because we have no systematic empirical data on the speech or gesture patterns involved in children’s lying and open-ended conversation will provide instances of spontaneous deception from which such data can be extracted.
Analytic procedure – How can I organize and analyze my observations in order to draw reasonable and convincing conclusions about my theory and the phenomenon of interest?

I will analyze my data by ______________ because ______________.

I will analyze my data by using NHST to compare average differences between executives and employees on psychopathic traits because

...
Analytic procedure – How can I organize and analyze my observations in order to draw reasonable and convincing conclusions about my theory and the phenomenon of interest?

I will analyze my data by ______________ because ______________.

I will analyze my data by using NHST to compare average differences between executives and employees on psychopathic traits because NHST is a disciplinary standard for estimating the likelihood that group differences are due to chance.
Analytic procedure – How can I organize and analyze my observations in order to draw reasonable and convincing conclusions about my theory and the phenomenon of interest?

I will analyze my data by ______________ because ______________.

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I will analyze my data by using grounded theory to identify and organize verbal and gestural patterns involved in children’s lying because
Analytic Procedure

Analytic procedure – How can I organize and analyze my observations in order to draw reasonable and convincing conclusions about my theory and the phenomenon of interest?

I will analyze my data by _______________ because _______________.

I will analyze my data by **using NHST to compare average differences between executives and employees on psychopathic traits** because **NHST is a disciplinary standard for estimating the likelihood that group differences are due to chance**.

I will analyze my data by **using grounded theory to identify and organize verbal and gestural patterns involved in children’s lying** because **grounded theory is a disciplinary standard for developing descriptive theory via inductive analysis of multi-modal qualitative data**.
The body of research on successful psychopathy suggests that psychopathic traits confer a competitive advantage in highly competitive environments. The corporate world is one such environment and positions within its hierarchy are a clear indicator of success. In the current study, we therefore predicted that, in an anonymous survey administered to samples (all including company executives) from 30 publicly traded companies, CEOs would show more psychopathic traits than would their employees. We tested this prediction by comparing average differences between executives and employees on psychopathic traits assessed through well-validated psychopathy measures.
Given that existing research and theory on deception detection is based exclusively on adult deception, we know very little about how to detect deception in children. We are thus in particular need of research that focuses on the unique verbal and gestural characteristics of deception in children. To that end, we have, in the current study, conducted grounded theory analyses on video recordings from a diverse sample of children. These children were asked to talk with an adult confederate concerning subjects about which children have been shown to frequently lie. Our aim was to develop a corpus of systematic empirical data on the speech or gesture patterns involved in children’s lying and our assumption was that open-ended conversation would provide instances of spontaneous deception from which such data could be extracted.
Thank you

- Any questions?