Steps for Writing Literature Reviews

According to the Publication Manual of American Psychological Association (2010), Literature Reviews “are critical evaluations of material that has already been published.

Resources used in Literature Reviews

- Book
- Journals
- Conference Papers/Proceedings
- Dissertations/Theses
- Historical Records
- Government Reports

Steps for writing a Literature Review

- **Step #1: Select a research topic and develop working hypotheses.**
  - ✓ Select a well-researched area that will give you more research to choose from.
  - ✓ A Working hypothesis is a statement of expectations that require exploratory research.

  **Facts about Exploratory Research**
  
  Exploratory research is conducted for a problem that has not been clearly defined.
  Exploratory research determines the best research design, data collection method and selection of subjects.
  Exploratory research relies on secondary research such as: reviewing literature, data.
  Exploratory research relies on interviews, focus groups, project methods, and case studies.

- **Step #2: Collect and read relevant resources:**
Library Research

✓ Visit John B. Cade Library (http://www.subr.edu/library), or utilize the library’s online catalog, electronic databases.
✓ Search the library databases for helpful articles.
✓ Determine how current your sources need to be

Reading the Articles

Scan the article Identify:

1) Research question
2) Specific hypotheses
3) Findings
4) How the findings were interpreted

HINT: Use note cards to list these key points for each article you read. Include full bibliographic details of each article, or book you read.

• Step #3: Write the Literature Review

Parts of the Literature review
INTRODUCTION
I. Addresses the topics that will be discussed in the body
II. Includes a thesis statement
III. Includes a research question
   (e.g. Does crime decrease as a result of positive parental relationships?)

BODY
I. Number of paragraphs depends on the number of topics and points you address.
II. Each paragraph must begin with a topic sentence that introduces your subject matter.
III. Each paragraph should end with a transition sentence connecting the next paragraph.
IV. Use the research to support your ideas.
V. Tie the evidence in the body back to your research question.

IMPLICATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH
I. Most Literature Reviews contain a section called “implications for further research.” This requires you to point out holes in what has currently been presented.
II. You can address specific areas that need to be addressed. Create new research questions to be explored.
III. You can also include your own theories and/or ideas

CONCLUSION
I. Highlight the points discussed in the body. Tie the information back to your research question.
Sample Literature Review of One Paper

Literature Review
Student's Name


[Note the Format of the Citation: Author Names (Year) "Paper Title," Journal Title, Volume(Number) (Month): page numbers. More examples of reference citation are at the end of this document.]

This paper examines the relationship between women's labor supply and divorce. The authors find that women who divorce had increased their labor supply during the three years prior, raising questions as to the cause-effect relationship between women's labor supply and marital dissolution. In other words, they try to disentangle the question of whether women's increasing labor force participation contributes to increased divorce or whether women who anticipate divorce increase their labor force participation as a result of that anticipation.

[Note: This first paragraph is an overview or abstract of the paper]

Johnson and Skinner (1986) analyzed data from the Michigan Panel Study of Income Dynamics (PSID), which allowed them to estimate predicted divorce probabilities based on actual divorce. They then used this predicted probability of divorce and actual divorce in estimates of female LFP, and though both variables had positive coefficients, they were statistically insignificant.

Johnson and Skinner (1986) included residence in a state with no-fault divorce legislation in their predicted labor supply equations. They concluded that living in a state with a no-fault divorce law has a negative impact on women's labor supply. However, Johnson and Skinner's (1986) analysis used PSID data from 1972, when only a few states had changed their divorce laws to no-fault; this created a small comparison group and a limited amount of time for the laws' effects to occur.

Though Johnson and Skinner's (1986) analysis suggested that no-fault divorce had a negative impact on married women's LFP, later research has consistently found that married women living in states with no-fault divorce laws are more likely to work, but the effects are small.

[Note: These paragraphs summarize details of the paper's methodology and data that are relevant to the paper this student is trying to write]

[Note: The in-text citation style is Author (Year)]