Working with Literature

What should I be reading and
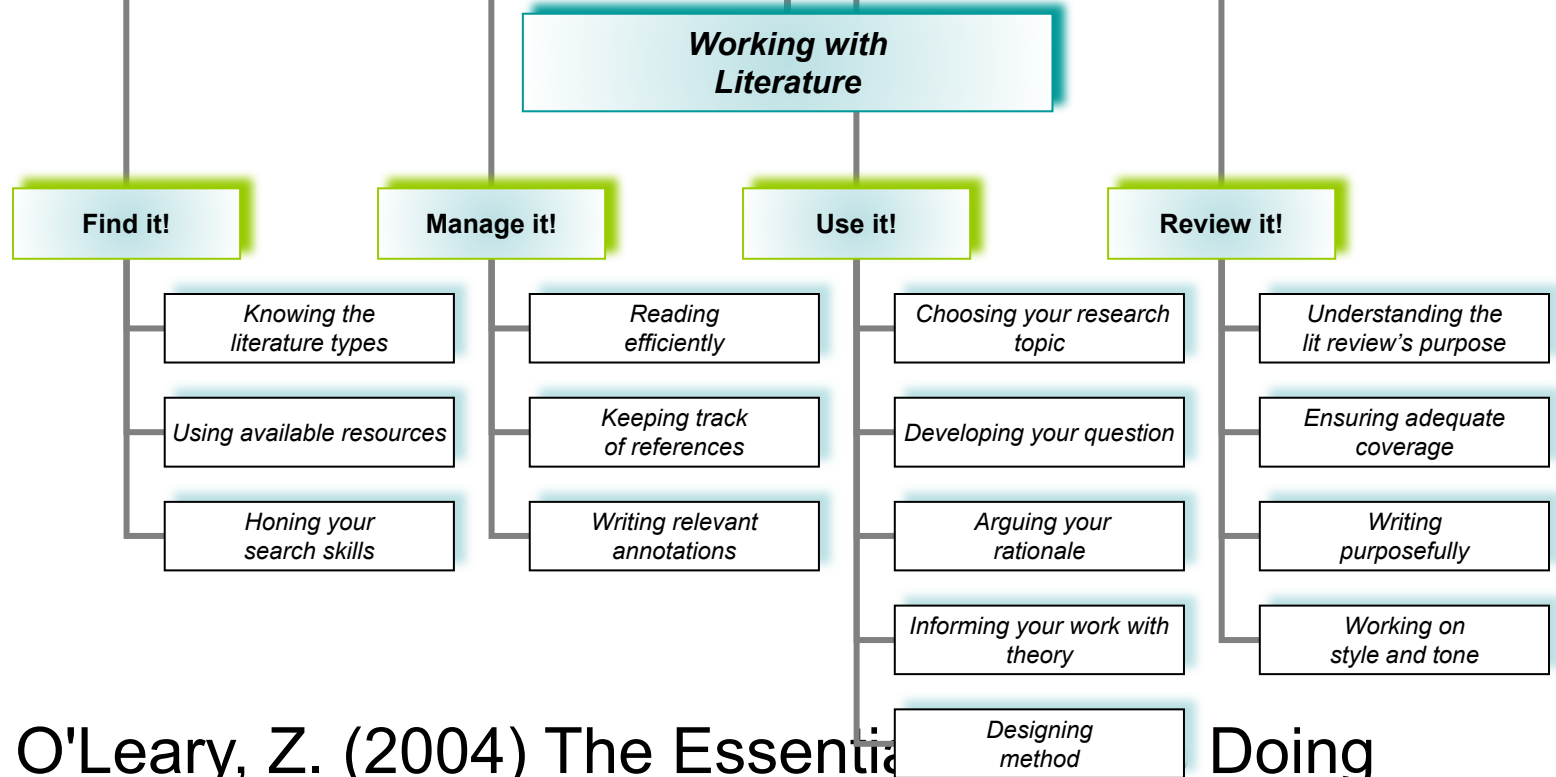what do I do with it all?

The Importance of Working with Literature

Working with literature is an essential part of the research process that:

- generates ideas
- helps form significant questions
- is instrumental in the process of research design

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Working with literature

Working with Literature

Find it!	Manage it!	Use it!	Review it!
Knowing the literature types	*Reading efficiently*	*Choosing your research topic*	*Understanding the lit review's purpose*
Using available resources	*Keeping track of references*	*Developing your question*	*Ensuring adequate coverage*
Honing your search skills	*Writing relevant annotations*	*Arguing your rationale*	*Writing purposefully*
		Informing your work with theory	*Working on style and tone*
		Designing method	

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Research. London: Sage Chapter
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Finding literature

Finding relevant literature can be made easier if you are able to readily access and draw on a wide variety of resources such as:

- reference materials
- books
- journals
- grey literature
- official publications
- archives

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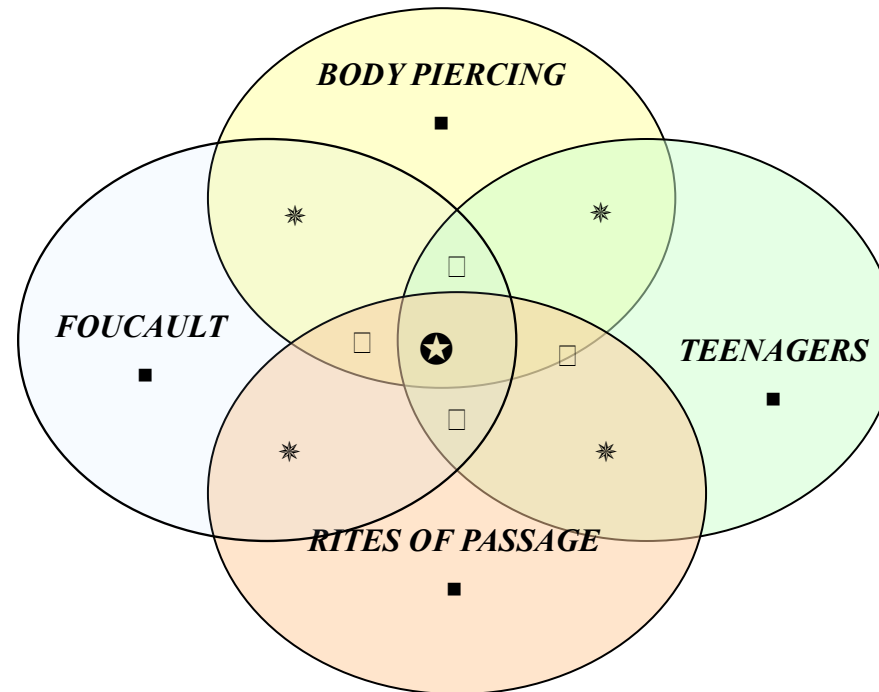
Finding literature

Don't go it alone!!

When looking for literature be sure to call on the experts such as:

- librarians

- supervisors

- other researchers

- practitioners

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Intersecting Areas of Literature

BODY PIERCING

FOUCAULT

TEENAGERS

RITES OF PASSAGE

■   *background literature*
✳   *moderate relevance*
□   *high relevance*
✪   *highest relevance*

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Managing the literature

It also pays to be organized and diligent when it comes to keeping references.

- Keep and file copies of relevant books, articles, etc.

- Avoid lending out your 'only copies'

- Find out about the recommended referencing style and use it from the start

- Consider using bibliographic file management software such as *Procite, Endnote,* or *Reference Manager*

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Annotating Sources

Annotating your sources provides you with a record of relevant literature. It should include:

- the citation
- articulation of the author and audience
- a short summary
- critical commentary
- notes on relevance that remind you of the significance, accuracy, and quality of the sources cited

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Using the Literature

Literature is used for disparate purposes throughout the research process. Whether it be:

- focusing interests
- defining questions
- arguing a rationale
- theoretically informing your study
- developing appropriate design, or writing a formal literature review

every stage of the research process demands literary engagement.

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The Formal Literature Review

Most find the writing of a literature review a difficult task that takes patience, practice, drafts, and redrafts

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The Formal Literature Review

The formal literature review is a very specific piece of writing designed to:

- inform your readers of your topic

- establish your credibility as a researcher

- argue the need for, and relevance of, your work

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Reviewing the Literature vs. 'The Literature Review'

TABLE 6.1 REVIEWING THE LITERATURE VS 'THE LITERATURE REVIEW'

Reasons for reviewing the literature	Purposes of the 'literature review'
• Informing yourself of what is happening in the field	☑ Informing your audience of what is happening in the field
• Gaining a level of topical and methodological knowledge and expertise	☑ Establishing your credibility as a knowledgeable and capable researcher
• Finding potential gaps in the literature that may point to potential research questions	☑ Arguing the relevance and the significance of your research question(s)
• Critically evaluating common/ typical methods	☑ Providing the context for your own methodological approach
• Facilitating the development of your own methodological approaches	☑ Arguing the relevance and appropriateness of your approach

Writing your Literature Review

A good literature review is an *argument* that is more purposeful than a simple review of relevant literature

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Six   3

Writing your Literature Review

Writing a good review requires you to:

- read a few good reviews
- write critical annotations
- develop a structure
- write purposefully
- use the literature to back up your arguments
- review and write throughout the research process
- get feedback
- and be prepared to redraft

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Writing your Literature Review

Style and Tone…

- Writing a good literature review can be likened to holding a good dinner party conversation

- They both require individuals who can engage, learn, debate, argue, contribute, and evolve their own ideas, without being hyper-critical or sycophantic