



SCHOOL-BASED YOUTH PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH

LITERATURE REVIEW

SchYPAR PowerPoint:

https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1y-kBTQFkwStKoFvOPuDeVsUHumSz-K5X1Li5VciZBaw/edit#slide=id.g2560232b1b2_0_127

Information adapted from:

Cammarota, J., & Fine, M. (2008). *Revolutionizing Education: Youth Participatory Action Research in Motion*. Routledge.

Lichtman, M. (2010). *Qualitative Research in Education: A User's Guide*. SAGE Publications, Inc. p. 126.

LEARNING STANDARDS

Session Description:

In this session, students will be introduced to the importance of conducting a literature review, including how it can help them identify gaps in existing knowledge, refine their research questions, and develop a more robust theoretical framework. They will learn how to identify relevant sources, including academic journals, books, government reports, and websites, and how to evaluate these sources for quality, relevance, and bias.

YPAR Learning Standard:

- In conducting a literature review, collaborators will learn the specific skills of locating and accessing relevant scholarly articles, critically analyzing and synthesizing research findings, identifying knowledge gaps, understanding different research methodologies, and effectively incorporating existing literature to inform and support their Youth Participatory Action Research projects.



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MATERIALS

- Students process journal
- Pencils/Pens
- Display screen
- Computer lab or computers for the literature review search and writing of the “mini” literature review.
- Handouts

LESSON (25 minutes)

Note on the structure of the lessons: The lessons situate the teacher as the leader or facilitator, but feel free to engage students as leaders/facilitators in preparing the lesson or the lesson itself. You can rotate students to be co-leaders/facilitators throughout the various sessions. They can co-lead with you by preparing beforehand a “mini-lesson” on one of the topics or guiding the conversations during group discussions. We are working on structuring these lesson plans, which engage all research collaborators in the teaching/learning process.

Introduction (5 minutes)

1. Explain that a literature review is a systematic search and evaluation of published research studies, reports, and other sources of information related to a research topic or question.

What is a literature review?: A literature review is a comprehensive and critical analysis of existing published research, articles, books, and other sources relevant to a particular research topic. It is an essential



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component of research, as it provides an overview of what has been studied, what is known, and what gaps exist in the current knowledge on a topic. A literature review allows researchers to identify key themes and concepts in their study area, evaluate the quality of previous research, and use this information to develop a research question and hypothesis. It also helps researchers avoid duplicating previous work and ensures their research builds on existing knowledge. A well-conducted literature review is critical to the success of any research project.

2. Directly connect the importance of literature reviews in Youth Participatory Action Research.

Literature reviews are important to Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR) for several reasons:

- *Provides a comprehensive overview of existing knowledge: Conducting a literature review enables youth researchers to identify what is already known about their research topic. It helps them gain a deeper understanding of the issue, the context in which it occurs, and the current interventions being used to address it.*
- *Helps refine research questions: The literature review process allows youth researchers to identify gaps and areas where additional research is needed. This information can be used to refine their research questions, making their research more focused and relevant.*
- *Establishes a theoretical framework: Literature reviews help youth researchers to establish a theoretical framework for their research. This is important because it helps researchers understand how their research fits into existing knowledge and the broader field.*
- *Builds research skills: Conducting a literature review is a valuable skill that can be used in future research projects. It*



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teaches youth researchers how to identify and evaluate sources, synthesize information from multiple sources, and develop an argument based on existing research.

- *Engages community members: In YPAR, community members are often involved in the research process. Conducting a literature review can allow youth researchers to engage community members in the research process, seeking their insights on what has worked in the past, what hasn't worked, and what additional information is needed.*

3. Discuss the 5 steps to conducting a literature review. We suggest asking students to apply the steps as you explain.

Group Activity (20 minutes)

In their YPAR research groups, introduce the 5 literature review steps. The goal is to have students apply the steps as they are reviewed.

1. **Identify the research topic:** Students have already identified the research topic by exploring their experiences and identifying the sources of information (generally) that can help them understand the research topic. Ask students to open their process journal to their issue and tentative research question.
2. **Locating what is out there:** Ask students to: 1) brainstorm possible keywords or search terms that could be used to find relevant sources and 2) use a search engine such as PubMed, Google Scholar, and Scopus to find relevant sources using the keywords or search terms identified. For example, students can find keywords related to this topic if they research student-teacher relationships.
3. **Deciding what is relevant and critical (a general search):** Evaluate the literature to determine its relevance to the research question. Ask students to 1) read the abstracts and identify the most relevant articles for the review. 2) Identify common themes and



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trends. The goal is to have students identify at least **three** sources that they would then give a more detailed read.

- a. Have students consider these questions: Is the source within your discipline? (*For example, if the course is focused on history, is the text a historical one, or if you are teaching a course that focuses on sociology, does the article bring a sociological perspective?*) What is the main point of the source? Is the article clear about its findings? How so? Does it direct your attention to the topic in a helpful way?
4. **Sorting, Selecting, and Organizing the Information (a more detailed search and reading through the sources):** Organize the literature based on the research question. This can be done by creating a table or spreadsheet to track the articles and their key findings. The following elements can be included in the table:

- **Author:** *Write the name of the authors*
- **Title:** *Write the title*
- **Date:** *Write the date the source was published. Students want to find the most updated information. If the information is dated, then that can also be helpful in understanding the temporal conversations around the topic.*
- **Source:** *Write the source type (article, book, website, etc.). Try and direct students to find at least two articles.*
- **Sample Size:** *Write the sample size or the number of people the study's findings represents.*
- **Type of Study:** *Write the type of study or the methodological approach (qualitative or quantitative) and methods (interviews, surveys, observations, etc.) used to collect and analyze data.*
- **Findings:** *Write the results or outcomes of a study. Findings can include any data or information collected during the study, as well as any patterns, trends, or relationships observed.*



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- **Critical Comments:** *Write comments to analyze, evaluate, and provide feedback on a text. These comments can help identify gaps or limitations in the research and suggest areas for improvement that their research will address.*

Sorting, Selecting, and Organizing Table

Research Question:

Authors	Title	Date	Source	Sample Size	Type of Study	Findings	Critical Comments
1.							
2.							
3.							

5. **Writing the Review (a “mini” Review):** Write the literature review by summarizing and synthesizing the key findings from the articles. The goal is to include a critical literature analysis and provide recommendations for future research.

Usually, literature reviews are long articles (anywhere between 10-25 pages), but in your student’s case, start by having them write three paragraphs summarizing their sources. And have them tie the findings to their research question.



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Here is an outline and some guiding questions:

A. Introduction

- a. Define and identify the topic and establish a purpose for the literature review.

B. The Body of the Review

- a. The articles are explained thematically as they relate to the research question. Answer the following questions: What are the key findings? How do the sources collectively help you understand your topic?

C. Conclusion

- a. Summarize the significant themes that emerged in the review and conclude by formulating questions that need further research within the topic. Answer: Do these sources answer your tentative research question?

- If not, great! You are addressing a gap in the literature. Write about the gap in the literature and how you will address a gap in the literature.
- If yes, think about how you can modify your research question. Write about how you will make adjustments to your current research question. And add how. Answer: how will your research question change? Can you add a more specific element to address a gap? Write about the element.

(Remind students to edit and revise the literature review to: 1) ensure it is well-written and organized; 2) Check for errors in spelling, grammar, and punctuation; and 3) Cite your sources using the appropriate citation style, such as APA or MLA).



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Note: We will come back to the literature review, and students will add to it in the session “writing your findings” in phase 4 (take action).

SUMMARY (5 Minutes)

1. Review the importance of conducting a literature review for Youth Participatory Action Research.
2. Encourage students to begin their literature review and offer support and guidance as needed.
3. Explain the learning standard (if you haven't already) by explicitly sharing how they relate to their learning in the class:
 - a. **YPAR Learning Standard:**
 - i. Collaborators will learn the specific skills of locating and accessing relevant scholarly articles, critically analyzing and synthesizing research findings, identifying knowledge gaps, understanding different research methodologies, and effectively incorporating existing literature to inform and support their Youth Participatory Action Research projects.
 - b. **NCSS's Social Studies Standard Alignment:**
 - i. **I Culture:** Analyze and explain the ways groups, societies, and cultures address human needs and concerns (Performance Expectation "a").
 - ii. **IX: Global Connections:** Analyze the cause, consequences, and possible solutions to persistent, contemporary, and emerging global issues, such as health, security, resource allocation, economic development, and environmental quality (Performance Expectation "d").
 - iii. **VI: Power, Authority, & Governance:** Compare different political systems (their ideologies, structure, institutions, processes, and political cultures) with that of the United States, and identify representative



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political leaders from selected historical and contemporary settings (Performance Expectation "e").

4. **Take home assignment (in process journal):** Have students continue their literature review. If they didn't complete the research steps, they can continue them at home and ask them to finish writing their "mini" literature review.

Assessment:

- Ask students to share one potential source they identified during the lesson and explain why it is relevant to their research topic or question.
- Collect a list of keywords or search terms students generate and review them for relevance and appropriateness.
- Collect students' "mini" literature review for their larger written YPAR research project.