

Literature Review Sample Outline

Introduction

- I. CARS Model followed for the structure of the Introduction
- II. Example Research Question: What features of composition and rhetoric characterize graduate student writing in interdisciplinary contexts?

Literature Review

- III. First Bucket or Theme 1: Student Writing
 - a. Overview of the characteristics of the theme (commonalities, differences, nuances)
 - b. Subtheme 1 (narrow, but grouped findings related to the theme): Undergraduate Writing
 - i. Study 1 (Research Question(s), Methods/Participants, Related Findings):
“In a qualitative study examining Latino high school students, Campos (2016) found that the participants”
 - ii. Study 2 (Research Question(s), Methods/Participants, Related Findings):
“In a similar study with African-American high school students, Sung (2015) identified three key factors...Sung surveyed across three different high schools, which may partially explain differences in responses.”
 - iii. Study 3 (Research Question(s), Methods/Participants, Related Findings)
 - iv. Do these studies share commonalities? How do these studies differ?
Discuss.
 - c. Subtheme 2: Graduate Writing
 - i. Study 1 (Research Question(s), Methods/Participants, Related Findings)
 - ii. Study 2 (Research Question(s), Methods/Participants, Related Findings)
 - iii. Study 3 (Research Question(s), Methods/Participants, Related Findings)
 - iv. Do these studies share commonalities? How do these studies differ?
Discuss.
- IV. Second “Bucket” or Theme 2: Published Writing
 - a. Follow a,b,c, and so on from above
- V. Conclusion: An evaluation/critique of the existing literature
 - a. What are the contributions of this literature to the field?
 - b. Return to your thesis statement or RQ
 - c. What are the overall strengths? What are the overall weaknesses?
 - d. What might be missing?
 - e. What are some next steps for research? The next steps should explicitly address how to “correct” for strengths, weaknesses, and gaps.