



SACRAMENTO STATE
Leadership begins here.

Selecting and Defining a Research Topic

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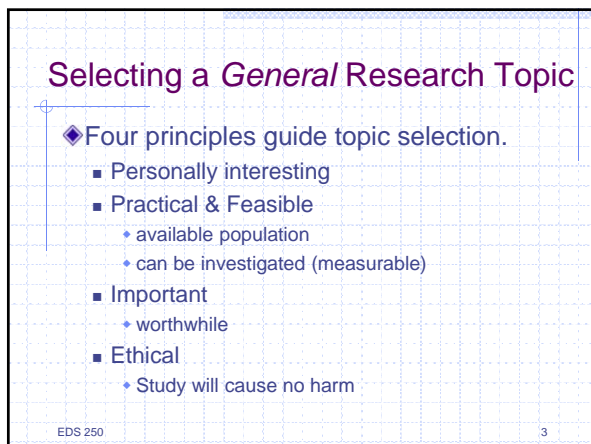
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Review

- ◆ Qualitative Research
 - Narrative
 - Ethnographic
- ◆ Quantitative Research
 - Descriptive
 - Correlational
 - Group Comparison
 - ◆ Causal Comparative (or Ex Post Facto)
 - ◆ Quasi Experiments
 - ◆ True Experiments

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Selecting a *General* Research Topic

- ◆ Four principles guide topic selection.
 - Personally interesting
 - Practical & Feasible
 - ◆ available population
 - ◆ can be investigated (measurable)
 - Important
 - ◆ worthwhile
 - Ethical
 - ◆ Study will cause no harm

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Selecting a *General* Research Topic

- ◆ Identify an area of interest (Personal).
 - ADHD brought with me to UCD
- ◆ Identify an available population and/or setting for study (Practical).
 - ADHD and elementary children (work in K-6 schools)
- ◆ Consider an issue(s) related to the area of interest that can be studied (Feasible).
 - ADHD and academic achievement (lots of measures of achievement, lots of study in this area)
- ◆ Identify a worthwhile research question (Importance).
 - Reading comprehension of ADHD children (no prior study)
- ◆ Make certain the conducting the study will not harm anyone (Ethical)
 - study would provide useful data to participants and would not harm

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Portfolio Assignment #1

- ◆ What are your research interests?
- ◆ Identify others who share your interests.
- ◆ Use the just discussed 4 guiding principles and apply them to your own areas of research interest.
 1. How is the area personally interesting?
 2. Is the area practical and feasible to study?
 3. Is the area important to study?
 4. Is it ethical to conduct study in this area?

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Sources of *Specific* Research Ideas

- ◆ Theory (e.g., Skinner or Piaget)
- ◆ Replication
- ◆ Research Discussions
 - Future research
- ◆ Textbooks
 - Literature reviews
- ◆ Course work
- ◆ Colleagues
- ◆ Listserves
- ◆ Personal/Professional experiences & observations

YOU!!!

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Selecting a Topic, Narrowing, and Stating a Research Question

1. Personal + Practical/Feasible + Important + Ethical = A good topic!
2. Narrowing the topic down is especially important for quantitative research.
 - Consult with advisors
 - Review textbooks
3. State the Research Question
 - Describe the population of interest
 - Describe variables
 - Describe relationships among them

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Purposes of the Literature Review

- ◆ Provide essential background knowledge.
 - The "textbook" for your research question.
- ◆ Identifies what has already been done.
 - Clarifies what is already known.
 - Justifies the research effort. Why is the study needed?
 - Identify prior research mistakes.
- ◆ Provides study rationale
- ◆ Facilitates interpretation of the results.

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Content of a Literature Review

- ◆ **An Example: ADHD & Reading Comprehension**
 - Provides an overview of the background or context within which the research exists.
 - ◆ Conceptualizations of ADHD
 - A Brief History of ADHD
 - The Current Conceptualization of ADHD
 - A Conceptualization of Reading Comprehension
 - Note: would be much briefer in a journal. Identifies the importance of the research questions. Justifies the research effort.
 - Provides a documented, logical rationale for hypotheses.
 - ◆ Origins of the Research Question
 - ◆ How ADHD May Effect Reading Comprehension

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Activity

- ◆ State a research question.
- ◆ Identify important background knowledge.
- ◆ How might the literature be used to justify the research effort?

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Conducting a Literature Review

- ◆ Searching for books
- ◆ Become familiar with library resources.
- ◆ Know how to use a variety of databases.
- ◆ Begin with a broad review (secondary sources).
 - Start with seminal works, textbooks, handbooks, encyclopedias, review articles, etc.
- ◆ Progressively narrow down the reference search and begin to review primary sources.
 - Avoid the temptation to include everything.
- ◆ BE SYSTEMATIC AND ORGANIZED!!!

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Computer Searches*

- ◆ Identify keywords
- ◆ Know how to read abstracts and how to locate documents.
- ◆ Identify Relevant Databases
- ◆ Commonly used Databases
 - ERIC
 - PsycINFO
 - Dissertation Abstracts
- ◆ The Internet
 - <http://www.google.com>
 - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v_CgPsGY5Mw

*Caution: The inclusion criteria in some databases is not very rigorous (if present at all). Give information from a peer reviewed journal more weight. This is not to say that "junk" does not sometimes find its way into journals. Books often include what sells.

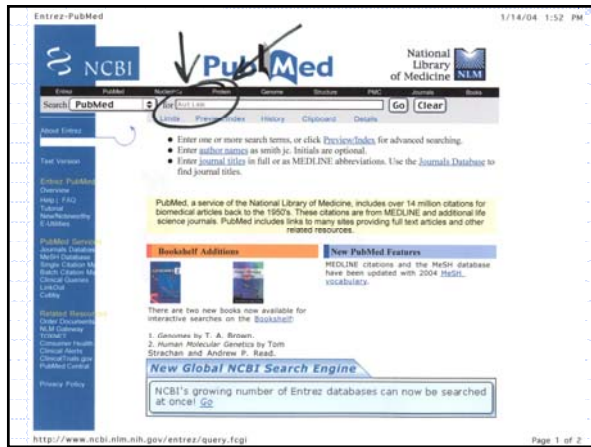
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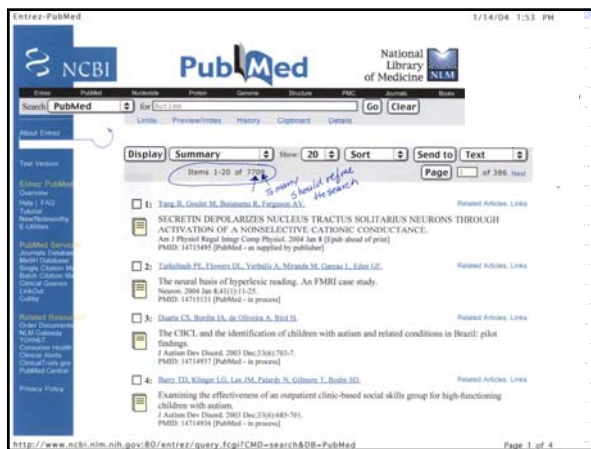
Using Databases

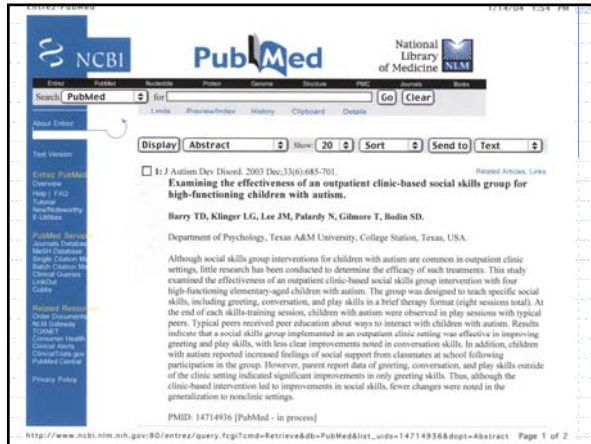
- ◆ Identify Keywords
- ◆ Identify Relevant Databases
- ◆ Commonly used Databases
 - PsycINFO
 - ERIC
- ◆ <http://library.csus.edu/>

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Organizing the Results of the Literature Review

- ◆ Locate the article
- ◆ Scan it to determine relevance
- ◆ Copy/Save the article (if relevant)
- ◆ Read the article
- ◆ Code the article
- ◆ Make notes on how it will be useful

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Writing the Literature Review

- ◆ Develop an outline
 - Appreciate it may take some time to get to this point
- ◆ Determine how the identified sources fit into the outline
- ◆ Organize parts into a meaningful whole
- ◆ Develop the reference list

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Summary

- The literature review should parallel the research development process. It begins with a broad focus (providing the reader with essential background knowledge) and concludes with a narrow focus (presents and justifies a specific research question or hypothesis).

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Next Meeting

- ◆ Preliminary Research Design
 - Read Educational Research, Ch 4 & 5
 - Portfolio Activity 2: Develop preliminary hypotheses
 - Template available:
http://www.csus.edu/indiv/b/brocks/courses/eds%20250/eds%20250/student_materials.htm

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