

# Faculty of Community Services

## Academic Support & Resource Centre

### Research Paper Tips

1. Narrow down your search topic and identify keywords
2. Clarify acceptable sources—academic articles only? News? Alternative forms of information? \*Grey literature?
3. You may be asked to describe your search process (these key words were used, these databases were used—JSTOR, TMU library, etc.) For example: “The following search terms were used: A, B, and C.”
4. Explain your rationale for choosing your articles. Were they chosen for their subject matter? For their findings? Date of publication?

*\*Grey literature is a term used to identify pieces of research published outside of formal academic settings. Grey literature can be an excellent tool for corroborating research findings, contrasting other material, and cross-examining your other articles. A great drawback of grey literature is that it can be difficult to validate and organize. Always use your best critical judgment when including grey literature. Examples of grey literature can include but are not limited to: Government reports, unpublished clinical trials, graduate theses/dissertations, blogs.*

### **Tips for analyzing each article**

Analyzing an article is about focusing on **one** piece of research or literature. Each element of the research/literature is examined.

1. Take a look at the article’s abstract, introduction, discussion (if included), and conclusion.
2. Look for the rationale behind the study—why was it conducted?
3. What methodologies were used? What theoretical framework was the study operating under?
4. What do the conclusions and implications mean for your paper/topic/field of study?
5. What are the limitations of the study? (Did the sample group only reflect one specific demographic/population? Whose voice was heard? Whose was excluded?)
6. Where does the author/researcher position themselves? Is there a clear perspective from which the author/researcher is operating?
7. How does this article reflect the purposes of your paper/topic/research interest?

### **Tips for synthesizing your articles**

Synthesising research is always about **two or more** pieces of material. To synthesize is to connect your individual articles by looking for themes, patterns, gaps, etc.

1. After analyzing your articles, what were the themes? Were there similar methodologies used? Similar findings?
2. What are the possible implications of the findings from **both** articles? For example, “based on the findings of article A and the discussion of study B, the following conclusions can be drawn about \_\_\_\_\_—\*insert population here\*, \*insert profession here\*, etc.
3. While looking for similarities, be on the lookout for gaps in knowledge/research. For example, “after analyzing studies A, B, and C, it is clear that something\* was missing”

*\*The “something” could mean representation, an alternative explanation, etc.*

### **References**

Paperpile (2023). What is grey literature? Paperpile. <https://paperpile.com/g/grey-literature/>

Purdue OWL (n.d). Writing a research paper. Purdue University.

[https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/general\\_writing/common\\_writing\\_assignments/research\\_papers/index.html](https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/general_writing/common_writing_assignments/research_papers/index.html)

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