The Power of Questions

A Guide to Teacher and Student Research

Chapter 4 Standing on the Shoulders of Those Who Came Before

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Standing on the Shoulders of Those Who Came Before

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To situate your question in a larger framework and to place it in the context of existing knowledge, you need to conduct a review of the literature. This type of review will apprise you of the kinds of studies that have already been done on your topic and what has been learned about it and other related issues.

You might approach a review of the literature for your topic from several angles. You might turn to the literature because you don't really know what you want to study but know the topic in which you are interested. By reviewing the literature that exists, you learn more about the topic, which should help you more easily develop and shape the question you want to explore.

Or, you may be clear about your question, but need more ideas about how to approach your study. Examining the literature will expose you to the different ways that others have explored this topic. For example, you may want to do a study that confirms or disproves what someone else has found, or you might want to model your study on the methods used by someone else. From reading the work of others, you might get ideas for how to organize your study, what methods to use, what questions to ask, or how to write up your findings. Or, after reading about the topic that is of interest to you, you might even find that what you want to do has not been done before! This was the case for Carol Gilligan, the well-known gender theorist, who, when reviewing the literature on moral development, was surprised to find that the only studies on this topic were done with boys. There was a gap in the literature and she decided to fill it (Gilligan, 1982). Thus began a whole new field. It is possible that the same could happen to you!

Reviewing the literature about your area of interest could even lead you to rephrase or reframe your question. Remember the story in Chapter 3 of how Michael transformed his research question? After he read about discipline, his area of interest, he realized that the questions he was focusing on were all wrong. Or think back to Juliana's revelation about her question (also in Chapter 3). After reading about assessment, she came to understand that assessment meant much more than simply test scores.

After you read about your topic, you might find that you agree or disagree with some of the authors. Some things you have read might not make sense to you. You might find that you have ideas about how a study could have been done differently. Or you might discover that there are different perspectives on the same issue. You may need to compare and contrast the studies so that you eventually can get a better sense of where you stand on the question in relation to the approach of others. Your exploration of what others have written can help you understand different perspectives about or approaches to your topic. You can use these understandings to adopt your own perspective on your question. For example, as you read about literacy learning you will see that the subject is approached from widely different perspectives—from a focus on sequentially learning discreet skills before emphasizing comprehension, to a focus on learning skills in the context of experiences with an early emphasis on meaning. As you read about these differing perspectives, you will get a clearer sense of your own views, what perspective you want to take, and how you want to approach your study. This will help you figure out where you and your study fit within the larger debates (see Exercise 4 at the end of the chapter).

It is often useful to begin a search by seeing if studies like yours have been conducted previously. For some topics there will be ample studies available. For instance, if you are exploring methodologies for teaching first graders to read, you will most likely find many studies that have been conducted on the topic. Do not worry if you find a study that looks very similar to the one you are planning to do. This is a sign of how significant this topic is to many people. The fact that it is similar can be helpful in several ways. It can help you because you can use the similar study to figure out what you want to do differently or the same in yours. Or, it can be helpful to others that you are doing a similar study in that your study could add more or even new information to the literature. In addition, the understandings you gain from exploring how the issue in which you are interested plays out in your unique context could turn out to be helpful to others who are in similar settings.

Some research topics may not have very much, or even any, literature to consult. If this is the case for you, you may need to examine several different literature areas to piece together the background information that you need. For instance, teacher researcher Jumel Carlos created a study on the role of ebonics in the editing part of the writing process with his sixth grade students. He was unable to find a study exactly like his own. Therefore, he looked across different areas of research for his literature review. He read studies about ebonics, about editing, and about the writing process with sixth grade students. After reading research from these different areas, Jumel was able to create a review of literature that was informative to his work.

As you can see, the different parts of the inquiry process are interconnected. Sometimes the steps are sequential; sometimes they are not. Generally, they interweave and intermix. You might develop your question first, then learn what others have said about it. Or you might have a general interest that you are unable to form into a question until you learn about what others have learned. In either case, the process usually involves several iterations of questioning, learning, questioning. A literature review, by exploring others' work, gives you a foundation on which to move forward.

Beginning your investigation

Where do you go to find books, periodical or newspaper articles, statistical information, or websites about your topic of interest? You can search the Internet, library resources, or consult experts in the field.

Using the Internet The Internet has search engines that will hunt for documents in the World Wide Web. Some are advertisement free, such as *www.google.com* and *www.northernlight.com.* Other search engines have commercials, such as *www.askjeeves.com, www.altavista.com, www.excite.com, www.msn.com, www.yahoo.com, www.webcrawler.com, www.hotpot.com,* and *www.refdesk.com.* There are even search engines for specific topics. Among the educational search engines are *www.askeric.org, www.eric.net,* and *www.worldwidelearn.com.* And finally, there are search engines that search several search engines at one time, such as *www.dogpile.com.*

If you are looking for statistical information, there are Internet sites devoted exclusively to this. Among them are

Statistical Abstract of the United States: *www.census.gov/state_abstract*

FirstGov: *www.firstgov.gov*

Google Uncle Sam: *www.google.com/unclesam*

Factfinder: *factfinder.census.gov*

The White House: *www.whitehouse.gov/fsbr/esbr.html*

STAT-USA Internet: *www.stat-usa.gov*

Regardless of the vehicle you are searching, use your research question or, if you don't have that yet, a statement of your investigating interest as a guide to finding information. Try to tease out two or three concepts connected to your topic. For example, let's use the question: What teaching strategies can support heterogeneous grouping in the primary grades? The key words or concepts in this sentence are

Concept 1	**Concept 2**	**Concept 3**
teaching strategies	heterogeneous grouping	primary grades

Because these concepts or key words have more than one word, when using them for a search, put parentheses around the whole phrase. Otherwise, the search engine will give you all the information it can find for each separate word. If you put an *and* in between the phrases when doing a search, the search engine will find you articles, books, or other information that simultaneously address all three concepts.

Concept 1		**Concept 2**		**Concept 3**
(teaching strategies)	and	(heterogeneous grouping)	and	(primary grades)

To increase the chances of finding information about these concepts, you can also provide the search engine with synonyms (get these from a thesaurus) of your concepts, using the word *or.*

Concept 1		**Concept 2**		**Concept 3**
(teaching strategies)	and	(heterogeneous grouping)	and	(primary grades)

or	or	or
(teaching practices)	(mixed-ability grouping)	(early childhood education)
or	or	or
(teaching methods)	(nontracked classes)	(young children's learning)

The rule to remember is that the word *or* broadens your search; the word *and* narrows your search. If you want to narrow your search further, you can use the word *not* to eliminate an unwanted combination, as in Concept 3:

Concept 3

(primary grades) or (early childhood education) not
(elementary education)

When you perform your search and look at the results, you might decide that you need to refine or modify the search further. If you have too few references, go back to the search screen and add or change descriptors or key words. If you have too much information that does not relate to your topic, you can also limit your search by defining what language, date, or publication type you want to receive (see Exercise 1 at the end of the chapter).

Make sure to save your search results. For more information about how to conduct Internet searches, consult websites that offer thorough guides, such as *http://webquest.sdsu.edu/searching/fournets.htm* or *noodletools.com*.

The Internet has grown rapidly during the last decade. In 1993 there were only something like fourteen websites. Today there are many millions! It is likely that you will find information from a variety of sources. Among the multitude of resources are sites developed by individuals, government agencies, profit and nonprofit organizations, magazines, and professional journals. Because anyone can post information on an Internet site, it is very important to evaluate critically the information that you find. Who posted it? What evidence is provided to support the information that is presented? Although critical evaluation of *anything* that you read is always important, the proliferation of information on the Internet has made it especially critical to evaluate carefully.

One way to help distinguish the kind of information offered at different sites is by the ending of the URL (the address of the site). Anything that ends in "edu" is from an educational institution—universities and/or school systems. Anything that ends in "org" is from a group or organization. An ending of "com" usually signals that it is a commercial site. "net" means a network, "gov" is a government site, and "mil" is a site sponsored by the military. These clues can help a little to let you know where the information is coming from, but you still must always be vigilant. Look for information that is presented with references. Beware of sloganeering or partisan arguments. Know that there are sites that try to fool readers by presenting themselves one way when in reality they are putting forth an opposite view. For example, in a Google search for Martin Luther King, a website turns up what, at first glance, appears to be about MLK but in reality is a site that offers a white supremacist view of MLK and his work (Gersh, 2004).

To check out the credibility of the information on a new website, first check to see who the author is. If the author is one person, check to see if that person is reputable by looking for any listed credentials. If the author is an organization, check it out in the *Encyclopedia of Associations* in your library. If an address or e-mail address is given, you might want to use it to investigate further.

Another thing you want to know about a website is the country or state that the site comes from. This will help you put the information that you find there in a context. Having a context will also help you find out how objective the website is. Knowing its purpose—to inform you, convince you of a point of view, sell you a product or service, amuse or entertain you—will help you discern whether the information you are presented with is worthy of your attention. Knowing how current the website's content is will also add to your ability to determine credibility. Check to see when the website was last updated.

To get a sense of how useful the website will be to you, make sure you find out who its intended audience is. You want a site that is appropriate for you or your students' age and reading level. And lastly, check out how the website is organized. A useful website will be well designed (i.e., organized logically and easy to navigate) (Gersh, 2004) (see Exercise 2 at the end of the chapter).

There are many Internet sites that offer criteria and processes for evaluating websites. Some even provide examples and exercises. (For a list of some sites to consult, see Appendix 2.)

Searching for books and periodicals ○ Although the Internet is dominant in our current "information age," books and periodicals still remain valuable sources of knowledge and information. However, with the increasing technological transformation of libraries, you can search for books and periodicals in much the same way as you search the Internet—by identifying key words or concepts from a statement about your research topic as described earlier. Remember always to consult your librarian to find out the details of how to do this in the library you use. Most libraries now purchase on-line databases that include hundreds of journal sources. Library searches can even be conducted in many libraries from your home computer with the use of a password or identification number, if your school or institution subscribes. Often, you can even download the full text of a journal from home.

Professional educational journals are most often your best bet in finding trustworthy materials. They generally are made up mostly of articles that are based on research and have been reviewed anonymously by an editorial board of professionals in the appropriate field. (This is different from the types of articles and ways of selecting them used by magazines. Magazines are generally pitched to a specific audience and typically contain articles selected or invited by an editor that feature reporting, essays, or opinions, as opposed to systematic research.) Although professional journals may present ideas with which you agree or disagree, you can at least be sure that what you are reading in them is based on evidence that has been reviewed by several readers and then approved by an editorial board. However, even when reading an article in a journal, you must still maintain your critical eye. What journals choose to publish are also influenced by the varying perspectives of the different readers and editorial boards. Their own educational philosophies, political leanings, and/or theoretical frameworks cannot help but affect their decisions to accept or reject potential manuscripts. Therefore, it is still important when reading any information always to ask yourself such questions as: Who is saying this? From what perspective? Do I agree or disagree?

An effective way to find interesting informational sources is to consult the reference lists in other books or articles you have read. One article will lead you to others, which can lead you to countless others.

Ask an expert ○ Interviewing an individual who is knowledgeable about your topic can be an effective way to get information. Find out the important people in your field and make appointments to talk to them. Formulate your questions in advance. Take notes but, if you can, audiotape the conversation so that you do not miss any important details.

Citing references

At the end of your literature review, you will need to provide a list of all the sources you consulted or quoted to prepare it. You need to do this for several reasons:

1. You want to know who said what and how to find this information again.
2. You want to alert others to the information you have found and they will need the reference information to find it.
3. You want to credit others for their ideas or, if you use their words (in your writing or talking), you must acknowledge them with quotes and cited information.

Although there are several reference format styles, the one generally used in the field of education is the American Psychological Association (APA) style. This style lists all references at the end of your writing, *and* credits (within the body of the writing) any author whose ideas or words you have used. How to do these references is explained in detail in Appendix 3.

Making sense of what you read

It is amazing that so many of us have gone through school, college, or even graduate school without ever being taught how to read informational material. As a result, we often have difficulty identifying the main points and really comprehending and retaining what we are reading. To ensure that we can support our students' mastery of these skills, we need to gain mastery of them ourselves. There are many things that you can do to help you read so that you will remember, understand, and be able to apply your own experiences to what you have read (see Exercise 2 at the end of the chapter).

The first thing you can do, before you start reading an article or a chapter of a book, is to look over the article/chapter to get a sense of the structure and organization of the article. This will give you an idea of where to go to find specific information in the text. To help you identify the author's main points, try underlining or highlighting what you believe are the significant sections of passages. Also, circle words that you aren't sure about. Try to find the explanation for that word or phrase in the surrounding text, and if you are still confused, look up the word in a dictionary.

Making notes in the margins of the text, on sticky notes, or on note cards about the big ideas/main points of the text can further aid your understanding of the material. If you've underlined or highlighted an important sentence, for example, rephrase this meaning for yourself in your own words in the margins or on your note cards. These notes can just consist of a phrase or maybe a word or a sentence—it depends on your preference. The important point is to be clear to yourself so you can refer to these notes later to help you understand what you read.

After you have completed all your readings, review your notes and sort them into big ideas or themes that have emerged from common issues you have identified across all the texts. Sometimes these big ideas or themes may be best categorized under your research subquestions. To identify the big ideas or themes, it helps to go back over the important points you encountered in your reading and color code them into themes. You can choose a different color highlight pen for each different theme or big idea. Then use each designated colored pen to underline or reunderline, highlight or rehighlight the words, sentences, or sections that are relevant to that color's theme. Later, when you write or discuss the literature you have read, the themes will be easier to identify and sort.

Sometimes it helps to make a chart in which you put quotes (with page numbers and other citation information) or your paraphrasing of important points (also reference the citation and page number) under the big idea the information represents. The following is an example of how such a chart might be organized:

Big idea #1	**Big idea #2**	**Big idea #3**
Quotes or information from text with full citations	Quotes or information from text with citations	Quotes or information from text with citations

You can use this same technique later when you analyze the data you collect for your own study (see Chapter 7).

Writing up your review

With your chart completed, putting your literature review together should be relatively easy because you have already organized all the information you have collected around the big themes or ideas you will be discussing. Begin your writing with an introduction that describes the big ideas or themes you have discovered in the readings. Next, devote a section for each big idea or theme, explaining and illustrating each idea with examples and quotes (if desired) from the texts you have read. Remember in these sections that you are explaining an idea and that you are *synthesizing* what you have read. (A synthesis pulls together ideas across many readings, referencing the views of the different authors to illustrate and elaborate on ideas. It is not a report that serially discusses one idea or author's work after another.)

After you have completed a section that discusses each big idea or theme, write a conclusion summarizing what you have discussed. In this section, address any differences and/or similarities you have found in the readings and discuss your own views of the issues: What have *you* learned from and what do *you* think about what these other researchers/authors have said? What is your evaluation, interpretation, or conclusion? In other words, with whom do you agree/disagree? Do you think that they have misinterpreted, ignored, underemphasized, or overemphasized particular aspects of the question? Finally, what questions are you left with after reading other peoples' work? How does this all relate to your study?

Figure 4–1 on page 51 is a guide that outlines steps to follow as you create your literature review.

Reviewing your work

After you have drafted your literature review, go over what you have written, either alone or with a colleague, to help you ensure you have done your best work. Refer to the guide in Figure 4–2 as well as to Exercise 7 at the end of the chapter for characteristics of what makes an effective and well-written literature review.

For an example of a literature review that exemplifies the qualities outlined in the figure, please refer to Appendix 4.

Searching the literature with children

The very same research skills that you use for putting together a review of the literature on your topic of interest can and should be taught to children. Although, for young children, direct inquiry with materials and experiences is generally the place to begin any investigation, it is important for them to learn how to find information from text and on-line resources as well. Everyone should have experience with this kind of research. To ensure that they do, make sure that class time is allocated during any study to browse through books and other texts. Some children will need to do this at the beginning of their studies to help clarify the focus of the research. Others may be able to wait until after their study is underway to access specific information that will extend their investigations. Children should be encouraged to use books from their class and school libraries, from the public library, as well as books they may bring from home.

In addition to books, make sure to utilize a wide range of other resources when conducting an investigation. These can include newspapers, magazines, the Internet, observations, experiments, travel, TV,

Figure 4–1. Steps to Creating Your Literature Review

1. Define the issues connected to your question that you need to read about.
2. Do a search for articles, books, websites, etc.
3. Read the information you have gathered.
    a. Highlight, underline, or make notes about the important information and ideas you have read.
    b. Create a reference list as you go, making note of all important reference information (don't forget to note the volume and issue number of periodicals as well as the pages in which the information was found).
4. Review what you marked as important and identify the big ideas or themes that cut across your reading (either in the margins, on note cards, or on sticky notes, or by color-coded highlighting).
5. Make a chart or outline of the big ideas, noting the sections in the text that fit under each big idea or theme.
6. Write up what you have learned:
    a. Write a summary introduction of the big ideas/themes.
    b. Subtitle and discuss each theme/big idea in a separate section, synthesizing and discussing the information from all your readings.
7. Write a conclusion that analyzes and draws implications about all the ideas you have discussed:
    a. How does this all connect to your study?
    b. What questions are you left with?

Figure 4–2. Literature Review Guide

Introduction

- The context/background for the literature is described.
- The big ideas or themes that you discovered in the readings are introduced in a brief overview or map so that the reader of the review can expect what to find in the rest of the review.

Big Ideas

- Each big idea or theme discovered in the readings is discussed in a separate section that has a heading.
- Each big idea is explained and illustrated with examples and quotes (if desired) from the different readings.
- Each idea discussed is relevant to your research questions.
- Different authors' writings are synthesized (not discussed in a string of separate reports) and used to illustrate different aspects of each big idea.
- Multiple and reliable data sources are referenced.
- Ideas and/or quotes from different authors are referenced.
- Correct reference format is used.

Conclusions/Implications

- The big ideas found throughout the texts are summarized.
- Differences and/or similarities in the perspective of the researchers/authors who were referenced are addressed.
- Your own views of the issues are discussed, explaining what *you* have learned from and what *you* think about what these other researchers/authors have said.
- The ideas are evaluated and interpreted. With whom do you agree/disagree? Do you think that they have misinterpreted, ignored, underemphasized, or overemphasized particular aspects of the questions?

Figure 4–2. Literature Review Guide *(Continued)*

- How the big ideas in your review relate to the study you plan to conduct is explained.
- Questions you are left with after reading other peoples' work are articulated.

Writing

- Ideas are communicated clearly and presented in a well-organized manner.
- Mechanics and conventions of print (spelling, punctuation, grammar, etc.) are used correctly.
- Text references and end references are formatted correctly.

interviews, and/or trips. Most children will need assistance selecting which resources will be best suited to answer their different research questions. One way to help them is to hold a class meeting during which you all generate a list of possible resources to consult. Let the children offer the possibilities. Don't forget to remind the children that, in addition to the resources on the list, *they* can be resources to each other. They might know of books, people, or places to visit that can help each other investigate their questions. Then review different questions the children have generated and brainstorm together what resources to consult.

Trips that could be made to pursue individual studies might include visits to an art museum for a study of an artist, to a planetarium for a study of the solar system, to famous buildings for an architectural study, to a history museum for a study of ancient Egypt, to a cultural center for an investigation of one's heritage, to a zoo to pursue a study of animals, to a botanical garden to explore the rain forest. Interviews with elders can be used to study one's family history or the history of a neighborhood. Interviews with experts can be conducted to learn about a specific issue—with an architect for a study of buildings, with a scientist for a study of bubbles, with a museum curator for a study of art (Falk & Margolin, 2005).

Using the Internet with children

When gathering informational resources, don't forget to take advantage of resources on the Internet. There are several search engines designed specifically for children. Among them are

Yahooligans: *http://yahooligans.yahoo.com/*

Ask Jeeves for Kids: *www.ajkids.com*

Kids Click!: *http://sunsite3.berkeley.edu/KidsClick!/*

These sites provide understandable, age-appropriate, and user-friendly information for children. Even with these sites, however, it is still important for children to learn how to evaluate the information they are accessing on different types of sites. The suggestions and websites that give guidance to website evaluation provided in Appendix 2 can be used to help children gain awareness of these issues.

Building knowledge, developing skills

Once resource materials are identified, children need to be taught how to use the information they have collected. First they need to learn how to access information in the materials. They need to be taught how to use tables of contents, indexes, glossaries, and bibliographies so that they can know where to go in the text to find the information they need. You can hold mini lessons with your class to instruct them about each one of these elements of nonfiction texts.

Children also need guidance on how to process and understand what they are reading. Although this skill may come naturally to some, most need explicit instruction in how to highlight, underline, take notes, and/or make outlines of the important ideas in the text. An effective way to teach these techniques is to have the class all read the same passage together and highlight or underline important information. Next, have them discuss what they understood and why they highlighted or underlined some ideas rather than others. Make sure to emphasize how to distinguish point of view from fact and how to interpret the information. You can do this same kind of activity with different passages for teaching note-taking and/or outlining skills. After completing these exercises, everyone should be better equipped to understand and retain what has been read (Falk & Margolin, 2005).

Similar activities can be done to teach how to organize/synthesize the big ideas of readings, how to analyze the information, and how to write introductions and conclusions. Each step of the way needs to be scaffolded for children with explicit directions and criteria that make the image of accomplished work crystal clear.

Working in this way with the children in your class, you can help them learn the necessary skills in the context of studies in a way that honors their views and ideas. You will be amazed at how their reading and writing skills develop when they get to use them in meaningful ways.

Exercise 1: Developing key words or concepts for conducting a search

Fill in the following chart:

Concept 1	and	**Concept 2**	and	**Concept 3**
or		or		or
or		or		or
not		not		not

Exercise 2: Questions for evaluating a website

1. Who is the author of the site? If the author is one person, what are that person's credentials? If the author is an organization, check it out in the *Encyclopedia of Associations* in your library. Is there an address or e-mail address given?
2. What country or state does this website come from?
3. How objective is the website? What is its purpose—to inform you, convince you of a point of view, sell you a product or service, amuse or entertain you?
4. How current is the website's content? Has it been updated to reflect current news and trends? Check the date of creation, the last update, and if the links are up-to-date.

5. Who is the intended audience for the site? At what age or reading level is it aimed?
6. How is the site organized? Is it organized logically? Is it well designed? Is it easy to navigate? Does it overwhelm you with ads?

Exercise 3: Making sense of what you read

Here are some tips for how to read and take notes actively so that you remember, understand, and are able to apply to your own experiences what you have read:

- Look over the article/chapter to get a sense of the structure and organization of the article.
- As you read the text, underline, highlight, or put sticky notes on significant passages that you think represent the main points of what you have read.
- Circle words that you aren't sure about and find the explanation for that word.
- Jot down the main points of the author in the margins or on note cards (using your own words) as you read.

Exercise 4: Analyzing what you read

Ask yourself the following questions about each article that you read:

- Who is saying this?
- From what perspective?
- Does it make sense?
- Do I agree or disagree?
- Did I "buy" it?
- Why or why not?
- What exactly do I agree with? What exactly do I disagree with?
- What other thoughts do I have about what I have read?

Exercise 5a: Sorting the big ideas across articles

- Color code the big ideas or themes you encountered in your reading. Choose a different color highlight pen for each different theme or big idea, then underline words, sentences, or sections that are relevant to each theme.

- After you have finished reading, sort the big ideas you have identified in the chart provided here:

Big idea #1	**Big idea #2**	**Big idea #3**

Exercise 5b: Sorting the big ideas across articles—Another way

- Read and reread your notes, or sticky notes, or highlighted sections in your articles and chapters.
- Write each of the emerging big ideas on the top of a separate index card.
- Go back through the articles and note what different authors say about the big idea on the appropriate index card.
- Take the cards and move them around in different orders. What seems to make sense?
- When you are comfortable with the order, write it down in an outline and then fill in more notes, if needed, to make your outline more complete.

Exercise 6: Questions for helping you synthesize ideas

- What are the ideas or perspectives that the authors you have read have in common? Explain with examples.
- How do the ideas or perspectives of the different authors differ? Explain with examples.

Exercise 7: Guide for reviewing a literature review

Introduction

- Did you describe the context/background for the literature that is being reviewed?
- Did you begin the review of the literature with an introduction of the big ideas or themes that you discovered in the readings?
- In other words, did you create a brief overview or map for the reader of what he/she should expect to find in the review?

Big Ideas

- Did you provide a separate section with a heading for each big idea or theme?
- In each section, did you explain the big idea and illustrate it with examples and quotes (if desired) from the different readings?
- Are each of the subsections relevant to your research questions?
- Did you synthesize different authors' writings to illustrate different aspects of each big idea (not discuss their work as separate reports)?
- Did you reference the ideas or quotes from different authors?
- Did you use multiple and reliable sources?
- Did you use the correct reference format?

Conclusions/Implications

- Did you summarize the big ideas found throughout the texts, addressing any differences and/or similarities in the perspective of the researchers/authors read?
- Did you discuss your own views of the issues, explaining what *you* have learned from and what *you* think about what these other researchers/authors have said?

- Did you present your evaluation, interpretation, or conclusion? With whom do you agree/disagree: Do you think that they have misinterpreted, ignored, underemphasized, or overemphasized particular aspects of the questions?
- Did you explain how the big ideas in your review relate to your study?
- Did you articulate any questions you are left with after reading other peoples' work?

Writing

- Are your ideas communicated clearly and presented in a well-organized manner?
- Have you used the mechanics and conventions of print (spelling, punctuation, grammar, etc.) correctly?
- Have you used the in-text reference and end reference format correctly?

Exercise 8: Steps to follow to help children make sense of what they have read

- Have the class all read the same passage.
- Ask each student to highlight or underline important information.
- Lead a discussion about what they understood and why they highlighted or underlined some ideas rather than others.
- Emphasize how to distinguish point of view from fact and how to interpret information.
- Repeat the activity with a different passage, adding note-taking and/or outlining skills, or how to organize/synthesize the big ideas of what has been read.