This course supports the assessment for RLT1. The course covers 4 competencies and represents 2 competency units.

Note: To find out who your assigned course instructor is for this course, see the "Educational Research Course Instructor Details" page.

Introduction

Overview
Research can significantly contribute to practice. More and more practitioners are being asked to gather data to learn the answers to questions that affect professional practice. This assessment will expose you to the principles of scientific inquiry that are used in the study of professional problems.

Some of the reasons why knowledge of research is important for practitioners include:

- becoming familiar with sources of data and information to help improve professional practice,
- living in a society that is driven by scientific inquiry,
- learning how to read and critically evaluate published research, and
- learning how to design and conduct research to answer questions important to improving professional practice.

Part of becoming an advanced professional is not only becoming familiar with the relevant literature, but also having the capacity to add to it.

Watch the following video introduction for this course:

Competencies
This course provides guidance to help you demonstrate the following 4 competencies:

- **Competency 508.2.1: Purpose of Literature Review**
  The graduate understands the purpose of conducting a literature review and understands its relationship to educational or healthcare research and practice.

- **Competency 508.2.2: Topic Selection**
  The graduate understands how to select appropriate research topics and research paradigms.

- **Competency 508.2.3: Resource Identification, Evaluation, and Selection**
  The graduate identifies, evaluates, and utilizes information resources in order to investigate specific research topics.

- **Competency 508.2.5: Develop a Literature Review**
  The graduate understands how to organize and develop a thorough and coherent literature review.

Teaching Dispositions Statement
Please review the Statement of Teaching Dispositions.

**Course Instructor Assistance**

As you prepare to successfully demonstrate competency in this subject, remember that course instructors stand ready to help you reach your educational goals. As subject matter experts, mentors enjoy and take pride in helping students become reflective learners, problem solvers, and critical thinkers. Course instructors are excited to hear from you and eager to work with you.

Successful students report that working with a course instructor is the key to their success. Course instructors are able to share tips on approaches, tools, and skills that can help you apply the content you're studying. They also provide guidance in assessment preparation strategies and troubleshoot areas of deficiency. Even if things don't work out on your first try, course instructors act as a support system to guide you through the revision process. You should expect to work with course instructors for the duration of your coursework, and you are encouraged to contact them as soon as you begin. Course instructors are fully committed to your success!

**Preparing for Success**

The information in this section is provided to detail the resources available for you to use as you complete this course.

Watch the following video for an introduction to this course:

- RLT1 Getting Started Video (8 min.)

**Learning Resources**

The learning resources listed in this section are required to complete the activities in this course. For many resources, WGU has provided automatic access through the course. However, you may need to manually enroll in or independently acquire other resources. Read the full instructions provided to ensure that you have access to all of your resources in a timely manner.

**Manually Enrolled Resources**

Take a moment to enroll in the learning resources listed in this section. To enroll, navigate to the “Learning Resources” tab, click the “Sections” button, and then click the “Enroll Now” button for each resource. Once your mentor approves your enrollment in the resource, you will receive an e-mail with further access instructions. Contact your mentor if you have questions.

**MyEducationLab**

The following e-text is available to you through MyEducationLab:

MySearchLab
You will be directed to the MySearchLab site in the activities of this course, which requires a Pearson login to access. The account login you receive for MyEducationLab will also grant you access to MySearchLab.

Automatically Enrolled Resources

You will be automatically enrolled at the activity level for the following learning resources. Simply click on the links provided in the activities to access the learning materials.

VitalSource E-Texts
The following textbook is available to you as an e-text within this course. You will be directly linked to the specific readings required within the activities that follow.


*Note: This e-text is available to you as part of your program tuition and fees, but you may purchase a hard copy at your own expense through a retailer of your choice. If you choose to do so, please use the ISBN listed to ensure that you receive the correct edition.*

Other Learning Resources

You will use the following learning resource for this course.

APA Formatting With Purdue OWL
Successful completion of this course requires an understanding and application of proper APA formatting. Please review the [Purdue OWL APA Formatting and Style Guide](#) for formatting guidelines and solutions for a range of citation types. If you find yourself in need of additional information on APA formatting, you are welcome to purchase a copy of the most recent edition of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* at your own expense.

Purpose of Literature Review and Topic Selection

One of the most rewarding elements of graduate school is identifying a real-world problem that you have experienced, creating solutions to it, and conducting either research or an evaluation to determine the effectiveness of the solution. Prerequisite to that, and supporting it throughout, is a thorough review of the literature, in which you review what is relevant as well as synthesize it. In this section, you will study to understand the purpose of a literature review, the three research paradigms, and different research approaches in order to identify an appropriate research topic. You will also learn characteristics of good topics so that you can select a topic that is manageable and of interest to you.

These competencies will be assessed through task 1 in the performance assessment and will set the direction for your work in this course. These are critical elements for you in eventually completing a research proposal or your capstone project and graduating!

Research Types and Literature Review
In this topic, you will read the required chapters to get familiar with research in general and the purpose of a literature review. Chapter 1 of *Educational Research: Competencies for Analysis and Applications* gives you an overview of types of research and approaches. A good understanding of types of research and approaches will help you identify an appropriate topic for research. You will also read part of chapter 2 in *The Scott Foresman Handbook for Writers* to understand the purpose and importance of conducting a literature review. It is always helpful to highlight text or take notes while reading.

This topic addresses the following competencies:

- **Competency 508.2.1: Purpose of Literature Review**
  The graduate understands the purpose of conducting a literature review and understands its relationship to educational or healthcare research and practice.

- **Competency 508.2.2 - Topic Selection**
  The graduate understands how to select appropriate research topics and research paradigms.

**Reading About Researching and Reviewing Literature**

Read the following in *Educational Research: Competencies for Analysis and Applications* in MyEducationLab:

- chapter 1 ("Introduction to Educational Research")
- chapter 2 ("Selecting and Defining a Research Topic")
- chapter 3 ("Reviewing the Literature")

Read the following chapter in *The Scott Foresman Handbook for Writers*:

- chapter 2 ("How Do You Find and Explore a Topic?")

Also review the following associated *Educational Research: Competencies for Analysis and Applications* PowerPoint presentations:

- chapter 1 ("Introduction to Educational Research")
- chapter 2 ("Selecting and Defining a Research Topic")
- chapter 3 ("Reviewing the Literature")

Use the following questions to guide your reading:

- What are the major steps involved in conducting a research study?
- How is research classified?
- What are the three different research paradigms, and what are methods that can be used with each?
- What are the limitations of the scientific method in education or nursing and healthcare (for students in nursing or healthcare degrees)?
- What is the purpose of literature review?
- What are the steps of conducting a literature review?
Commonly-Used Terms for Research Types and Literature Review

Be able to define the following commonly-used terms:

- analyze
- explain
- keywords
- classify
- prove or disprove
- technical writing
- discuss
- review of the literature
- meta-analysis
- survey
- compare and contrast
- evaluate

Use the "Notes" feature of the course to record your findings.

Selecting and Defining a Research Topic

In this section, you will start to identify a topic for your research. You will first read to understand the characteristics of good research topics and then discuss them with your mentor or capstone facilitator to identify your own topic. You will learn how to use online libraries in order to do online searches for literature. By the end of these activities, you should have identified enough sources for your literature review.

The topic you choose will lay the foundation of what you will build into a research proposal, meaning that your selection must meet the following criteria:

- It is measurable.
- It is manageable (not too broad or too narrow).
- It is relevant to your program goals.
- It is related to a problem in your specific area and is meaningful to you.

Access MySearchLab and click on the tab titled "Research Tools." Then click on the "Understanding a Research Topic" section in the left-hand navigation. Read the following section:

- "Finding a Topic"

Complete the following activity and post your answer on the message board.

Choosing a Topic

When given the topic heading "Education/Nursing and Technology," narrow down this topic as it relates to your program, and frame it as either a question or a problem statement. Use the
following example to guide you:

- Program: MS Special Education
  - Topic: Assistive technology in inclusion classes
    - Question 1: Does the use of reading software programs increase comprehension for at-risk high school students?
    - Question 2: Can the use of computer based instruction increase time on task for students diagnosed with ADD or ADHD?

In each of the topics, cluster key words that might help you locate resources to explore the topic (e.g., special education, inclusion settings, computer-aided instruction, at-risk, reading comprehension).

The topic you choose should align with your program requirements. In programs that require a capstone, you will want to select a topic that will follow you through to the end of your program. Each program’s capstone is slightly different. Some capstones require experimental or action research, others a summative or formative evaluation.

If the capstone of your program does not require a written or oral project, you will still be required to meet the competency of creating a research proposal. Please review your Degree Plan to determine the direction your project will take. It is important that you discuss this with your mentor or capstone facilitator.

**Complete: Topic Selection Performance Task, Part I**

Open the following task in TaskStream:

- RLT1: Topic Selection

For details about this performance assessment, see the "Assessment" tab in this course.

**Complete: Topic Selection Performance Task, Part II**

Create a word processing document and follow the task directions to write the essay for the following task:

- RLT1: Topic Selection

It is always helpful to break your writing into sections using the required subtopics as subheadings. It is difficult for the reader to read a very long paragraph without breaks; it is equally difficult for you to check whether you have addressed each subtopic fully. For example, for task 1 in RLT1, you can create a structure like the following:

- Topic Selection (Center this main heading in normal font type.)
- Introduction (This subheading should be flush to the left and in italics.)

Your discussion goes here.
• Instructional Problem (This subheading should be flushed to the left and in italics.) Your discussion goes here.
• Instructional Setting (This subheading should be flush to the left and in italics.) Your discussion goes here.
• Questions for Literature Review (This subheading should be flush to the left and in italics.) Your discussion goes here.
• Summary (This subheading should be flushed to the left and in italics.) Your discussion goes here.

Proofread the completed task carefully, check the APA style, and then submit it for evaluation in TaskStream. Make sure to keep a copy for yourself.

Resource Identification, Evaluation, and Selection

Your literature review will consist of several journal articles, research studies, dissertations, and other sources. In this section, you will begin to assemble sources, evaluate them, and get them ready for a literature review. This will form the base for the literature review and for those programs that require a capstone, which you will understandably augment and expand as you learn more about your topic. You will need at least 10 references to cite when you write your literature review. This may mean you will review 20 or more sources to find 10 that are scholarly and reliable.

Conducting Research Using the WGU Library Resources

As a student at an online university, it is imperative that you understand how to use an online library. The WGU Library offers access to abstracts and full-text articles from periodical journals, magazines, and newspapers through a number of databases.

This topic addresses the following competency:

• Competency 508.2.3: Resource Identification, Evaluation, and Selection
  The graduate identifies, evaluates, and utilizes information resources in order to investigate specific research topics.

Read in Your Textbooks About Conducting Research

Read the following in Educational Research: Competencies for Analysis and Applications in MyEducationLab:

• chapter 3 ("Reviewing the Literature") (pp. 82-91)

Read the following in The Scott Foresman Handbook for Writers:

• chapter 44 ("How Do You Find Information?")

Define Commonly-Used Terms for Conducting Research

Be able to define the following list of commonly used terms:

• Boolean operators
• search engine
• annotated bibliography
• LISTSERVs
• academic directories
• field research
• databases
• academic integrity

Write the definitions in your course notebook.

Finding Sources

After choosing a topic, your next challenge is learning to navigate the different databases and resources available. Often there is so much literature on a topic that the task of locating articles and studies supporting it becomes very time intensive and somewhat frustrating.

Before you access the WGU Library, one strategy you can use to reduce frustration and time spent is to learn about research sources that are easy to follow and may help you in examining the scope of your topic. Complete this activity and post your answers in the message board.

Access MySearchLab and click on the "Research Tools" tab. Click on the "EBSCO Content Select" section in the left-hand navigation to access the database and complete the following (Note: you will be required to re-enter your Pearson account info):

• Locate an article that relates to your topic.
• Cite the article using APA style and save the article in your electronic literature review folder.

Using the article title, author, or key words, go to the next database and locate either the same article or one similar to it. Repeat this process in the "EBSCO Journal List" and "AP News Feeds" databases.

On the message board, post one of the references using APA formatting and include a statement describing the degree of difficulty or ease you experienced in accessing the databases.

Using the WGU Library

The WGU Library
The WGU Library is available online to WGU students 24 hours a day.

For more information about using the WGU Library, view the following videos on The WGU Channel:

Introducing the WGU library

Note: To download this video, right-click the following link and choose "Save as...": download
Searching the WGU library

*Note: To download this video, right-click the following link and choose "Save as...": [download video].*

**Search for Sources**

To effectively search for sources, follow these steps:

1. Develop a list of keywords to start your search. If your keywords generate too many sources, modify your keywords to be more specific. If they do not result in enough sources, modify your keywords until they generate enough. It is very likely that you may not find sources that directly relate to your subject matter. You may need to search for sources that are indirectly related to your subject matter and then go from there.
2. Scan the results to see which ones are related to your topic.
3. Check to see which sources have full-text articles.
4. Obtain as many primary sources, articles in refereed journals, and scholarly and published research studies or books as possible. Avoid too many sources from the Internet.
5. After you have obtained the items that are related to your topic, modify your keywords and search again until you have enough sources.
6. As mentioned before, you will need at least 10 references to cite when you write your literature review. This may mean you will review 20 sources to find 10 that are scholarly and reliable.

*Note: If you will be completing a final capstone, you will be required to have more than 25 sources. Check with your mentor or capstone chair.*

**Read About Evaluating Sources**

Review the following chapter in *The Scott Foresman Handbook for Writers*:

- [chapter 45 (“How Do You Evaluate Sources?”)]

**CARS Evaluation**

After you have obtained enough sources, you must evaluate your sources for reliability. The CARS evaluation tool is recommended for such activities and can be found at the [CARS Checklist](#) website. You can also find examples of a CARS evaluation in the multimedia presentation "How to do RLT1".

A table should be created for the report of the results of your CARS evaluation. List the items in the left column and the criteria in the top row. Write your evaluation comments for each item under each criterion. Save what you have developed for use for task 2, which you will complete in the next subject, "Literature Review: Part I."
Example:

Table 1, Results of CARS Evaluation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Titles</th>
<th>Credibility</th>
<th>Accuracy</th>
<th>Reasonableness</th>
<th>Support</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: You can turn on the vertical lines and all the horizontal lines when you are working with the table so that you can see rows and columns. After you have finished the table, you can turn the lines off except the top, the second, and the bottom horizontal lines so that you have only horizontal lines and no vertical lines, as shown in this example. You do this in the table menu under "Properties" > "Borders and Shading."

In your CARS table, for each criterion, you will need to provide some narrative details to justify your determination that each of the sources is appropriate. The following website has a lot of details for CARS:

- "Evaluating Websites"

Although the focus of the site is for website evaluation, not for research articles, the questions in the CARS checklist might give you some hints of how to evaluate a source (Caution: Do not simply use a numerical rubric like those you can find on the site).

**Literature Review, Part I**

A literature review is a summary and interpretation of the literature on your topic. It is a comprehensive survey of publications in your field of interest. A literature review should be a survey of what others have done or have found on your topic. Sources should include scholarly articles from reputable sources, like refereed journals and publications.

A review of literature is done for several reasons, such as

- to learn more about your topic if you are not a subject matter expert,
- to find out what other researchers have learned about your topic,
- to modify or adjust your research proposal based on what has been learned from others,
- to learn more about how others have tried to solve a problem you may have identified, and
- to review current trends and issues.

In the section "Resource Identification, Evaluation, and Selection," you gathered sources and evaluated their credibility, accuracy, reasonableness, and support. In this set of activities, you are going to review them and annotate them; that is, you will create "a listing of the sources that includes a summary or description of the main points covered in an article" (Ruszkiewicz, Walker, & Pemberton, 2006, p. 92). This is the first step toward writing your literature review.
Conduct an Annotated Bibliography

Before you write up the final APA-style literature review, it is important that you annotate all the sources that you have obtained. Task 2 of RLT1 requires an annotated bibliography in addition to the CARS evaluation that you have done in the previous section. The following are some recommended steps that you can use to create an annotated bibliography. A good annotated bibliography will lay a solid foundation for your final literature review.

This topic addresses the following competency:

- **Competency 508.2.5: Develop a Literature Review**
  The graduate understands how to organize and develop a thorough and coherent literature review.

**Annotating Sources**

Read the following from *Educational Research: Competencies for Analysis and Applications* in MyEducationLab:

- chapter 3 ("Reviewing the Literature") (pp. 91-92)

Read the following section in *The Scott Foresman Handbook for Writers*:

- section 46a ("How Do You Annotate Research Materials?") of chapter 46

The following full-text articles are available in the WGU Library.


Be able to define the following commonly used terms and include the definitions in your notebook:

- Boolean operators
- Search engine
- Annotated bibliography
- Listservs
• Academic directories
• Field research
• Databases
• Academic integrity

Recommended Steps to Annotate All the Sources

1. Create a blank text document and save it.
2. Type up the full APA citation (consult the Purdue OWL APA Formatting and Style Guide) for one of your obtained sources (an article or a book) and save it. An example of a citation is as follows:
3. Read the source, take notes summarizing the content (focus), and describe the usefulness, limitations, and audience for which it is intended.
4. Summarize any conclusions or findings the author(s) may have made.
5. Describe your reaction to the item.
6. During your reading, if you find something interesting, write it down and use quotation marks at the beginning and end of the quote, indicating the page number where you got the quote. Never quote a passage without adding the quotation marks and page number.
7. Type up your notes under the citation and save the document.
8. Double check to make sure you have enough information for the source.
9. Insert a couple of blank lines and then type up the citation for the second source.
10. Repeat steps 3-9.
11. Do the same for each of the selected sources.
12. When finished, check for spelling errors or content errors. Save the document and print it out.
13. You have now created an annotated bibliography.

The process described above is only one way of doing an annotated bibliography. In chapter 3 ("Reviewing the Literature") of Educational Research: Competencies for Analysis and Applications, the process is labeled "abstracting."

You can also visit the following websites for more information about annotated bibliographies:

• How to Write Annotated Bibliographies
• The OWL at Purdue: Annotated Bibliographies
• The OWL at Purdue: Annotated Bibliography Example

Complete: Literature Review Sources Performance Task

Open the following task in TaskStream and read the task descriptions:

• RLT1: Literature Review Sources

For details about this performance assessment, see the "Assessment" tab in this course.
This task is a combination of the previous activities you have completed, including what you have written for task 1. Following the task directions, put everything in one document and submit it for evaluation.

It is always helpful to break your writing into sections using the required subtopics as subheadings. It is difficult for the reader to read a long paragraph without breaks; it is equally difficult for you to check whether you have addressed each subtopic fully. For an example of format, look at the previous activity found under the subject "Research Types and Literature Review" in this course.

**Literature Review, Part II**

In previous activities, you gathered sources and evaluated their credibility, accuracy, reasonableness, and support. You have also reviewed and annotated all of your selected sources. Now you are going to synthesize the same sources by writing up your literature review for your last task. You will do this by using the annotated bibliography you created. Before you start to write your literature review, it is important that you understand the differences between an annotated bibliography and a literature review.

**Writing Your Literature Review**

Before you write, review the difference between an annotated bibliography and a literature review. An annotated bibliography serves as the starting point for your literature review, which is a synthesis of all the selected sources you have annotated in the annotated bibliography. Your annotated bibliography is a list of items with notes under each item; your literature review should be organized into subtopics, reporting the findings you summarized from your sources on what worked, what did not, and why.

When you do that, you will be reporting what the best practices are (e.g., use of technologies or problem-based learning), what factors (e.g., gender, skill levels) have affected human behaviors (e.g., test scores, student retention), and what barriers (e.g., lack of enough instructional time, small sample size, not having enough computers) have affected the success of a program or intervention. In your review, you will cite the sources to support your statement of findings. A good example of a full literature review can be found in Educational Research: Competencies for Analysis and Applications on pages 32-36.

This topic addresses the following competency:

- **Competency 508.2.5: Develop a Literature Review**  
  The graduate understands how to organize and develop a thorough and coherent literature review.

**Conducting a Literature Review**

Review the following in Educational Research: Competencies for Analysis and Applications in MyEducationLab:

- chapter 3 ("Reviewing the Literature") (pp. 92-96)
Read the following section in *The Scott Foresman Handbook for Writers*:

- section 46b (“How Do You Summarize and Paraphrase a Source?”) of chapter 46

You can browse the following websites for more information on how to conduct a literature review:

- [How to Prepare an Annotated Bibliography](#)
- [The OWL at Purdue: Annotated Bibliographies](#)
- [Literature Reviews](#)

**Writing Your Literature Review**

Suggested Steps for Writing Your Literature Review

1. Review your annotated bibliography. You should have completed this in the previous section. Correct any content errors, spelling errors, etc.
2. Cut out each citation with your notes for the item.
3. Read the notes for each citation carefully and categorize it with a meaningful label (e.g., effective use of problem-based learning in teaching writing to fourth graders).
4. Sort and group the citations to create subtopics.
5. You will need to read and reread your notes so that you can classify all citations into two to four categories. Each category will become your subsection in the literature review. Synthesize the resources for each group of sources.
6. When you write, summarize and paraphrase your sources.
7. Include an introduction at the beginning and a summary at the end.
8. For each theme or subtopic, provide ample evidence from the sources to support your theme.

**Writing Tips**

- Be sure to use your own writing to summarize and reflect on the sources.
- Provide in-text citations that are complete and accurate according to APA format.

**Example of In-Text Citation**

Now you are going to review in-text citations and annotate them, that is, make a list "of the sources that includes a summary or description of the main points covered in an article" (Ruszkiewicz, Walker, & Pemberton, 2006, p. 92). This is the first step toward writing up your literature review.

Note: The period is placed after the closing parenthesis when the quote is not a complete sentence.

1. Quote your sources as appropriate within your writing.
2. Cite at least two sources for each paragraph. Do not cite one source per paragraph, which is the style of an annotated bibliography. A great way to synthesize sources is to cite more than one source at one time when the sources have similar findings. Here is
an example: (Ruszkiewicz, Walker, & Pemberton, 2006; Gay, Mills, & Airasian, 2009) A semicolon separates the references.

3. Provide guidance in your writing to help the reader move from one sentence to the next. Do not simply throw in a bunch of ideas that are not related to the point you want to make in a paragraph. Keep in mind that the reader may not be familiar with your literature. The art of your writing is to walk the reader step by step through your report of your findings by using transitions and linking words to connect sentences, paragraphs, and sections.

4. Be careful not to write a long paragraph without citing any sources.

5. Make sure you do not discuss your own problem or project in this review of literature.

6. Create a list of APA-styled references at the end of the review.

Reference


Complete: Literature Review Performance Task

Open the following task in TaskStream and read the task descriptions:

- RLT1: Literature Review

For details about this performance assessment, see the "Assessment" tab in this course.

This task is the last activity. It requires you to write a formal review summarizing the literature related to your topic. Within the sections of your literature review, use your sources to provide relevant support for your research problem by discussing:

- factors that influence human behaviors in your specific research topic,
- barriers to the success of a program or intervention, and
- best practices related to your research topic.

Following the task directions, put everything in one document and submit it in TaskStream for evaluation. It is always helpful to break your writing into sections using subheadings. For this task, do not use the task elements as subheadings.

For subheadings, refer back to the activity entitled "Writing Your Literature Review." Subheadings for this task should be the themes of your findings. For an example of format, look at the previous activity found under the subject "Research Types and Literature Review" in this course.

Final Steps

Congratulations on completing the activities in this course! This course has prepared you to complete the assessment associated with this course. If you have not already been directed to complete the assessment, schedule and complete your assessment now.
The WGU Library

The WGU Library
The WGU Library is available online to WGU students 24 hours a day.

For more information about using the WGU Library, view the following videos on The WGU Channel:

Introducing the WGU library

*Note: To download this video, right-click the following link and choose "Save as...": [download video].*

Searching the WGU library

*Note: To download this video, right-click the following link and choose "Save as...": [download video].*

Center for Writing Excellence: The WGU Writing Center

If you need help with any part of the writing or revision process, contact the Center for Writing Excellence (CWE). Whatever your needs—writing anxiety, grammar, general college writing concerns, or even ESL language-related writing issues—the CWE is available to help you. The CWE offers personalized individual sessions and weekly group webinars. For an appointment, please e-mail writingcenter@wgu.edu.

Feedback

WGU values your input! If you have comments, concerns, or suggestions for improvement of this course, please submit your feedback using the following form:

- Course Feedback