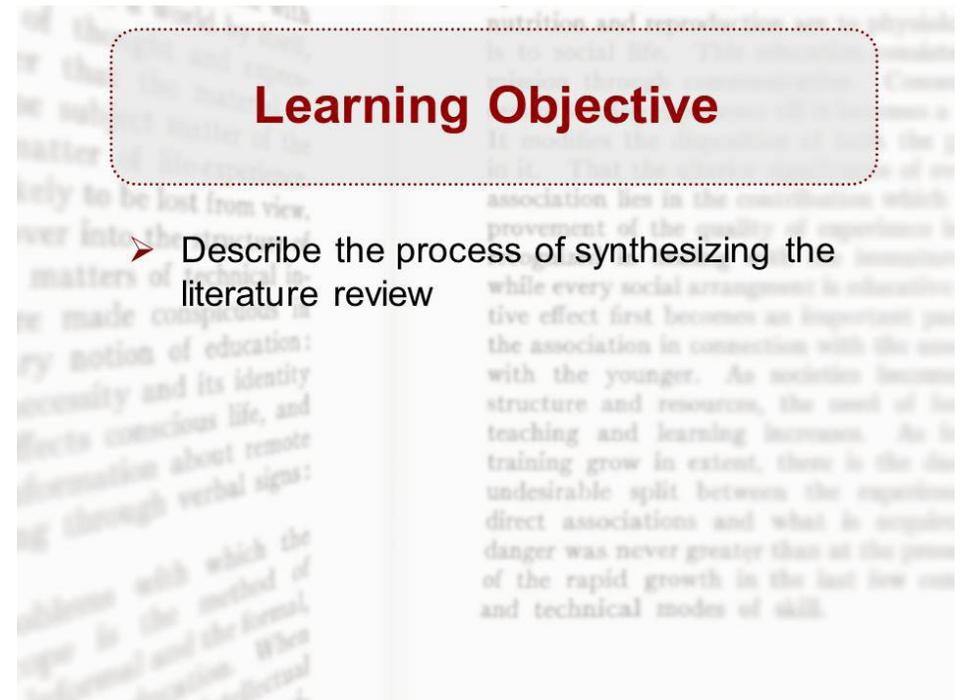


Synthesize E-Lecture  
The Literature Review: A Research Journey

At this point in your literature review journey, you might be wondering how do I actually “review the literature”? What does it mean to synthesize the literature I find?



- Describe the process of synthesizing the literature review

By the end of this e-lecture, you’ll be able to describe the process of synthesizing the literature.

## What's Involved in Synthesizing?

- Gather relevant literature
- Take notes: describe, summarize, analyze, identify key concepts
- Synthesize: compare & contrast, critically evaluate, interpret, draw conclusions

[\[library.ucsc.edu/ref/howto/literaturereview.html\]](http://library.ucsc.edu/ref/howto/literaturereview.html)

## What's Involved in Synthesizing?

- Discover relationships between sources
- Identify major themes & concepts
- Identify critical gaps & disagreements

Now we're ready to look at what it means to synthesize the literature.

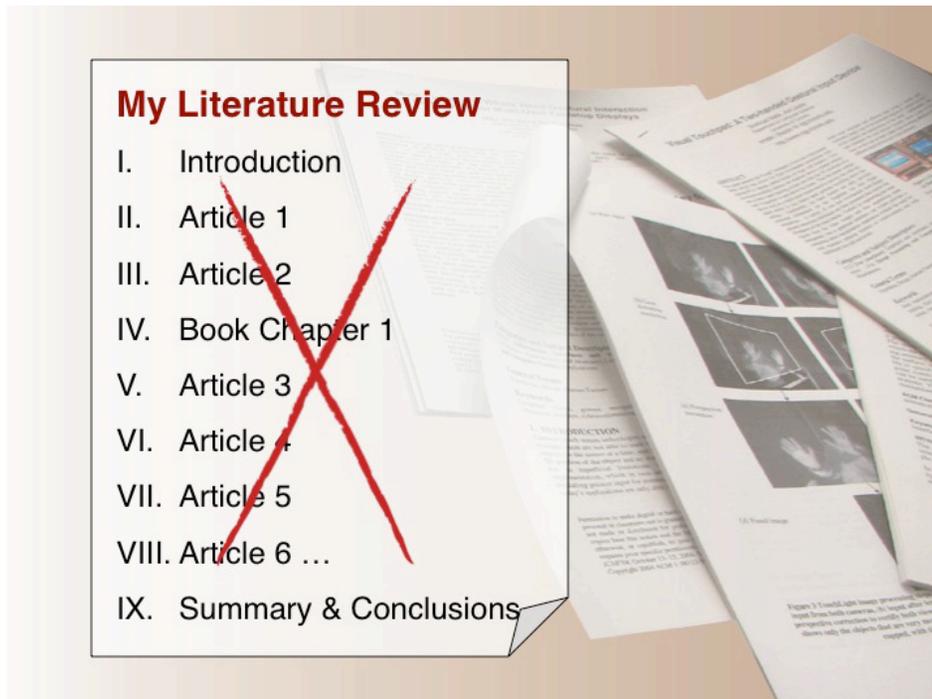
First, using what you learned about searching, gather the literature that addresses your research question.

As you read, review the literature by describing, summarizing, analyzing, and identifying key concepts in your notes.

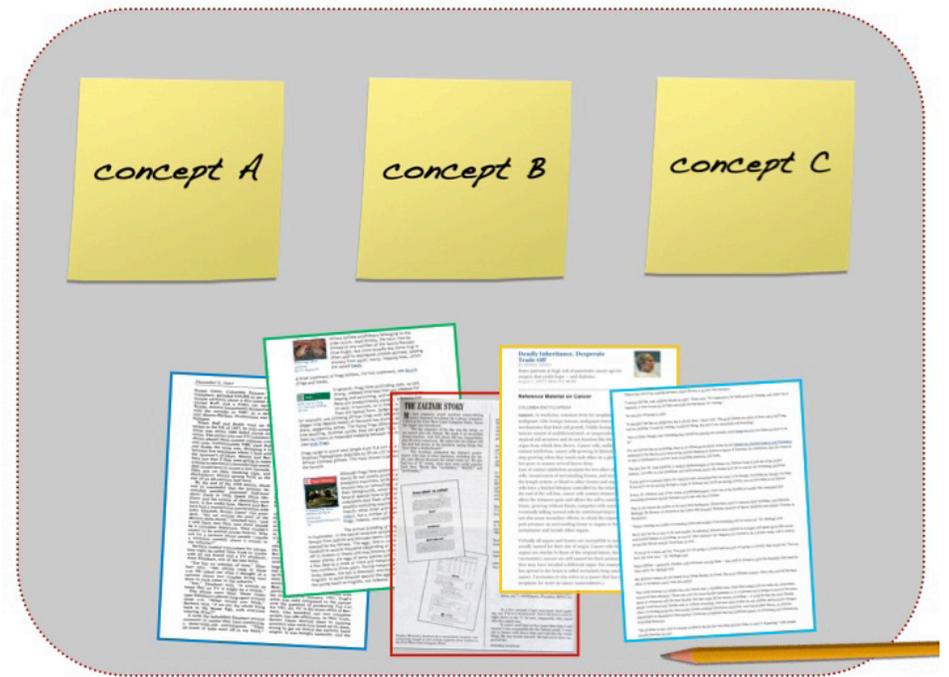
After you've reviewed, you'll be ready to synthesize—to make connections by comparing and contrasting, and to interpret and draw conclusions from what you've found in your reading.

[\[library.ucsc.edu/ref/howto/literaturereview.html\]](http://library.ucsc.edu/ref/howto/literaturereview.html)

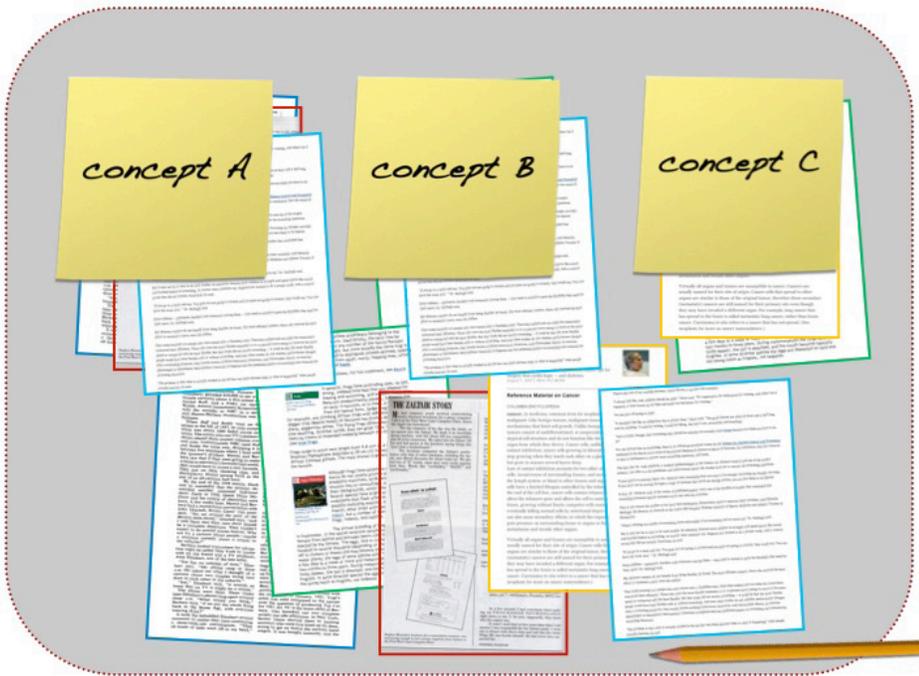
When you work with the literature it is important to look for relationships between publications. Some of the important relationships that you discover might include major themes and important concepts, as well as critical gaps and disagreements.



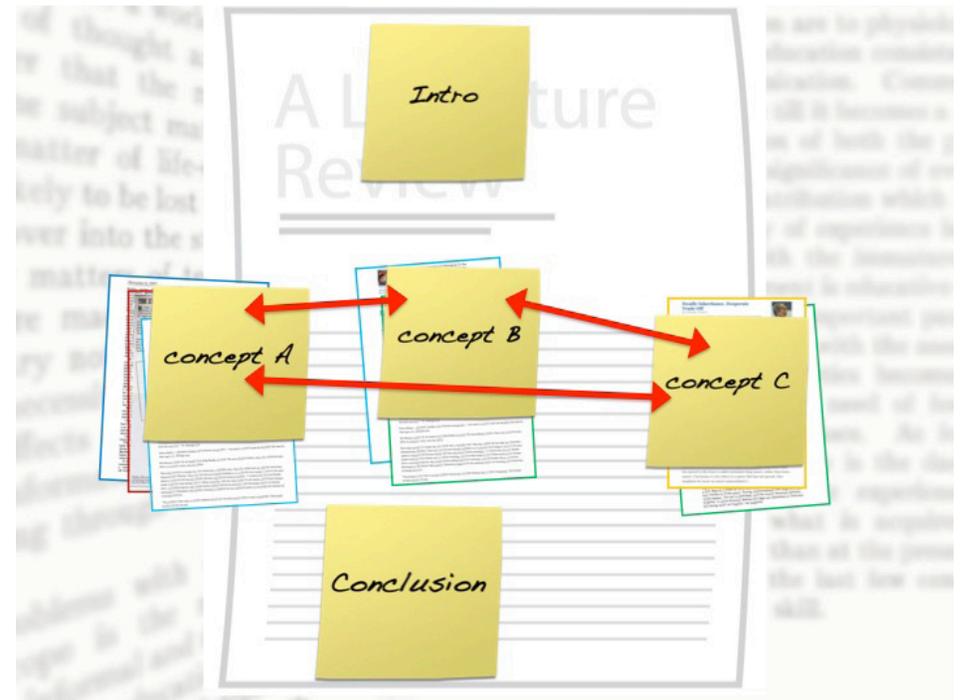
But don't fall into the trap of making your review a laundry list of summaries of the works you read. A literature review is not an annotated bibliography. Your goal is to go one step further and integrate and synthesize what you find in the literature into something new.



For example, let's say as you read you discover three major concepts that are important in the literature and relevant to your research.



You should then identify how the literature - that is, the content in individual articles, books, and other publications — relates to the concepts you discovered. Some publications may be relevant to several concepts; others may apply to only one concept. What's important is that you develop and present your own organization and understanding of the literature.



Then, when you write your literature review you will end up with a document that is organized by the concepts and relationships you found and developed based on your reading and thinking. Your review will not only cover what's been published on your topic, but most importantly, will include your own conclusions about how the literature addresses your research question.