

Social Work Literature Review (Faux and Vallem)

In case you work with a social work student who is writing a literature review...

- Make sure the student is comparing and contrasting sources
 - AKA – Students should not just be spitting out information. They should talk about where they agree and disagree.
- At least TWO different sources need to be cited per paragraph (except in the introduction and conclusion) for the review to be a comparative literature review, not a report.
- The thesis is REALLY important.
- Have the APA manual ready because you will most likely use the manual for in-text citations and references.
- The review should have at least three sentences per paragraph.
- Suggest a strong topic sentence that previews the whole paragraph. Also, though not a hard and fast rule, suggest that the topic sentence is in the writer's own words, rather than a direct quote or paraphrase (e.g. avoid having to cite in the first sentence of a paragraph). Citations should back up the assertion made in the topic sentence.
- In-text citations in each paragraph must be used when appropriate.
 - If it is a direct quote, use the page number, but if it is paraphrased, use author's name, year.
- Use a small introduction and conclusion to each subtopic (four to five subtopics in the whole paper).
- Make sure the conclusion does not include new information. It should reiterate the main points of the literature review.
- Encourage students to read the APA manual or show them how to find websites which explain APA rather than telling them everything – give them the tools to use for themselves.
- Encourage writers to avoid opinion-based and extraneous words or phrases such as “unfortunately,” “it is important,” “in order,” or “proves.”
- Encourage writers to start sentences with strong subjects, and avoid “it,” “they,” and “there,” as these opening words generally lead to vague, passive sentences. Try to use nouns instead of pronouns whenever possible for greater clarity.
- Excellent grammar and punctuation are imperative.

Compiled by WRS� students, updated in September 2010