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enhanced answer keys and reflection questions, can help students and instructors bridge the external and internal factors and support learning (p. 3). They connected the scaffolds in the study to the three dimensions of metacognition and the eventual transformation of existing ideas into new or revised ideas. The conceptual framework provides a rationale for focusing on how studies use two different scaffolds, and not on other factors that may influence a student's success (self-efficacy, use of active learning, exam format, etc.). In constructing conceptual frameworks, researchers should address needed areas of study and/or contradictions discovered in literature reviews. By attending to these areas, researchers can strengthen their arguments for the importance of a study. For instance, conceptual frameworks can address how the current study will fill gaps in the research, resolve contradictions in existing literature, or suggest a new area of study. While a literature review describes what is known and not known about the phenomenon, the conceptual framework leverages these gaps in describing the current study (Maxwell, 2012). In the example of Sabel et al. (2017), the authors indicated there was a gap in the literature regarding how scaffolds engage students in metacognition to promote learning in large classes. Their study helps fill that gap by describing how scaffolds can support students in the three dimensions of metacognition: intelligibility, plausibility, and wide applicability. In another example, Lane (2016) integrated research from science identity, the ethic of care, the sense of belonging, and an expertise model of student success to form a conceptual framework that addressed the critiques of other frameworks. In a more recent example, Shegila et al. (2021) illustrated how a conceptual framework influences the methodological choices and inferences in studies by educational researchers. Sometimes researchers draw upon the conceptual frameworks of other researchers. When a researchers conceptual framework closely aligns with an existing framework, the discussion may be brief. For example, Ghee et al. (2016) referred to portions of SCT as their conceptual framework to explain the significance of their work on students self-efficacy and career interests. Because the authors conceptualization of this phenomenon aligned with a previously described framework, they briefly mentioned the conceptual framework and provided additional citations that provided more detail for the readers. Within both the BER and the broader DBER communities, conceptual frameworks have been used to describe different constructs. For example, some researchers have used the term conceptual framework to describe students conceptual understandings of a biological phenomenon. This is distinct from a researchers conceptual framework of the educational phenomenon under investigation, which may also need to be explicitly described in the article. Other studies have presented a research logic model or flowchart of the research design as a conceptual framework. These constructions can be quite valuable in helping readers understand the data-collection and analysis process. However, a model depicting the study design does not serve the same role as a conceptual framework. Researchers need to avoid conflating these constructs by differentiating the researchers conceptual framework that guides the study from the research design, when applicable. Explicitly describing conceptual frameworks is essential in depicting the focus of the study. We have found that being explicit in a conceptual framework means using accepted terminology, referencing prior work, and clearly noting connections between terms. This description can also highlight gaps in the literature or suggest potential contributions to the field of study. A well-elucidated conceptual framework can suggest additional studies that may be warranted. This can also spur other researchers to consider how they would approach the examination of a phenomenon and could result in a revised conceptual framework. It can be challenging to create conceptual frameworks, but they are important. Below are two resources that could be helpful in constructing and presenting conceptual frameworks in educational research: Maxwell, J. A. (2012). Qualitative research design: An interactive approach (3rd ed.). Los Angeles, CA: Sage. Chapter 3 in this book describes how to construct conceptual frameworks. Ravitch, S. M., & Riggan, M. (2016). Reason & rigor: How conceptual frameworks guide research. Los Angeles, CA: Sage. This book explains how conceptual frameworks guide the research questions, data collection, data analyses, and interpretation of results. Literature reviews, theoretical frameworks, and conceptual frameworks are all important in DBER and BER. Robust literature reviews reinforce the importance of a study. Theoretical frameworks connect the study to the base of knowledge in educational theory and specify the researchers assumptions. Conceptual frameworks allow researchers to explicitly describe their conceptualization of the relationships among the components of the phenomenon under study. Table 1 provides a general overview of these components in order to assist biology education researchers in thinking about these elements. It is important to emphasize that these different elements are intertwined. When these elements are aligned and complement one another, the study is coherent, and the study findings contribute to knowledge in the field. When literature reviews, theoretical frameworks, and conceptual frameworks are disconnected from one another, the study suffers. The point of the study is lost, suggested findings are unsupported, or important conclusions are invisible to the researcher. In addition, this misalignment may be costly in terms of time and money. Conducting a literature review, selecting a theoretical framework, and building a conceptual framework are some of the most difficult elements of a research study. It takes time to understand the relevant research, identify a theoretical framework that provides important insights into the study, and formulate a conceptual framework that organizes the finding. In the research process, there is often a constant back and forth among these elements as the study evolves. With an ongoing refinement of the review of literature, clarification of the theoretical framework, and articulation of a conceptual framework, a sound study can emerge that makes a contribution to the field. This is the goal of BER and education research. Allee, V. (2000). Knowledge networks and communities of learning. OD Practitioner, 32(4), 413. [Google Scholar] Allen, M. (2017). The Sage encyclopedia of communication research methods (Vols. 14). Los Angeles, CA: Sage. 10.4135/9781483381411 [DOI] [Google Scholar] American Association for the Advancement of Science. (2011). Vision and change in undergraduate biology education: A call to action. Washington, DC. [Google Scholar] Anfara, V. A., Mertz, N. T. (2014). Setting the stage. In Anfara, V. A., Mertz, N. T. (eds.), Theoretical frameworks in qualitative research (pp. 122). Sage. [Google Scholar] Barnes, M. E., Brownell, S. E. (2016). 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Articles from CBE Life Sciences Education are provided here courtesy of American Society for Cell Biology A literature review is a comprehensive, critical summary of previous research on a specific topic. It helps to understand the current state of knowledge, identify gaps, and position your own research in the context of existing studies. Its a crucial part of academic work, especially in research projects, theses, and dissertations. Understand the current state of knowledge on a specific topic. Identify gaps in the existing literature or areas where further research is needed. Develop a theoretical framework or support a hypothesis for your own research. Provide a context for your research by grounding it in the existing body of work. Avoid duplication of past research by ensuring your work builds on previous studies. Clearly identify the subject or question you want to explore. This helps narrow down the scope of your review and ensures that you focus on relevant sources. Conduct a broad search to gather sources, such as books, peer-reviewed journal articles, conference papers, dissertations, and other credible materials. Search engines like Google Scholar, databases like JSTOR, PubMed, Scopus, and Web of Science are common academic sources. Many universities offer access to subscription-based databases as well. Once you have identified potential sources, gather them by accessing digital versions through databases, university subscriptions, or public repositories. You may also access physical copies from libraries. Critically evaluate the credibility, relevance, and quality of the sources you find. Look for peer-reviewed articles, books by experts in the field, and high-impact journals. Assess the methodology used in research articles to ensure they are appropriate and robust. Take note of the publication date/make sure to ensure you are using up-to-date information. Organize the literature by themes, trends, methodologies, or findings, and identify patterns, contradictions, or gaps. Compare and contrast different studies, noting their strengths, weaknesses, and contributions to the field. Present your findings clearly and concisely. Discuss the strengths and limitations of the studies youve reviewed and highlight the areas where further research is needed. Use a proper citation style (APA, MLA, Chicago, etc.) as per the requirements of your project. As new literature is continuously published, keep your review up-to-date by incorporating the latest studies relevant to your topic. Develop a list of specific keywords or phrases that relate directly to your topic. Use Boolean operators (AND, OR, NOT) to narrow or expand your search. Use databases such as Google Scholar (for scholarly articles), PubMed (for health sciences), JSTOR (for humanities and social sciences), ERIC (for education), Scopus, and Web of Science for a more comprehensive collection of peer-reviewed sources. Use filters to narrow your search by publication date, type of publication (e.g., peer-reviewed journals), or subject area. Read abstracts and summaries to determine whether an article is relevant before downloading or accessing the full text. Accessing Full Text: If access is restricted, use academic libraries, interlibrary loan systems, or consider contacting the author directly. Many researchers share PDFs of their papers upon request. Search for open-access journals or repositories like arXiv, PubMed Central, or Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ), which provide free access to full-text articles. After reviewing key articles, check their reference lists for other relevant works that may have been cited but missed in your search. Title Page (if required) If youre submitting a report or dissertation, include a title page that contains the title of your literature review, your name, the course, the instructors name, and the date. A concise summary of the review, typically 150-250 words. Include the purpose of the literature review, the scope, and the key findings or conclusions. Context and Importance: Introduce the topic you are reviewing, why it is significant, and the scope of your review (i.e., the time period, geographical focus, or research question). Purpose: Clearly state the purpose of the literature review (e.g., to synthesize existing research, identify gaps, inform your own research, etc.). Research Questions/Objective: If applicable, introduce your central research question or hypothesis. Search Strategy: Describe the databases, keywords, and search criteria you used to gather the literature (e.g., peer-reviewed articles, books, or grey literature). Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria: Specify any criteria you applied to select or exclude sources (e.g., publication date, language, subject relevance). Review Method: If using systematic or scoping reviews, mention the method for synthesizing or categorizing literature. Thematic or Theoretical Synthesis (Main Body) This is the core of the literature review, where you summarize, analyze, and synthesize the literature. Possible structures for this section: Thematic Structure: Organize your review by major themes or topics found in the literature. Example: If reviewing literature on climate change, you might have sections on the science of climate change, its impacts on ecosystems, and human responses to it. Chronological Structure: Present studies in the order they were published to show the progression of research over time. Example: Early studies focused on the theory of climate change, while later studies look into its economic consequences. Methodological Structure: Organize the review based on the methods used in the research (qualitative, quantitative, mixed-methods, etc.). Example: One section could focus on qualitative research studies, another on quantitative studies, and so on. Theoretical Framework: If applicable, group literature by theories or conceptual frameworks used by the authors. For instance, if reviewing research on motivation, you could discuss literature through the lens of Maslows hierarchy of needs or Self-Determination Theory. Key Findings: For each theme or section, highlight the major findings, common points, contradictions, and the implications of the research. Summary: Recap the key findings of the literature review. Research Gaps: Highlight areas where further research is needed or areas that have not been fully explored. Implications: Discuss the implications of the findings for your own research or for the broader field. Theoretical or Practical Contributions: If relevant, mention how the review contributes to theory or practice. List all the sources you cited in your review. Use the appropriate citation style (e.g., APA, MLA, Chicago) as required by your institution or publication. A theoretical framework provides a foundation for your research by drawing on theories, concepts, and existing knowledge to guide your study. It sets the context and helps to justify your research questions, methodology, and the interpretation of your findings. Establishes a lens through which you analyze your research topic. Explains the relationships between variables or concepts in your research. Provides a solid base to develop hypotheses or predictions. ContentKey Concepts and Theories: Describe the theories and concepts relevant to your research topic. These could be established in prior studies or emerging theoretical perspectives. Variables or Constructs: Identify the variables or constructs that are central to your study, explaining their relationship based on theoretical perspectives. Hypotheses or Propositions: If your study is hypothesis-driven, present any theoretical predictions. Introduction: Briefly introduce the theoretical perspectives that are relevant to your research. Review of Key Theories: Discuss relevant theories in detail, explaining their foundational ideas and how they relate to your research topic. Research Questions or Hypotheses: Based on the theories discussed, outline your research questions or hypotheses. Application to Your Study: Explain how the theoretical framework applies to your research problem and how it guides your methodology and analysis. Visual Representation (optional): Sometimes, researchers include diagrams or models that depict the relationships between different concepts or variables. Deductive reasoning starts with a general theory or hypothesis and then tests it through specific observations or empirical data. Begin with a theory or established knowledge. Develop hypotheses based on this theory. Test the hypotheses with data. Draw conclusions about the validity of the theory based on the results. Inductive reasoning starts with observations or data and then moves toward developing a broader theory or generalization. Begin with specific observations or data. Identify patterns or trends in the data. Develop a theory or general principle based on these observations. In conclusion, the literature review provides a comprehensive synthesis of existing research, highlighting key findings, trends, and gaps in the field. It establishes the current state of knowledge, identifies areas for further exploration, and sets the stage for new contributions to the topic. The theoretical framework, in turn, grounds the study in established theories and concepts, offering a structured lens through which to analyze the research problem. By linking the literature review and the theoretical framework, the study gains clarity on the direction of the research, how existing theories inform the study's approach, and how the study will contribute to addressing identified gaps in the literature. Use academic databases such as Google Scholar, PubMed, JSTOR, or Scopus to find peer-reviewed articles and books. You should also consider using university library resources, citation databases, and open-access journals. Be sure to focus on sources that are peer-reviewed and published by credible scholars or institutions. Deductive reasoning starts with a general theory or hypothesis and tests it through specific observations (typically associated with quantitative research). Inductive reasoning starts with observations or data and builds broader generalizations or theories (common in qualitative research). A strong literature review is comprehensive, well-organized, and critical, showing an in-depth understanding of the topic and identifying clear gaps. A strong theoretical framework is well-justified, clear, and directly linked to the research problem, guiding your study effectively. Peer feedback, clear logical progression, and alignment with research objectives can indicate strength

Theoretical review. What is theoretical framework. Theoretical framework and methodology. What is methodological review in research. What's theoretical review in research. What's theoretical review in research. What is theoretical review in research.