Identifying Themes in Academic Literature

CARLI Instruction Showcase 2016

Objectives:

- Students will be able to identify topics/themes in psychological literature
- Students will be able to organize those themes as they would for a literature review

Audience:

- Sophomore-Graduate Student, can be adapted to any course in sciences/social sciences

Materials:

- A handout of six article abstracts relevant to class topic
- A YouTube video on synthesizing literature

Activities:

(7-10 minutes) Introduce synthesizing literature

- [Prior to this activity, reviewed sample assignment, discussing expectations for the literature review, and the role and purpose of the literature for their proposal]
- Remind students of the literature review they are expected to write, and what it should look like
- Introduce different ways of organizing a literature review (e.g., chronologically, thematically)
- Show video "Synthesizing Literature" by Nathalie Sheridan via YouTube [https://youtu.be/Gm8mZ-ClNuw]
- Transition to activity with something like "How do you figure out the themes for your literature review? They come from the literature!"

(Think-Pair-Share)

(7-10 minutes) Read article abstracts

- Pair students together
- Hand out article abstracts
- Instruct students to read the abstracts looking for topics that appear more than once

(5 minutes) Discuss themes found in the abstracts

- Students should share what themes they identified in the abstracts with their partner and discuss

(5-7 minutes) Share themes found in the abstracts

- Students share what themes they identified in the abstracts
- Discussion: [Topics to be covered (if students don't generate, librarian provides instruction)]
    - How those articles and themes could be written out in a literature review.
    - Organization of themes and how a literature review needs to logically "flow"

Assessment:

- The librarian walks around during TPS activity, listening and commenting as appropriate
- Groups share the themes they found and which articles would be introduced under each theme.

ACRL Information Literacy Framework:

- Scholarship as Conversation: Knowledge Practice 1
- Scholarship as Conversation: Knowledge Practice 6

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Identifying Themes in Academic Literature (cont'd)

Sample Academic Abstracts

1. **Lin, L., Lee, J., & Robertson, T. (2011). Reading while watching video: The effect of video content on reading comprehension and media multitasking ability. *Journal Of Educational Computing Research*, *45*(2), 183-201**

   Abstract: Media multitasking, or engaging in multiple media and tasks simultaneously, is becoming an increasingly popular phenomenon with the development and engagement in social media. This study examines to what extent video content affects students' reading comprehension in media multitasking environments. One hundred and thirty university students were given reading comprehension tests in two multitasking environments: the background environment (a video playing in the background that could be ignored) and the test environment (a video playing at the same time that the students knew they would be tested). Two different videos were used: one, a situational comedy, the other, an in-depth news report. Results indicate that the two videos affected reading comprehension differently, with the news report interfering more severely than the comedy, but also more easily ignored when necessary. Implications for social media and learning are discussed.

2. **Subrahmanyam, K., Michikyan, M., Clemmons, C., Carrillo, R., Uhls, Y. T., & Greenfield, P. M. (2013). Learning from paper, learning from screens: Impact of screen reading and multitasking conditions on reading and writing among college students. *International Journal Of Cyber Behavior, Psychology And Learning*, *3*(4), 1-27.**

   Abstract: Electronic screens on laptop and tablet computers are being used for reading text, often while multitasking. Two experimental studies with college students explored the effect of medium and opportunities to multitask on reading (Study 1) and report writing (Study 2). In study 1, participants (N = 120) read an easy and difficult passage on paper, a laptop, or tablet, while either multitasking or not multitasking. Neither multitasking nor medium impacted reading comprehension, but those who multitasked took longer to read both passages, indicating loss of efficiency with multitasking. In Study 2, participants (N = 67) were asked to synthesize source material in multiple texts to write a one-page evidence-based report. Participants read the source texts either on (1) paper, (2) computer screen without Internet or printer access, or (3) computer screen with Internet and printer access (called the "real-world" condition). There were no differences in report quality or efficiency between those whose source materials were paper or computer. However, global report quality was significantly better when participants read source texts on a computer screen without Internet or printer access, compared with when they had Internet and printer access. Active use of paper for note-taking greatly reduced the negative impact of Internet and printer access in the real-world condition. Although participants expressed a preference for accessing information on paper, reading the texts on paper did not make a significant difference in report quality, compared with either of the two computer conditions. Implications for formal and informal learning are discussed.

Sample Academic Abstracts with Themes

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   Abstract: Media multitasking, or engaging in multiple media and tasks simultaneously, is becoming an increasingly popular phenomenon with the development and engagement in social media. This study examines to what extent video content affects students' reading comprehension in media multitasking environments. One hundred and thirty university students were given reading comprehension tests in two multitasking environments: the background environment (a video playing in the background that could be ignored) and the test environment (a video playing at the same time that the students knew they would be tested). Two different videos were used: one, a situational comedy, the other, an in-depth news report. Results indicate that the two videos affected reading comprehension differently, with the news report interfering more severely than the comedy, but also more easily ignored when necessary. Implications for social media and learning are discussed. **[Impact on reading comprehension]**

2. **Subrahmanyam, K., Michikyan, M., Clemmons, C., Carrillo, R., Uhls, Y. T., & Greenfield, P. M. (2013). Learning from paper, learning from screens: Impact of screen reading and multitasking conditions on reading and writing among college students. *International Journal Of Cyber Behavior, Psychology And Learning*, *3*(4), 1-27.**

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