



EVALUATING GENERAL RESEARCH

How does one find the “best” research for graduate level inquiry? Here are some ideas:

First, identify the scholarly and professional journals in your field. You can easily find these through going to a specialized database and finding these names. Articles there are typically written by researchers and/or practitioners and have been reviewed for their accuracy. The authors are usually prominent or have specializations that enhance their scholarship or credibility as a writer. Finally, the audience of these journals is also specialized. So, what do you find in these journals?

- ◆ Professional Discourse Community
- ◆ Current & Prominent Topics of Research
- ◆ Shared language
- ◆ Shared ideology/philosophy on the topic
- ◆ Shared format and conventions of writing

While peer review isn’t always necessary, “peer review” is a good indicator of quality scholarship. “Peer Review” pertains to how the article is read and accepted. A number of recognized researchers in the field will evaluate a manuscript and recommend its publication, revision, or rejection. Articles accepted for publication through a peer review process implicitly meet the journal and discipline's expected standards of expertise.

Some journals don’t have a peer review process, and articles are selected by an editor or editorial board. Here, manuscript quality and



depth of inquiry then depends on the journal's purpose and its standards, which you may find very easily in the front pages of the journal.

Next, research the author and examine other writings/research. Usually, you're able to identify the author's research focus through other writing or conference papers. You might also be able to find other qualifying information such as place of employment. Going to that website, you might find out other research interests of the community of scholars/researchers.

Finally, find the article and read its abstract. What information does the author provide? Look below and identify the relevance of the key terms. Does the topic and angle interest you? Does it relate to your research questions? If so, then go to the full text and begin reading. Remember, you don't have to stay with any article that you find in your research. You make the final decision of what is valuable to your research and what isn't.

Researching Tip:

Did you know that the References/Bibliography pages are ready resources in locating other authors/researchers in the field? Using these reference pages is a simple shortcut but beware that these references will most probably concur with the author and not provide contrary data or ideas.

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