Annotating Model Student Papers

Writing Across the Curriculum S21 Learning Community

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GLOA 605: Interdisciplinary Research Methods

Literature Review Assignment

Writing an Effective Literature Review

When writing the literature review for the research proposal, we are aiming to demonstrate our familiarity with previous research in our three selected areas of scholarly research and indicate how our project will contribute to those areas of research. To do this, we will divide the literature review into three sections, each dedicated to outlining the primary debates in one of the three areas of scholarly research we have identified. Below is an example from a well-constructed student proposal that focused on refugee camps in Lebanon. Rather than summarizing individual articles or books, you will see that the author of the proposal imposes an order on the selected body of texts.

As you read through this example, pay attention to the following *writing moves* that the author makes:

1. The section is organized as an inverted triangle. The author highlights broader categories of research first and then indicates more specific subfields of research.
2. Rather than providing a direct quotation from an individual source, the author organizes multiple sources into conversations around particular topics.
3. The author indicates how their project contributes to the area of research.

I've highlighted examples of these writing moves in the first two sections. See if you can identify these moves in the third section.

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Excerpt from Sample Literature Review:

Lebanon and Syria's relationship has been a center of discussion for policy makers, politicians, and scholars. Historians and anthropologists trace a dual relationship of conflict and cooperation between Lebanon and Syria since the Ottoman period (Davie 1993; Kasmieh 1993; Kawtharani 1993; Rafeq 1993). The economic and political divergence between Syria and Lebanon in modern history has created tensions that caught the attention of anthropologists (Gunderson 1995). Another particularly fruitful area of studies tackles the agreements and treaties signed in favor of a Syrian-Lebanese harmony (Nasrallah 1993; Saadeh 1993), that resulted in political and military control of Lebanon by the Syrian regime (Berti and Lee 2014). In the past decade, anthropologists have most explained a dichotomous relationship between Lebanese politicians and the Syrian regime (Mencutek 2017; Mourad 2017; Thibos 2014).

As part of the Lebanese-Syrian studies, researchers have been interested in exploring the Syrian refugee crisis in Lebanon. Anthropologists began to explore the dynamics between Lebanese people and Syrian refugees by examining the policies the Lebanese government adopted in response to the Syrian refugee crisis (Beaujouan and Rasheed 2019), and the shift from inaction to restriction policies (Mencutek 2017; Mourad, 2017). A new generation of research has also focused on the repatriation of Syrian refugees from Lebanon and the rise of tensions between Lebanese political parties, Syrians, and local population (Fakhoury and Ozkul 2019, Içduygu and Nimer 2020).

Microsoft Office User
1.Here we see that the student has provided a broad characterization of the Lebanon-Syrian relationship based on scholarly research.

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2.Notice that the author does not use direct quotations from individual articles, but rather groups three sources into one conversation (around the "dichotomous relationship between Lebanese politicians and the Syrian regime").

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1.Here the author moves down the inverted triangle by indicating that within this Lebanon-Syrian relationship the project is specifically focused on the Syrian refugee crisis in Lebanon.

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1.Here the author marks an increasingly more specific subfield within studies on the Syrian refugee crisis in Lebanon by indicating that there is "a new generation of research" that looks at the repatriation of Syrian refugees and the rise of tensions between refugees and host populations.

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2.Notice that the author has again grouped two sources into one conversation.

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3.The phrase "less work in anthropology has focused on" indicates where more research is needed. This provides an opening for indicating how the project will contribute to the scholarly conversation.

Questions?

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