Literature Reviews – Clinic Projects

Document Purpose:
This document offers guidance to Rowan students as they pursue additional information relevant to their clinic projects. It is a resource to help produce quality literature reviews. These reviews should form a basis for in-depth understanding of the technical problem they face.

• Here are action words that clarify what a literature review show involve:
  a. “critically evaluate” – Act like a curious journalist, assessing the claims made as well as the reasoning and evidence behind the claims. This site may be useful:
     • http://www.utoronto.ca/writing/critrdg.html
  b. “investigate” – Explore. Don’t simply scan the internet, use all your available resources: our textbook, magazines, the Rowan Library. A simple citation from Wiki is not acceptable. I would like to see primary sources cited.
  c. “consider” – Be open minded to all design options at the start. As you go through your research temporarily suspend judgment and then dig deeper, building understanding and awareness, eventually forming a well-reasoned opinion.
  d. “formulate a position” - Take a position on the subject at hand and back it up.
  e. “site X number references” – Set a quota and go after it. Use these links as a guide:
     • http://www.library.cornell.edu/olinuris/ref/research/skill26.htm
     • http://www.strategian.com/evaluate.html
     • http://library.ucsc.edu/ref/howto/literaturereview.html

• In terms of your finished product – I expect you to try to write well.
  a. Writing well isn’t easy; hard writing makes for easy reading (W. Zinsser). If you do not revise your initial draft a few times, your writing will likely be poor. And remember longer literature reviews are not better reviews. Address each source as it relate your research problem, nothing more nothing less.
  b. Follow this advice: http://www.notrain-nogain.org/Train/Res/Write/wtight.asp The most important point is point #2: “Challenge every word. Write fast, edit slow. During the final edit, challenge each word. If it's not necessary, throw it out. Such as not and out in that sentence ….” If it's unnecessary, toss it.”
  c. Use drawings and pictures to tell your story. Don’t simply cut and paste from the web and expect the reader to “get it.” Label your drawings and refer to them continually throughout the literature review.