



"It's My First Real Lit Review": Mentoring Undergraduate Students From Reading to Writing

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Background

According to the Council of Undergraduate Research (2016), undergraduate research:

- enhances student learning through mentoring relationships with faculty;
- increases retention;
- increases enrollment in graduate education and provides effective career preparation;
- develops critical thinking, creativity, problem solving and intellectual independence;
- develops an understanding of research methodology; and
- promotes an innovation-oriented culture.

Lessons Learned

How do we mentor students whose disciplines are different from our own?

Having a variety of mentors helps. In our group, our principal investigator has a background in psychology and trauma response. But our group contains students from across the social sciences and humanities, including history, museum studies, psychology, and education.

To provide discipline-specific mentorship, we use graduate student and practitioner mentors. Practitioners include professionals with backgrounds in trauma, developmental psychology, art history, architecture, art therapy and art education, special education, social studies education, history, statistics, and library and information science. These mentors apply their practical skills to help students define research topics, find prior research, gather, interpret, and analyse data, then to synthesize that data into a presentable, publishable final product.

Where do we start?

Just like most research, our students' projects are based on prior work in their disciplines. Mentors guide students through building quality literature reviews. Mentors help students view their topic as "under construction," built as they move from general ideas to researchable ones. Mentors then help students search for quality research in discipline-specific resources.

What are other helpful resources?

Take advantage of the resources available at your institution. These might include alumni groups, in-class sessions with a librarian, and database guides.

Reference: Council of Undergraduate Research. (2016). *Fact sheet*. Retrieved from www.cur.org/about_cur/fact_sheet/



Google Scholar

