

The Mysterious Part III - Reading for Questions



Bison on the Great Plains would often congregate in spaces not owned by any tribe

Below is a breakdown of the literature review (aka Part III) from my master's thesis as an example to help you understand how to find the analytic space within your topic. You need to cluster your sections in Part III around specific issues or sub-questions related to your big question. You should identify the debates or mysteries that your articles are trying to answer.

The difference between "A" papers and "B" and "C" papers in college is that the "A" papers are the ones that are able to identify and discuss the questions that authors are grappling with AND the questions that they should be asking but aren't.

Don't read for answers. Read for questions.

Follow the bison! (if you miss class, ask me about this reference)

Marcus' Research Question: How can conservation organizations use education and outreach to sustain community involvement in their work over a long period of time?

Questions present in the literature

- Environmental Behavior – How do we get people to practice environmentally-responsible behavior (e.g. turning off lights)?
- Sense of Place – What kinds of emotional attachments do people have to specific places and landscapes?
- Community Education and Organizing – What kinds of education are most effective at encouraging civic involvement and participation?
- Program Evaluation – What are the best ways to evaluate complex education programs? What are indicators of success?

What are the sub-questions you've found in the literature?

The best papers will organize their section 3 around these questions and then discuss what you think about these questions and the different ways people are answering them **OR** talk about why these are the wrong questions to be asking or at least not the questions that you're really interested in.

Instructions

Turn to the person next you. Take turns sharing what questions you are pulling out of the literature. Have the other person write these questions down and read them back to you. How do these questions relate to your big research question? Have the other person take notes and give this sheet to you.

By the end of your conversation you should have the start of a solid outline for sections 3 and 4. If you don't, look at your readings again and try to pull out the questions they are trying to answer. This should be in the abstract of the academic articles.

1.

2.

3.

4.

How does these questions relate to your big research question?