

Separating the wheat from the chafe: Effective Strategies for Culling the Literature

Marci Ybarra, MSW, PhD
IRP/Howard University
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Introductions

- Name, institution, area of degree, your dissertation interests
- Methods, data you envision using
- Areas of literature you are invested in for your scholarship

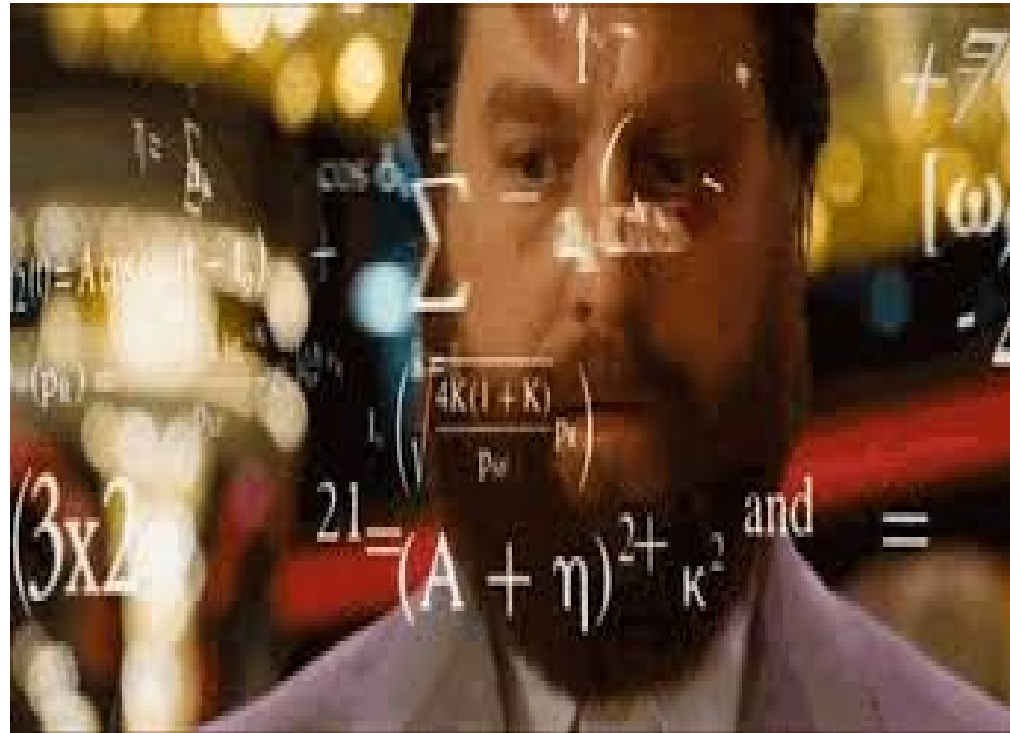
Some orientating starting points

Most of us

- Never feel like we've read all that we should
- Go down rabbit holes
- Difficulty sorting out what's relevant (and not) to our own scholarship
- Do not know when to take a break from reading
- Should, but often do not, develop strategies to curtail the above
- By the way, none of this stops post PhD or even post tenure

What are some challenges you are having in this area?

What would you like to get out of our discussion?



My approach today

- Reduce stress on this (if there is any)
- Provide practical tools for
 - How and where to begin?
 - Starting to cull articles and books for a literature review
 - Organizing all articles and books you've read
- Not going down the rabbit hole (too much)

My Approach at your Stage: Welfare Reform

- I began with the 'classics'
- I marked all citations that spoke to my interests which were a lot
- I read all of them
- I got stuck
- I moved on to 'searches' on 'welfare reform'
- Wash, rinse, repeat

THERE ARE BETTER WAYS TO DO THIS

What I (try) to do now

Think about: who am I trying to have a conversation with?

- Classics in your area
- Backward citation mapping
- Developing an excel tracker
- Thinking across is this valuable for:
 - My area of scholarly interest?
 - Methods?
 - Tangential to what I am studying?
 - Data?

Google Scholar is your friend. YOUR BEST
FRIEND

[Example Search and backward citation mapping](#)

What do you do with all of this? My approach

- Example 1: Literature Review tracking
- Example 2: Data source tracking

Rabbit Holes

- Examples of what you run into here?
- Tips on what you do?
- [Here's what I do](#)

Writer's Block or Procrastination

- Ugly can be revised, blank pages cannot
- In-person writing group
- On-line writing group
- Timer trick
- Bootcamp
- Take a break