

Facilitator Notes

# The Literature Review: A Foundation for a Proposal

These notes accompany the PowerPoint presentation of the same title by Barbara Gastel.

This module normally would accompany other modules on preparing a grant proposal.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Module Title | The Literature Review: A Foundation for a Proposal |
| Course title (or analogous information) | This module can serve as part of a workshop on preparing grant proposals. It also can serve as part of a workshop unit, course unit, or short course on the topic. It is one of nine modules on preparing grant proposals. Typically, most or all of the nine should be used, in the order (or approximately the order) in which they are numbered. |
| Unit Title | Preparing Grant Proposals |
| No. of Unit | Not applicable |
| Session Day/Time | Not applicable |
| Length of Session | This module typically would run about 30 to 60 minutes. The length would depend mainly on how much the facilitator elaborates on points in the slides and how much discussion there is. |
| Aim | This module is intended mainly to help participants (1) recognize the importance of reviewing the literature when preparing a proposal, (2) know how to approach this task soundly, and (3) be aware of ways to obtain journal articles identified as potentially relevant. |
| Learning Outcomes | By the end of this module, participants will be able to (1) state reasons that reviewing the literature can be valuable when preparing a proposal, (2) list good practices to follow when reviewing the literature for this purpose, (3) note strategies for obtaining journal articles identified as potentially relevant. |
| Facilitator Profile | This module may appropriately be facilitated by (1) someone with experience in writing, editing, or reviewing grant proposals, (2) a research librarian, or (3) perhaps ideally, a team consisting of both the former and the latter. A less specialized facilitator also can present the module, as the combination of PowerPoint slides and facilitator notes provides sufficient information to do so. |
| Participant Profile | This module is primarily for early-career researchers with little or no experience preparing grant proposals. However, it also may aid mid-career researchers who wish to improve their preparation of grant proposals or their mentoring of others in this regard. In addition, it may be helpful to some editors and writing instructors. Participants having experience with grant proposals may be able to enrich the workshop by sharing their experience. |
| Pre-workshop Activities | No pre-workshop activities are required. However, participants are encouraged to identify beforehand a research project or other project for which they would like to seek grant funding. |
| Room Layout | Ideally, this module will be presented in a room layout facilitating interaction—for example, with several small tables, with tables in a U configuration, or with a conference table. However, this module also can be presented in a traditional classroom or a lecture hall. |
| Number of Participants | For optimum discussion, the number of participants should be limited to about 10–15. However, the module also can reasonably delivered to about 25 participants. |
| Files and Materials | PowerPoint file: 03\_The Literature Review |
| Visual Aids and Resources | Computer with PowerPoint; projector for PowerPoint presentation  If feasible, internet access  Depending on the small-group activity chosen, it may be useful to have participants bring laptop computers or the like or to meet in a computer laboratory. |
| Potential Embellishments of the PowerPoint | To keep the file small, the presentation consists almost solely of text. Images can be added to make it more visually appealing. For example, decorative images can be inserted between sections to signal a change of subtopic and provide visual relief. Also, relevant images can be added to selected slides if desired.  If desired, the facilitator can divide the material on a given slide into more than one slide or can format some slides for progressive disclosure, in which items on a slide are revealed one by one.  Facilitators may localize some slides to suit the institution, country, or region from which the participants come. For instance, in Slide 4, the examples of reference management software might be modified for local relevance. Likewise, in Slide 7, the list of resources could be modified for this purpose. |
| Learning methods and activities | The following notes may help facilitators to (1) elaborate on the content of some slides and (2) elicit group participation at suitable times. (Slide 1 is a title slide.)   * Slide 2 (“Overview”)   + Note the topics that the module will address.   + Note the module’s overall aim, which is stated earlier in this facilitator’s guide. (Feel free, of course, to frame it in the way that the group is likely to find most relevant.) * Slide 3 (“Some Reasons to Search the Literature When Writing a Proposal”)   + If desired, before showing this slide, do one of the following:     - Ask the group to identify some reasons to search the literature when writing a proposal.     - Have pairs or trios of students identify such reasons and then share them with the full group.   + In presenting the reasons listed on the slide, perhaps do one or both of the following:     - Ask participants for examples from their experience.     - Include examples from your experience or that of people you know. * Slide 4 (“Some General Suggestions”)   + In discussing the first bulleted item, perhaps note some literature databases relevant to the participants (or ask participants to do so).   + If you are not yourself a librarian and at least some participants have access to research librarians at their institutions or otherwise, emphasize that research librarians are specialists in searching the literature and can be very helpful in this regard. If possible, elicit or provide one or more examples of how librarians have helped with literature reviews.   + If you are a librarian, if possible present one or more examples of how you or colleagues have helped researchers with literature reviews for proposals.   + As noted, in the fourth bulleted item, perhaps modify the examples of reference management software to suit the local context. Perhaps note that Zotero is free and openly available. * Slide 5 (“Accessing Relevant Literature”)   + Emphasize that with resourcefulness, even researchers not at institutions with extensive libraries generally can obtain the articles that they identify as relevant.   + Remind participants that obtaining journal articles sometimes takes time and that one should plan accordingly.   + Regarding the third bulleted item: INASP’s work keeps evolving. For current information, including that on INASP activities in specific countries, see the INASP website (<http://www.inasp.info/en/>).   + Perhaps briefly explain what an institutional repository is. A Google search for “institutional repository” yields definitions and related content.   + In discussing items on this slide and the next one, try to elicit examples from participants or provide examples yourself.   + As a transition to the next slide, perhaps ask the group something like the following: “What if an article that a researcher wants isn’t available in any of these ways? What are some other approaches to consider?” * Slide 6 (“If all else fails . . .”)   + Regarding the first bulleted item: Note that even if items aren’t openly accessible, it’s fine for authors to share individual copies of them for scholarly use.   + Regarding the last bulleted item:     - Perhaps note that it isn’t, however, appropriate to send an international colleague a long list of items to provide.     - This might be a good time to say a little about AuthorAID mentors and how they can be obtained. Information in this regard appears at <http://www.authoraid.info/en/mentoring/>.   + If you have additional strategies to suggest, of course mention them. Perhaps also invite participants to note other strategies. * Slide 7 (“A Few Examples of Resources”)   + A slide such as this one can be useful to include at this point. Depending on the situation, it can be replaced by more than one slide. Of course, examples of resources can be changed to suit the disciplines and locales of the participants.   + If internet access is available and time permits, perhaps show some of the resources and demonstrate how they can be used.   + Perhaps ask participants to identify other resources that they have found useful. * Slide 8 (“Small-Group Activity”)   + Depending on the situation, any of various small-group activities may be appropriate. Whatever activity the facilitator chooses, it would be advisable to add instructions for the activity to this slide or otherwise provide written instructions.   + Here are two examples of activities that may be appropriate. (Normally only one activity would be used.) Facilitators also should feel free to use activities that they design.     - Have groups of about three or four participants identify key points to remember from the session and come up with questions to ask. Then use these items as the basis for full-group discussion. (Or have pairs of participants come up with these items and share them with another pair before proceeding to full-group discussion.) This activity can be a good choice if time is limited or if participants don’t have access to internet and computers.     - If participants have access to internet and computers, give them a little time to do literature searching for the proposals that they are preparing. Be available to answer questions and provide guidance. Then have participants meet in small groups to discuss what they found and how they could use it. Finally, have the small groups share highlights of their discussion with the full group. Answer questions that arise. If facilitators do not have answers to some questions, they can see whether others have the answers or discuss how the answers could be obtained. * Slide 9 (“In Conclusion”)   + Perhaps ask for any additional questions and request other points that participants would like to make.   + Wrap up the session, for example by expressing hope that this module has provided useful guidance, restating one or more key messages, and noting the subject of the next module. * Slide 10 (“Wishing you much success!”) and Slide 11 (Creative Commons information etc):   + (These are the standard closing slides for this series of presentations.) |