

- _____ 5. Does the article contain a section that describes and integrates previous studies on this topic? In what ways is this previous work relevant to the research problem?
- _____ 6. If the author explained procedures that were followed in the study, are these procedures clear enough that you could repeat the work and get similar results? What additional information might be helpful or essential for you to replicate the study?
- _____ 7. If data were collected, can you describe how they were collected and how they were analyzed? Do you agree with what was done? If you had been the researcher, what additional things might you have done?
- _____ 8. Do you agree with the author's interpretations and conclusions? Why or why not?
- _____ 9. Finally, think about the entire article. What is, for you, most important? What do you find most interesting? What do you think are the strengths and weaknesses of this article? Will you remember this article in the future? Why or why not?

KNOWING WHEN TO QUIT

Certainly you shouldn't read only one or two articles and think that you're done. Get used to looking for and reading new research reports; for a researcher, this is a lifelong endeavor. There are always, *always* new things to learn about a topic.

At some point, however, you must be practical and bring your preliminary literature review to a close. How will you know when that time has arrived? The best advice we can give you is this: *Look for repetitive patterns in the materials you are finding and reading.* As you read more and more sources, eventually familiar arguments, methodologies, and findings will start to appear. Perhaps you will see the same key people and studies cited over and over. You will get a feeling of *déjà vu*—"I've seen this (or something very similar to it) before." When you are no longer encountering new viewpoints, you can be reasonably sure that you are familiar with the critical parts of the literature.

Notice our use of the adjective *preliminary* to modify "literature review" in the second paragraph of this section. As you begin to write your review of the literature, you may find certain gaps in your knowledge that need filling. And later on, after you've collected your data, you may find intriguing results within them that additional explorations of related literature might help you sensibly interpret. Thus, you should plan on spending some additional time in your university library or its online equivalent as your project proceeds.