

Step #2b – Brainstorming

Still stuck? Here are a few more questions and tips to consider:

- Engage with current or past research. See what has been done. Look at journals like the **Journal of Applied Sport Psychology** and the **Journal of Sport, Exercise, and Performance Psychology**. What topics have they covered recently? What can you add to the debate?
- Do you have an advisor? What is your advisor's main research topic? How can you expand on their research?
- Has there been a news story/release about sport or exercise or even a specific team or athlete that you found interesting?
- What is your favorite aspect of sports and exercise? What do you find intriguing about sports and exercise?
- Do you believe that myths about sports and exercise exist?
- Do you find listening to music while exercising affects your results?
- When you think about what interest you most about sport and exercise what first pops into your mind?

After going through this brainstorming process, it may be helpful to write a revised list of topics.

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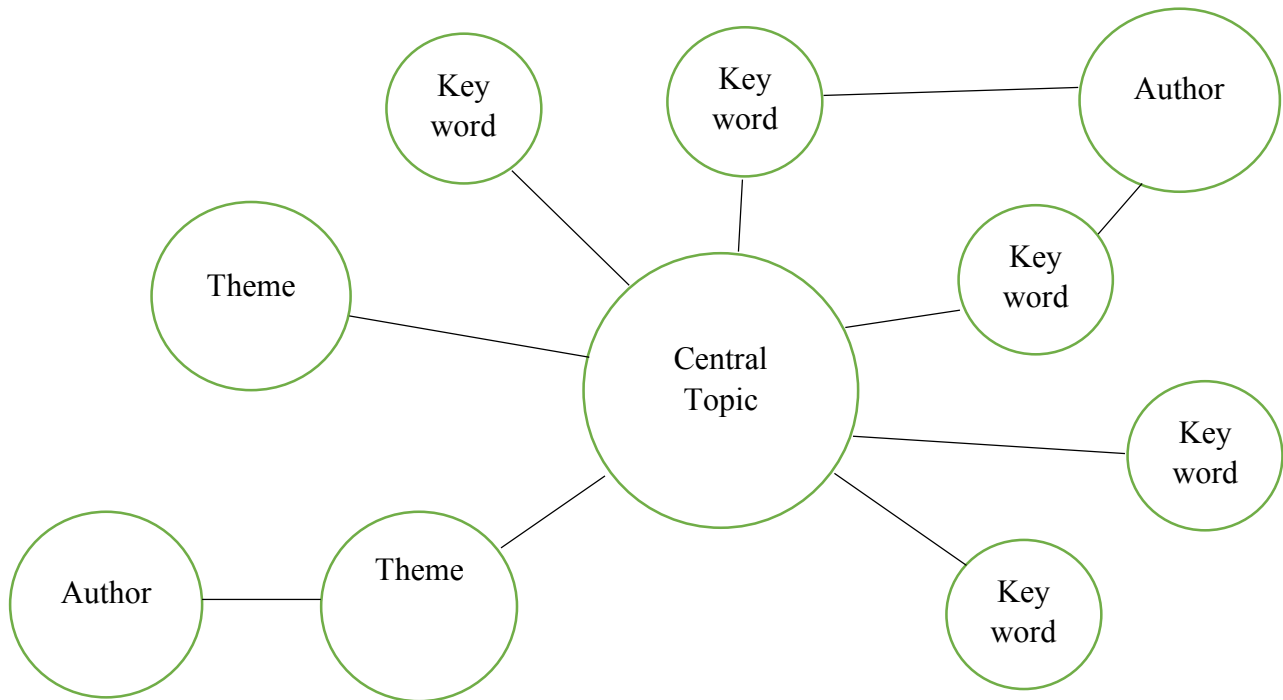
Step #4 – Read the Literature

Now search your topic(s) in journals, the web, textbooks, etc. It is only necessary to read a few articles or chapters per topic on your list. Here are a few tips and questions to consider while reading through some of the literature:

- Be sure to note keywords and reoccurring authors.
- Does this topic have multiple components (e.g., interpersonal, intrapersonal) or multiple facets influencing the topic (e.g., confidence- preparation, feedback, past success, goal orientation)? What about these facets of the topic seem intriguing to you?
- What research on this component has been done and supported or contradicted the topic of your choosing?

- How can you explore the specific component of your topic even further? (e.g., specific population? Gender? Sexual orientation? Ethnicity?)
- What types of research have been done on this topic? (e.g., quantitative, qualitative, mixed methods, experimental/interventional?)

It may be helpful to create a visual diagram (e.g., web plot) to keep track of and connect the keywords, authors, and themes throughout your quick literature review.



Step #5 – Narrow the Topic

It is essential for your research to choose a topic narrow enough to allow you to ask a research question that will add to the literature on your topic. If the topic is too broad, it may be difficult to add new information to the existing literature. However, if the topic is too narrow, it may be difficult to generalize your findings to the target population. Utilize the following tips and questions to help appropriately narrow your topic:

- What new questions do you have about the topic?
- Are there any controversies?
- What is the purpose of your research?
- Would the answer to your question describe the relationship between two or more variables?
- Think of narrowing the topic as a method to developing a potential thesis statement

Finally, you should have a topic picked! At this point, you are ready to continue reviewing the literature for a more comprehensive understanding of the subject and more detailed modifications (as needed) to your research question. It is important to remember that it is acceptable to change your research question and even your topic throughout the beginning stages of searching for a topic.

Of course, the research process is not over yet; it has just begun. Nevertheless, choosing a topic is a huge milestone. Congratulations for making it this far! The next step to the research process would be “How to Review the Literature.”