Assignment#4: Strategy for literature review process

You to establish a standard framework for conducting a literature review and a method of abstracting the information from each reading in your review through this assignment.

A literature review serves the purposes of providing the context in which a research study relates to the knowledge in the subject field. Its development and compilation also serves to give the researcher the needed knowledge base to effectively develop the research problem and implement the research project.

The literature review occurs in conjunction with, not before or after, the formulation of the problem and the design of the research!

A. Literature Review Process

The process below is the beginning basis for superimposing your specific research topic into a literature review strategy.

I. Identify the research topic as to:
   A. Subject matter:
   B. Focus (theory building, application, etc.):
   C. Population of concern (variables that describe the population or problem):
   D. Other topic parameters:

II. Retrieval terms or descriptors (those terms and phrases to look up in various indexes or use for computer searches). List:
   A. Primary terms or key words:
   B. Secondary terms or key words:

III. Major relevant indexes to search. List:

IV. Time span for search. Give years (1980 and beyond, etc.):

V. Plan for compiling literature content (how you will take notes, file copied material, use abstracting form, etc.). Outline your plan:
VI. Appropriateness of computer search. Identify usable systems by contacting the appropriate librarian. Take your research statement and your key words with you! find out if costs are involved.

VII. Identify major works and authors on your research topic. Create a listing of the citations.

VIII. Identify major sources of "hard data" on the subject. List citations.

IX. Develop topic outline for your review of literature.

X. Define the background that you need regarding your proposed research methodology. List questions to answer or topics to explore. Make sure that you identify methodology used in each citation that you abstract!

XI. Develop time plan for developing your review of literature.

XII. Estimate budget required (copying, interlibrary loan, supplies, computer searches, etc.).

Action: Develop your plan! You may work in pairs to establish a standard version then fine-tune individually!
B. Instructions for Abstracts

Explanation of terms:

Author(s)  Person or persons whose work is being abstracted
Title      Complete title of article, chapter or publication
Publication date Date and volume, number, etc.
Source     Title of book or publication as well as publisher's name, address, page numbers
Retrieval terms One to two word terms or phrases that indicate content of material. Avoid meaningless jargon. These terms are the most important terms that would appear in an index. The purpose of this inclusion is to help others compile bibliographies of readings on a given topic, so be accurate and list as many terms as you need to in describing the content -- subject and methodology.

Objectives or hypotheses Why was the article or chapter written? For research: what the author wanted to prove or disprove. For other readings: a concise main theme.

Population/geographic area For research: population being studied. For other readings: intended audience. Make sure you include date of data collection and sample size!

Annotation (ask yourself the following questions):

What would someone else want an/or need to know (do not repeat the objectives):

$ About this article in deciding whether or not to read the article.
$ Is the content applied, theoretical or combination?
$ Are there any unfound or inappropriate assumptions in the publication?
$ Has the author met the objectives s/he stated? Why or why not?
$ Is a relevant bibliography included?
$ Is the research sound?

As you can see, the intent in annotation is to be analytical rather than just summarizing.
Document type: Examples might include magazines, professional journals, newspapers, research reports, etc.

Abstractor: Your name.

Hint: Think ahead about computerization of this info -- you may be able to save time later, especially if you use the correct style manual for citations, etc. For example, build your potential bibliography as you go!

Action: Abstract at least ten key articles for your proposed research.

Final note: Check your schedule for due dates for this two-part assignment. The abstracting portion (b) is due later in the semester. The first part (a) is due a week from today!