Literature Review: Relational Words and Phrases

The entire point of writing a literature review is to synthesize, or write about the relationships between, the articles you’re using, defining the connection between them and explaining how they come together to represent a body of knowledge on a subject. The following words and phrases are useful because they express specific types of relationships between ideas.

- on one hand
- on the other hand
- contrary to
- in line with
- parallel to
- related to
- linked to
- responds to
- elaborates
- undermines
- explores / investigates
- contributes to the research on
- enters the debate
- re-emphasizes the categories
- in agreement with
- in opposition to
- in confirmation of
- in response to
- in reaction against
- in contrast to
- influenced by
- rejects
- confuses
- reinforces
- a similar focus/approach/tone
- a slightly different focus/approach/tone
- a broader scope
- a narrower scope
- more specific / more general
- in the same vein
- in a different sphere
- adapts
- misses
- supports
- revisits the same subject
- revolutionizes the field of
- bypasses the debate
- breaks out of the paradigm
- goes beyond
- misinterprets
- criticizes