'Finding Grey Literature: Issues & Challenges'

Will Durland (CCL), Dean Giustini (UBC) & Terri Thompson (CCL)

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Agenda

Part 1 – 30-45 minutes

- **What is grey (or 'gray') literature?**
  - Definition(s)
  - Characteristics
  - Types, examples
  - Examples from you, the audience
- **Why we use grey:**
  - *Grey* matters
  - Research is grey-dependent
  - Systematic reviews

Agenda

Part 2 – 15-20 minutes

- **Case study of grey literature**
  - Canadian education topic requiring grey literature
  - Discussion

Part 3 – 20 minutes

- **Discussion & examples from participants**
  - Share tips & tricks
  - Information overload; fragmentation of research
  - Repetitive searching on search engines

What is *Grey Lit?*

Officially defined as:

"Information produced on all levels of government, academics, business and industry in electronic and print formats not controlled by commercial publishing i.e. where publishing is not the primary activity of the producing body."

- Luxembourg, 1997 - Expanded in New York, 2004

Two major 'shades' of grey

Grey literature is produced by:

- ***Formal*** research channels
  - academic, peer-reviewed, published in specialized journals
- ***Informal*** or 'less' formal publishing channels
  - newspaper articles; new media such as blogs

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More 'shades' of grey

Various ways of *defining* GL:

- Hard-to-find or even '*invisible*'
- *Unindexed*
- Transient or ephemeral
- Self-published - or even *un-published*
- Fugitive literature
- Only in the *deep web*
- *Not* put through peer-review process

Other definitions?

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Types of grey lit?

- Pre-prints, conference proceedings, meeting abstracts
- government reports & documents
- research, technical & organizational reports
- policy briefs
- theses and dissertations
- unpublished research or reviews; research proposals
- databases of on-going systematic reviews.

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More grey…

- Census information
- economic and other ‘data’
- technical standards
- bibliographies
- newsletters
- personal sites, blogs, researchers’ webpages
- correspondence, e-mails, newsgroups, listservs
- multimedia formats – e.g. videos, audiocasts
- Other knowledge-objects, powerpoint slides, etc.

Examples from audience?

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Information Retrieval includes:

- *extending* beyond electronic searches of bibliographic databases
- *attempting* to include 'unpublished' literature
- …and including reference lists, the Internet, conference proceedings, government documents and 'other sources' as appropriate

Grey 'matters' in research

Why is it important?

- Reveals *high-calibre* research not found elsewhere
- Easily-accessible & may be *open-access (OA)* online
- Represents what is available on certain topics
- Needed to avoid *publication bias*
- Helps in reference *harvesting* & snowballing
- Reveals *broader range* of information sources
- Provides *alternative* research perspectives, findings

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Other characteristics

- Shifting definitions of *grey* lit
  - Field widening due to self-publishing on web
  - Distinction breaking down between *grey* & non-grey
- 'Publish or perish' *grey*
  - "Be open or be obscure"
- *Grey* journalism & new media
- Many disciplines have their own *grey lit* definition
  - Social sciences & the sciences
  - Yin & yang of grey literature

Examples from audience?

If *grey* is so great –

what's the problem?

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Issues in finding greys

- **Access**
  - Digital or print?
  - Paying for access $$
- **Documentation**
  - Be thorough, or systematic
  - Replicability
- **Language**
  - indexing or lack thereof
- **Location**
  - Where do you search?
  - In the 'deep web'?
- **Quality**
  - Trusted sources of information
- **Time**
  - When do you stop searching?

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Where can I find the most 'greys'?

Grey lit is *more visible* due to the Internet

And search tools such as…

- Google …of course! – http://google.ca
  - Yahoo – http://yahoo.com
  - Google scholar – http://scholar.google.com
- Free ERIC access – http://www.eric.ed.gov
  - PubMed – http://pubmed.gov
- DOAR, Directory of Open Access Repositories – http://www.opendoar.org
  - OAister – http://www.oaister.org

Others?

But, first and foremost…

If you <u>do not</u> have a librarian on your team

Isn't it time to get one?

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Case study:

Educational topic in Canada

"What can government do to foster lifelong learning initiatives?"

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Case study – *Develop a search strategy*

- Determine *most relevant* sites to search
- Create *order* or *hierarchy* for search strategy
- Set up search diary, or tracking sheet
- And, document your work!

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Systematic approach to GL searching

- International organizations
- Government sites
- Portals & institutional repositories
- Research organizations
- Advocacy/ foundation sites
- General *browsing* on the Internet

Case study: ***"What can government do to foster lifelong learning initiatives?"***

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Case study – *International sites*

A few examples:

OECD http://www.oecd.org/

Eurydice http://www.euridice.org/

UNESCO http://portal.unesco.org/

Case study – *Government sites*

A few examples:

- Australian Government Education Portal
  http://www.education.gov.au/goved/go
- British Columbia Ministry of Advanced Education
  http://www.gov.bc.ca/aved/
- European Commission http://ec.europa.eu/index_en.htm
- Directgov
http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/EducationAndLearning/index.htm
- Human Resources and Social Development Canada
  http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/
- National Center for Education Statistics http://nces.ed.gov/
- Statistics Canada http://www.statcan.ca/start.html
- U.S. Department of Education http://www.ed.gov/index.jhtml

Case study – *Portals & IRs*

A few examples:

- CARL (Canadian Association of Research Libraries http://carl-abrc-oai.lib.sfu.ca/
- Education policy Clearinghouse http://www.edpolicy.org
- OAIster http://oaister.org
- DOAJ Directory of Open Access Journals http://www.doaj.org
- T-Space (University of Toronto Research Repository) https://tspace.library.utoronto.ca/
- What Works Clearinghouse http://www.whatworks.ed.gov)
- RePEc (Research Papers in Economics) http://repec.org
- U.K. Educational Evidence Portal - http://www.eep.ac.uk

Case study - *Research organizations*

A few examples:

- Campbell Collaboration - http://www.campbellcollaboration.org/
- American Educational Research Association - http://www.aera.net/
- Australian Council for Education Research - http://www.acer.edu.au/)
- Canadian Council on Learning - www.ccl-cca.ca/
- EPPI-Centre database of educational research
- Higher Education Research Institute - http://www.gseis.ucla.edu/heri
- Institute for Public Policy Research - http://www.ippr.org.uk/
- National Center for Public Policy & Higher Education - http://www.highereducation.org/
- National Foundation for Educational Research - http://www.nfer.ac.uk/
- Social Sciences Research Network - http://www.ssrn.com/

Case study - *Foundation & advocacy sites*

A few examples:

- American Council on Education
  http://www.acenet.edu/
- Center for Public Education
  http://www.centerforpubliceducation.org
- Lifelong Learning UK
  http://www.lifelonglearninguk.org/
- Public Policy Forum http://www.ppforum.ca/en/

Case study – *General web browsing*

A few examples:

- Google Scholar - http://scholar.google.ca/
- Librarian's Internet Index - http://lii.org/
- The Researching Librarian - http://www.researchinglibrarian.com/databases.htm
- World Wide Web Virtual Library Database - http://vlsearch.org/VLsearch

Tips & tricks

What works for us:

- Gaining some 'domain knowledge'
- Finding key domain organizations
- Key research organizations
- Maintaining lists of websites
- Being as thorough, transparent as possible
- Sharing information & collaborating with colleagues

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Tip: document, document, document

Microsoft Excel - Fugitive Literature Sites - Research Institutes.xls

A151 National Foundation for Educational Research

	A	B	C
1	FUGITIVE LITERATURE SITES		
2	Canadian Sites		
3	Aboriginal Canada Portal	http://www.aboriginalcanada.gc.ca/acp/site.nsf/en-frames/index.html	
4	Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada	http://www.aucc.ca/	
5	Atlantic Institute for Market Studies	http://www.aims.ca/	
6	British Columbia Teachers' Federation	http://bctf.ca/	
7	Caledon Institute on Social Policy	http://www.caledoninst.org/	
8	Canada Millenium Scholarship Foundation	http://www.millenniumscholarships.ca/en/index.asp	
9	Canada West Foundation	http://www.cwf.ca/	
10	Canada's Digital Collections	http://epe.lac-bac.gc.ca/100/206/301/lc/cdc/E/Alphabet.asp	
11	Canada's SchoolNet	http://www.schoolnet.ca/home/e/	
12	Canadian Adolscents at Risk Research Network	http://educ.queensu.ca/~caarn/index.htm	
13	Canadian Association of Research Libraries (CARL) Canada's Institutional repository	http://carl-abrc-oai.lib.sfu.ca/	
14	Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives	http://www.policyalternatives.ca/	
15	Canadian Chambers of Commerce	http://www.chamber.ca/article.asp?id=3	
16	Canadian Council on Social Development	http://www.ccsd.ca/	
17	Canadian Education association	http://www.cea-ace.ca/home.cfm	
18	Canadian Education Statistics Council	http://www.cesc.ca/mainE.html	
19	Canadian Evaluation Society (Grey literature data base	http://www.evaluationcanada.ca/site.cgi?s=6&ss=8&_lang=en	
20	Canadian Foundation for the Americas	http://www.focal.ca/	
21	Canadian Institute for Research on Regional Development	http://www.umoncton.ca/icrpap/fs_mandate_en.html	
22	Canadian Policy Research Networks	http://www.cprn.com/	
23	Canadian Research Institute for Social Policy	http://www.unb.ca/crisp/index.php	
24	Canadian Teachers' Federation	http://www.ctf-fce.ca/	
25	Carleton School of Public Policy and Administration	http://www.carleton.ca/spa/Publication/index.html	
26	CD Howe Institute	http://www.cdhowe.org/	
	Centre for Research and Information on		

Sheet1 / Sheet2 / Sheet3

Ready

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Tip: search diary, tracking, transparency

Microsoft Excel - Document Control CTF Mainstreaming Systematic Review.xls

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Mainstreaming Inclusion Review of Evidence

Name of Site	Website & URL	Date	Search Terms/Phrase	# of hits	Documents Saved	Ref ID #	Web Address of the
Educational Policy Institute	www.educationalpolicy.org	October 23/06	inclusion	43	1	6366	http://www.educationalpolicy
		October 23/06	mainstreaming disability	53	0		
Caledon Institute on Social Policy	http://www.caledoninst.org/	October 23/06	communities and schools (subject in search page)	9	0		
Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives	www.policyalternatives.ca	October 23/06	Education (topic search)	66	0		
Canadian Council on Social Development	http://www.ccsd.ca/	October 23/06	Entire education catalogue	about 65	1	6471	http://www.ccsd.ca/pubs/2006/
Canadian Policy Research Networks	http://www.cprn.com/	October 23/06	Education (topic search)	08	0		
Carleton School of Public Policy and Administration	http://www.carleton.ca/sppa/publications/index.html	October 23/06	Searched research page	about 50	0		
Centre for Research and Information on Canada	http://www.cric.ca/	October 23/06	searched published articles and surveys and analysis pages	about 50	0		
Conference Board of Canada	http://www.conferenceboard.ca/	October 23/06	inclusion mainstreaming disability	32	0		
Fraser Institute	http://www.fraserinstitute.ca/	October 23/06	disability inclusion	7			
Council of Ministers of Education, Canada	www.cmec.ca	October 23/06	disability inclusion mainstreaming mainstreamed special needs - research and statistics page	about 20	0		
Links to all Education Ministries in Canada	http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/intersectoral/_prov.html	October 23/06					
Ontario Ministry of Education	http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/	October 23/06	special education page	about 20	2	6367 and 6468	http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/policy/specialed/ and www.gov.on.ca/MCZ/English/sheets/
Alberta Ministry of Education	http://inbox.alberta.ca/	October 23/06	Special Needs page	about 10	0		
BC Ministry of Education	http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/public.htm	October 23/06	Special Needs page	About 45	1	6469	http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/special_needs/policy_manual.htm
Manitoba Ministry of Education	http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/index.html	October 23/06	K-12 education page	about 200	0		
New Brunswick Ministry of Education	http://www.gnb.ca/0000/public.asp	October 23/06	K-12 education page	about 30	1	This is review was saved for handsearching, but it is not a relevant document	http://www.gnb.ca/0000/publications.pdf

grouped facet analysis / categorized key terms / Search Diary 2007 / Hand Search Diary / Fugitive Search Diary / index

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Best practice

- **Grey lit searches – use sound *strategies & roadmap***
  - Use search strategy from database searches
  - Adapt them to *grey* literature searches
  - Use terms to search specific sites & *document everything*
- **Hand-search major journals**
  - Scan online versions of journals, & table of contents
- **Scan reference lists, bibliographies and academic CVs online**
  - *Also called 'snowballing'* by some in research community

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Conclusion

Finding *grey* literature is:

- Often – searching is a learning process itself…and *iterative*
- Learn more, as you search more
- Respect your *learning curve*
- As you search - new sources & insights will be gained

- Try to develop strategies & a roadmap beforehand
- When you find yourself searching repeatedly & inefficiently, & the same authors & articles come up …

…it may be time to stop searching

Find the balance – inefficiency vs. 'thoroughness'

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Thank you

Will Durland
wdurland@ccl-cca.ca

Dean Giustini
giustini@interchange.ubc.ca

Terri Thompson
tthompson@ccl-cca.ca