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ENC 1102

Literature Review

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Reading and writing extend far beyond conventional notions that frame literacy as an isolated academic skill. Instead, literary strategies operate as a tool used to express identity, organize experience, and maintain social connection across one's lifespan. This wider context becomes particularly valuable when investigating interaction among individuals living with Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementias (ADRD). As neurodegeneration advances, neural systems involving communication and memory gradually decline as expected, but these changes do not occur equally within brain associations. It is important to understand that studies suggest semantic networks are often the first to deteriorate during the early stages of ADRD. However, it is a common phenomenon that the complementary lexical and autobiographical memory pathways remain comparatively resilient throughout disease progression (Foster et al. 502).

This new normal and consistently lopsided pattern of cognitive ability in ADRD creates opportunities for innovative strategies and interventions that evoke preserved neural systems. Rather than concentrating entirely on what is lost neurologically, scholars are focusing on how to adapt structured external written and verbal cues to target remaining neural pathways. Significant research suggests that patterned routines, adaptive questioning, creative poetry, familiar stories and written aids can help activate retained associative memory networks. For example, it is known that a single concept can trigger a web of interrelated ideas, words, and

images through related correlations. Theoretically, this idea implies that comprehension and memory recall is supported through recognizable cues and language patterns. Literary strategies grounded in these neuroscientific concepts are key to reducing intellectual strain and support meaningful engagement for individuals living with ADRD.

Diverse interdisciplinary fields converge to seamlessly integrate composition, psychology, and gerontology, providing an explainable foundation for these complex neuroscientific processes. Rather than an isolated technical skill, experts portray writing as an organized process of invention that helps to form individual identity. Psychologists specializing in cognitive behavior explain how spreading activation theory illustrates connections among distinct memory models. ADRD clinical evidence also supports that semantic and lexical systems weaken through different mechanisms in early neurodegeneration (Foster et al. 502). Additional investigation examines how autobiographical memory and cue-dependent recall serve as reliable cognitive processes that help sustain engagement and identity (Koppel and Rubin 135). Together, these diverse assessments indicate that coordinated literary strategies may activate preserved cognitive pathways and support engagement in adults with ADRD.

Review of Literature

Literacy as Networked Invention and Identity

Composition scholarship interprets literacy as a vibrant intellectual and social process rather than a static ability. These researchers claim that the concept of individual meaning-making materializes through associative networks that permit the reorganization of knowledge into new forms of expression and communication. Robert De Beaugrande explains how the process of invention is formed through “association and recombination,” in which ideas interact within intertwined neural systems to generate manifestation (De Beaugrande 261). Comparably,

D. Gordon Rohman articulates writing development as a progression of discovery crafted through patterned association and questioning (Rohman 106). De Beaugrande and Rohman help to explain how individuals transform abstract thinking into organized communication. Most importantly, both proposals suggest that literacy formation depends on the activation and reorganization of information through structured cognitive processes.

There is also a social dimension within literacy progression that composition research explores. Deborah Brandt claims that an individual's ability to develop and apply reading, writing, and overall literacy is shaped by relationships, institutions, and access to sophisticated instruction. Brandt's uses the term "sponsor" to describe those mentors who influence how humans discover to engage with language and meaning throughout their life journey (Brandt 19). Within this perspective, literacy skills function not only as technical abilities, but also as vital resources embedded in identity and social circumstance. Brandt goes on to further highlight how literacy contributes to an individual's "sense of security and wellbeing, even to their sense of dignity" (Brandt 1). When considered together, this research outlines literary capability as a system that collaboratively links communication, perception, and identity across a lifespan.

Spreading Activation and Networked Memory

Psychological studies that focus on information-processing provide a robust framework for understanding how memory and language function within related cognitive networks. An investigation of semantic memory proposes that intelligence is stored as a web of interconnected concepts that activate one another through associative pathways. Allan M. Collins and Elizabeth F. Loftus articulate this structure through the spreading activation model. They explain that "when a concept is processed, activation spreads out along the paths of the network" connecting associated nodes within memory (Collins and Loftus 411). The relationship between

these nodes and the way they interact influences both the retrieval and presentation of related ideas. Therefore, semantic memory operates as a dynamic network of relationships, not a basic hierarchical or linear system.

This theoretical notion of knowledge as a networked structure helps explain how word cues stimulate recollection of memory and situational comprehension. Familiar language, narrative stimuluses, and word pattern configurations often trigger groups of related ideas and visual representations. As activation spreads rapidly amid correlated nodes, individuals might remember related words, memories, or experiences. Storytelling, metaphors, and guided questioning are a few examples of how literacy strategies can be applied to produce desired cognitive activation. These literary tactics inspire associative recall by essentially unlocking corresponding memory circuits. Thus, a structured communicative approach can intentionally target and stimulate desired network structures within the brain.

ADRD research supports this academic model by revealing irregular cognitive decline across studied neural systems. Understandably, data shows that semantic processing is often weakened during the progression of ADRD. Remarkably, however, lexical associations may remain moderately intact during earlier stages (Foster et al. 502). Consequently, individuals with ADRD may recognize familiar information or respond to intentional cues even when situational context and conceptual understanding is unpredictable. This valuable understanding emphasizes the tremendous potential of organized literacy tactics supporting ADRD management. Literary strategies that are designed to pursue preserved lexical pathways might be the key in advocating for the ADRD population.

Communication Scaffolding in ADRD Care

Studies in ADRD communication demonstrate how structured and adaptive language support can help to compensate for the breakdown in semantic processing. Conversational studies indicate that linguistic challenges often stem from difficulties interpreting contextual cues and semantic meaning rather than simple speech-sound breakdown. Nikolas Coupland emphasizes that conversational context is crucial for sustaining dialogue with individuals living with ADRD (Coupland 468). Interaction methods that guarantee appropriate conversational guidance can help to encourage sustained communication. Slower pacing, directed questioning, and patient repetition are some techniques that provide additional structure to conversations. These strategies reduce cognitive strain and encourage individuals to trust preserved cues and proven approaches.

External memory aids are among the most widely recognized interventions for supporting communication in ADRD care. Memory books, written reminders, and visual signals offer prompts that drive attention toward relevant information. Michelle Bourgeois observed that individuals using such support tools delivered “more factual and elaborated statements and fewer ambiguous and repetitive utterances” during dialog (Bourgeois 363). These literary practices serve as semantic scaffolds that reduce recall demands and promote confidence. Most importantly, these interventions are designed to intentionally act on comfortable lexical links during contact. Together, conversational scaffolding and external aids demonstrate how strategies grounded in literacy can enhance communication in ADRD care.

Autobiographical Memory and Cue-Dependent Recall

Autobiographical memory is considered relatively resilient in ADRD populations while many other neural systems decline. Studies describe a phenomenon known as the “reminiscence bump,” in which individuals recall events from their adolescence more clearly than those from

other periods (Koppel and Rubin 135). Interestingly, memories from early life frequently remain available even as other memory systems weaken. For this reason, autobiographical memory can serve as a key mechanism for facilitating communication. This category of intimate memories helps to reinforce individuality and inclusion. Understanding and leveraging the autobiographical memory system can provide strategic entry points for care and discussion.

Cue-dependent stimuli help to energize and sustain memory structures crucial for impactful interaction. To promote meaningful recollection, storytelling, narrative prompts, and sensory cues function as indispensable aids. Emotional and sensory markers may also improve reminiscence by stimulating personal memory formations. Notably, these systems remain tightly intertwined to personal identity and perceptual experience (Koppel and Rubin 138). When autobiographical pathways are powered, individuals frequently reunite with individual narratives. Such narratives fortify a sense of self and act as vital bridges to social engagement and personal identity.

Firsthand conversational studies support the effectiveness of cue-centered approaches. Structured prompts, visual reminders, and references to personal history encourage individuals with ADRD to participate more actively within their environment (Bourgeois et al. 363; Coupland 468). This strategy bonds literacy to personal experience, promoting a beneficial alliance. Even as semantic networks decline, individuals with ADRD retain access to the separately preserved autobiographical memory structure. Thus, storytelling and other signal-focused methods play a central role in overall communication. These methods facilitate significant interaction and encourage the activation of important cognitive pathways in individuals with ADRD.

Literary Interventions and Therapeutic Engagement

Current interdisciplinary research investigates how organized literary activities bolster communication and wellness among individuals with ADRD. Creative storytelling programs and narrative exercises facilitate healthy opportunities for imaginative expression without demanding strenuous contextual recall. One broadly analyzed platform, TimeSlips, encourages ADRD partakers to craft inventive stories based only on visual guides. Rather than stressing strict and factual accuracy, the framework innovatively prioritizes creativeness and collaboration. Scholars describe TimeSlips as “a patient-centered creative storytelling program and social activity that focuses on communication, improvisation, and creativity” (Kim et al. 1). Participants experience a sense of well-being when they engage in their retained linguistic and imaginative capacities.

Poetry-based interventions display comparable value by providing controlled opportunities for interactive expression. The Alzheimer’s Poetry Project uses rhythmic call-and-response poetry to provoke verbal participation and auditory processing networks (Glazner and Kaplan 2294). Repetition and incorporated rhythm foster predictable linguistic arrangements that make communication patterns more straightforward. This model effectively triggers echoic memory synapses and evokes group dialog (Glazner and Kaplan 2294). Contributors often find this activity to be a positive emotional outlet that also enhances cognitive stimulation. These gatherings, centered on poetic literacy, foster social connection and provide powerful therapeutic benefits.

Clinical research on cognitive rehabilitation further reinforces the value of individualized and goal-oriented interventions in ADRD care. A randomized controlled trial conducted by Linda Clare reported improved functional outcomes via empirical data among individuals with early-stage Alzheimer’s disease (Clare 934). It is important to note that these remedies focus on preserved cognitive abilities rather than shortfalls. This approach helps participants sustain and

maximize autonomy in daily life for as long as possible. In conjunction with other literacy-based practices, cognitive rehabilitation helps to strengthen communication within ADRD.

Collectively, these targeted approaches sustain psychosocial fitness in individuals with ADRD.

Research Gap and Study Direction

Despite promising interdisciplinary findings, significant gaps remain in the systematic study and practical implementation of everyday literacy strategies as communication scaffolds in non-clinical ADRD caregiving environments. Furthermore, the field largely relies on small qualitative samples and short intervention periods, limiting the long-term and large-scale evidence necessary to standardize these approaches. Inconsistent intervention strategies further impede the improvement of consistent communication paradigms in ADRD. However, the seamless convergence of composition theory, psychology, gerontology, and neuroscience provides a robust foundation for literacy-based strategies. Both compositional and neuroscientific frameworks conceptualize literary processes as associative networks that engage distinct neural pathways. Interdisciplinary alignment in ADRD care remains limited, as literacy-based interventions are rarely recognized or applied to stimulate autobiographical memory and lexical networks.

This review examines how simple literary strategies stimulate neural processing in adults living with ADRD. The study direction will build on the work of De Beaugrande, Rohman, Collins and Loftus, and Foster et al., whose findings collectively demonstrate how associative networks shape language, memory, and cognition. Their theoretical insights illustrate how literacy practices can structure and scaffold ideas to sustain interactive connections across different stages of ADRD progression. An organized case study would offer an in-depth analysis of authentic interactions in a non-institutional setting. Guided reading, handwriting practice,

routine planning, and adaptive storytelling are promising strategies that can generate valuable firsthand data. Observational notes will document communicative depth, emotional state, and overall interaction during these literacy-grounded activities.

Informal interviews with caregivers, healthcare providers, and family members will also explore the general role of literacy-based strategies in ADRD care. These conversations will examine which narrative structures, external aids, and patterned routines most effectively support communication and autonomy. Data will be exclusively qualitative, focusing on interactional trends rather than clinical measurements. Materials will include observational notes, interview transcripts, and recurring behavioral patterns and language use across diverse literacy practices. Ethical training via the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) will be completed prior to engagement with human subjects. Jointly, these objectives demonstrate how simple literacy practices serve as practical and applicable communication scaffolds in ADRD caregiving environments.

The broader research goal is to advance helpful literacy strategies that support communication, identity, and social engagement among adults with ADRD. Creative storytelling, metaphor usage, external written aids, patterned routines, and adaptive questioning serve as feasible, cost-effective methods to engage associative memory networks. Supplementary firsthand research that integrates composition theory with neuroscientific evidence may establish effective literary interventions as a reputable component of ADRD care. Refining and elaborating the broader interdisciplinary structure may help transform abstract integration into realistic caregiving applications. Framing literacy as a therapeutic, interactive practice underscores preserved cognitive capacities rather than progressive disability. Ultimately, this

perspective reconstructs current social norms and misconceptions about ADRD, shifting the narrative of loss to one of preserved potential and enduring personhood.

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Reflection

This literature review explores how literary resources can improve daily life for individuals with Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementias (ADRD), integrating insights from composition studies, cognitive psychology, and geriatric medicine. Synthesizing neuroscientific theories of networked memory with literacy models of invention, identity, and social engagement proved to be challenging, as it required bridging diverse disciplinary contexts. My favorite part was investigating how storytelling, questioning, routines, and written aids can act as cognitive scaffolds, while the least enjoyable part was deciphering complex theoretical models. Completing this assignment highlighted that cognitive decline in ADRD is unpredictable, and that lexical and autobiographical nodes frequently compensate when semantic pathways weaken. A significant takeaway is the remarkable resilience of intellectual networks within the human brain, the interdisciplinary value of literary interventions, and the vital role of literacy in supporting dignity and communication. Overall, this review demonstrates how literacy-based strategies can foster connection and improve quality of life for individuals with ADRD despite ongoing cognitive challenges.

SEAN M.

ENC 1102- Self- Review

Literature Review (AKA "lit rev")

A. Read your paper and write a "Y" (yes) or "N" (no) next to each of the following questions.

1. Y Does the writing use MLA heading style with last name/pg#?
2. Y Is the paper typed in **Times New Roman 12-pt font**? (looks just like this)
3. Y Is it **double-spaced**?
4. Y Is the paper at least 4 full pages?
5. Y Is there a **Works Cited**? (You'll just use the sources cited from your Research Log; at least seven sources should be included.)

B. Content: Using a scale of 1-3, where 0= missing, 1= poor, 2= fair, 3= great, write the corresponding number for each of the statements below.

1. 3 The lit rev includes a short introduction that defines or identifies the general topic, issue, or area of concern, thus providing an appropriate context for reviewing the literature (this is called establishing a territory).
2. 3 The lit rev synthesizes others' research on the topic, explaining what is known about it.
3. 3 The lit rev groups sources according to common denominators such as conclusions of authors, findings, etc.
4. 3 The lit rev is organized in a clear and coherent way and does not just present information randomly nor does it go simply source by source as the Research Log did.
5. 3 The lit rev concludes by stating what is missing, what is controversial, what is not yet known, or what needs to be resolved in the discussion (AKA establishes your niche).

Add the numbers above and write the score here: 15 (max 15)