Changes to the political, social, and economic landscapes in the United States have called for the need to increase cultural diversity in the workplace as well as educational institutions. The demographic shifts in the population have been a major impetus for the push toward cultural diversity but more than demography, a plethora of studies and surveys point to the benefits of culturally diverse environments in the workforce and university settings. For example, the extensive body of literature on representative bureaucracy illustrates the importance of gender, racial, and ethnic diversity in government workforces (see Hindera, 1993; Keiser, Wilkins, Meier, & Holland, 2002; Meier, 1993; Meier & Bohle, 2001; Meier & Nigro, 1976; Riccucci & Meyers, 2004; Riccucci & Saidel, 1997; Wilkins & Keiser, 2006). This literature shows that women and people of color in public bureaucracies push for public policies and programs on behalf of their counterparts outside as well as within the bureaucracy. As Keiser and colleagues (2002, p. 553) point out, a good deal of research “shows that minority bureaucrats frequently implement policies or use their discretion to reduce the disparate treatment minority clients have received historically from various public bureaucracies.” Similarly, in the policy arena of child support enforcement, Wilkins and Kaiser (2006) found that women bureaucrats can make a difference for public policies that favor women. Their research found “that increases in the number of female supervisors lead to greater child support enforcement in Missouri counties” (2006, p. 98).

In addition, a good deal of research points to the importance of diversity in educational institutions (see Astin, 1993; Gurin, Dey, Hurtado, & Gurin, 2002; Hurtado, Milem, Clayton-Pedersen, & Allen, 1998; Meier & Stewart, 1991, 1992). Chang and Astin (1997), for example, show that a diverse student body has a positive influence on institutional climate in terms of the following: overall college satisfaction; intellectual self-confidence; social self-confidence; student retention, commitment to multiculturalism, a greater emphasis by faculty on racial and gender issues in their research and in the classroom; and higher student enrollment in ethnic studies courses.

The U.S. Supreme Court majority also pointed to the benefits of diversity in its Grutter (2003) decision. The Court (2003, p. 308) emphasized the “substantial, important, and laudable educational benefits that diversity is designed to produce, including cross-racial understanding and the breaking down of racial stereotypes.” It went on to say that diversity promotes learning outcomes and better prepares students for an increasingly diverse workforce, for society, and for the legal profession. Major American businesses have made clear that the skills needed in today’s increasingly global marketplace can only be developed through exposure to widely diverse people, cultures, ideas, and viewpoints. High-ranking retired officers and civilian military leaders assert that a highly qualified, racially diverse officer corps is essential to national security. Moreover, because universities, and in particular, law schools, represent the training ground for a large number of the Nation’s leaders . . . the path to leadership must be visibly open to talented and qualified individuals of every race and ethnicity. (Grutter, 2003, p. 308)

To be sure, there continues to be some resistance around the use of affirmative action programs and policies in the workplace as well as public universities. However, it is exceedingly difficult to argue against the importance and value of cultural diversity; moreover, public and private employers and universities will continue to strive toward diversifying their environments. Reliance by the courts on strict scrutiny creates greater hurdles for public employers as well as public universities in implementing their affirmative action programs or policies that are aimed at
promoting diversity. The question becomes, how can policymakers in educational or employment settings develop affirmative action policies that will meet the legal standards of strict scrutiny, when those standards are erratic and unreliable?

I hope that this is helpful to understanding how the literature is compared, contrasted, and even disputed. Copying quotations or providing a synopsis of one article is not a literature review. You must group the literature and explain how that grouping is related and affects the problem or issue that you are studying. Give the reader a 30,000 foot view of the literature landscape. This then frames why your research is important, or at least what gaps it is addressing.

Reference