Preparing for your literature review in the Social Sciences

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Plan for today

Part 1: The literature review process

Part 2: Searching

Part 3: Search tools

Part 4: Citations

Part 5: Alerts
Learning outcomes

By the end of the session, you should:

• Understand the literature review process
• Be able to plan an effective and structured search on your dissertation or thesis topic
• Know where to look for different types of information
• Have considered different methods of searching
• Know where to come for future help
Part 1: The literature review process
Developing your literature search (1/3)

1. **Preliminary searching and browsing**
   - Scan abstracts and skim-read papers
   - Identify current directions of research
   - How will you contribute new knowledge?
2. **Structured searching with appropriate syntax**

- Identify the key articles and heavily-cited papers
- Establish key authors, organizations and sources
- Commit to in-depth consideration and re-reading of papers
3. **Develop search**

- Track citations to follow research connections
- “Cast net more widely” in terms of resources searched
- Set up alerts for new content

Stay focused on the research question and keep a search log
Part 2: Searching

- Natural language
- Keywords
- Syntax

Relevant research
Start with a clear research topic

Bullying among boys in secondary schools
Search method 1: Natural language searching
Adding Google Scholar Library links (1/3)
Adding Google Scholar Library Links (2/3)

Show library access links for (choose up to five libraries):

- Oxford
- Open WorldCat - Library Search
- University of Oxford - Find it @ Oxford

Online access to library subscriptions is usually restricted to patrons of that library. You may need to login with your library password, use a campus computer, or configure your browser to use a library proxy. Please visit your library's website or ask a local librarian for assistance.

To retain settings, you must turn on cookies.
Adding Google Scholar Library Links (3/3)
Search method 2: Keyword searching
Bullying among boys in secondary schools
Bullying among boys in secondary schools
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concept 1</th>
<th>Concept 2</th>
<th>Concept 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bullying</td>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>Secondary schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harassment</td>
<td>Young men Males</td>
<td>High schools Post-primary education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victimisation</td>
<td>Adolescents Teenagers</td>
<td>Private schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical</td>
<td>Youths Young people</td>
<td>State schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verbal</td>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Colleges</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fighting</td>
<td></td>
<td>GCSE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teasing</td>
<td></td>
<td>A level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cyber-bullying</td>
<td></td>
<td>KS3 / Key Stage Three</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aggressive behaviour</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Have a go later: Search preparation

See Exercise 1 in your workbook (pages 9-10).

1. Write a short sentence about your research interest
2. Underline key concepts
3. Write down alternative words/phrases for each concept (rows 1 and 2 of the table)
## Search syntax: Boolean logic (1/2)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AND</th>
<th>Bullying <strong>AND</strong> boys</th>
<th>Narrows search</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>OR</td>
<td>Boys <strong>OR</strong> males</td>
<td>Broadens search</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NOT</td>
<td>Secondary <strong>NOT</strong> primary</td>
<td>Narrows search</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
• **AND** is used to combine different concepts
  – Finding articles about both bullying AND boys

• **OR** is used to combine synonyms for the same concept
  – Finding articles about boys OR males (or both)

• **NOT** is used to exclude terms (can be risky!)
  – Excluding articles about primary education
Search for a phrase by using double quotation marks “ ”

This will find the whole phrase together, rather than secondary in one place and schools in another.

e.g. “secondary schools”
Further search syntax (2/2)

Truncation and wildcards
  e.g. boy*, behavio?r, wom?n, victimi?ation

* will match zero or more letters. It is used to find different word prefixes or suffixes (endings):
  boy, boys, boyhood

? will match one or zero letters. It is often used for variant spellings:
  behaviour or behavior
  women or woman
  victimization or victimisation
### Combining keywords and syntax

**Research Topic:** Bullying among boys in secondary schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Row 1</th>
<th>Concept 1</th>
<th>Concept 2</th>
<th>Concept 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bullying</td>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>Secondary schools</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Row 3</th>
<th>Concept 1</th>
<th>Concept 2</th>
<th>Concept 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>bull* OR harass* OR victimi?ation OR “aggressive behavio?r” OR teasing OR fighting</td>
<td>boy* OR “young m?n” OR adolescen* OR teen* OR youth* OR “young people” OR gender</td>
<td>“secondary school*” OR “high school*” OR “post-primary education*” OR college*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
IBSS: International Bibliography of the Social Sciences

Accessible via
http://solo.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/permalink/f/89vilt/LGDBaz/31532465
Use Advanced Search to get more flexibility when searching
IBSS Example 2/5

- Add search terms for one concept into each box
- Use **Add a row** to create more boxes
IBSS Example 3/5

- Use the drop-down menus to choose where to search – Abstract, Document title, and Anywhere except full text (abstract, title, keywords) are good.
- If you are only interested in recent publications, use the date filter.
IBSS Example 4/5

Use **Modify search** to change your search terms and settings
IBSS Example 5/5

Use the filters on the left to restrict by type (e.g. scholarly journals) or date
Have a go later: Building a structured search

See Exercise 2 in your workbook (pages 9-10).

1. Create a structured search from your keywords (row 3)
2. Apply the search to one of the following:
   - IBSS: https://solo.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/permalink/f/89vilt/LGDBaz/31532465
     Or a key database in your field
3. Explore the database search functionality
4. Modify and refine your search
What if it’s not available in Oxford?

- Are you sure? May be only in print, search SOLO for journal titles or ask for help from library staff
- Google to see if an Open Access version is available
- Recommend that one of the Bodleian Libraries buy a copy/subscription [https://www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/collections-and-resources/recommend-a-purchase](https://www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/collections-and-resources/recommend-a-purchase)
- Try to obtain it on interlibrary loan
  - PDF/scanned copy of article or book chapter
  - Borrow the whole book from another library in the UK or internationally (not always available)
  - Place a request at [https://solo.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/interlib](https://solo.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/interlib)
- Buy the individual article from the publisher (last resort)
Part 3: Search tools

- Abstracting and indexing services
- Internet search engines
- Full-text databases
Accessing online resources provided by the Bodleian Libraries

• SOLO
  https://solo.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/

• Databases A-Z
  https://libguides.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/az.php

• Subject and Research Guides
  https://libguides.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/oxford
https://libguides.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/az.php
Use the dropdown menus or search bar to explore databases for your subject area
Subject and Research Guides (1/2)

https://libguides.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/oxford
• Explore subject guides relevant to your research written by subject librarians
• Look for database recommendations
• Learn about other useful sources of information – data, theses, grey literature
We searched six databases (Medline, Embase, PsychINFO, CINAHL, IBSS and SSCI) systematically, along with a manual search, including key journals and subject experts. Peer-reviewed studies were included if they qualitatively explored experiences of or socio-structural contexts for injection drug use initiation. A thematic synthesis approach was used to identify descriptive and analytical themes throughout studies.


Have a go later: Select databases

1. Ask yourself two questions:
   - Which subjects are relevant to my topic? (sociology, health, public policy, education…)
   - Which formats might contain useful research? (journal articles, working papers, books, datasets)

2. Explore the subject menu on Databases A-Z
   [https://libguides.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/az.php](https://libguides.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/az.php)

3. Explore the LibGuides for recommended resources
   [http://ox.libguides.com](http://ox.libguides.com)
Part 4: Citations

Researcher 3

Cites researcher 2

Cites researcher 1

Impact
Use citations to:

- Locate current research based on earlier research
- Find out how many times, and where, a publication is being cited
- Identify who is referencing a particular paper
- Explore how a particular research topic is being used to support other research
- Analyse the impact of a publication on other research in the field
- Track the history of a research idea
- Keep track of your own research
Where can you get citation information?

- **Web of Science:** [https://libguides.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/wos](https://libguides.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/wos)
  - Social Sciences Citation Index (SSCI) [https://ox.libguides.com/ssci](https://ox.libguides.com/ssci)
  - Over 21,000 titles; 1.8 billion citations
  - Citations from 1900-present

- **Scopus:** [https://ezproxy-prd.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/login?url=https://www.scopus.com/](https://ezproxy-prd.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/login?url=https://www.scopus.com/)
  - Social Sciences & Humanities subject collection
  - Over 22,000 titles; 1.7 billion citations
    - Cited references going back to 1970

- **Google Scholar:** [https://scholar.google.com/](https://scholar.google.com/)
  - “While we try to be comprehensive, it isn't possible to guarantee uninterrupted coverage of any particular source” [https://scholar.google.com/intl/en/scholar/help.html#coverage](https://scholar.google.com/intl/en/scholar/help.html#coverage)
Identify current research based on earlier research (1/3)

- Web of Science citation counts
- Search for articles
Identify current research based on earlier research (2/3)

- Results will be sorted by relevance initially – very new publications won’t have many citations yet!
- Sort by Citations: highest first to see most cited publications
Identify current research based on earlier research (3/3)

- Click the Citations number next to an article to see the list of articles that have cited it.
Be careful with numbers!

- Web of Science, Scopus and Google Scholar will all give different numbers of citations for the same article.
- They can only count citations from articles/publications within their databases, and there will be duplication.
- Different fields also have different rates of publication so if your research is interdisciplinary you may see very different citation rates.
See Exercise 3 in your workbook (page 15).

1. Use your structured search in Web of Science

2. Look at your results sorted by Relevance – note some titles which have been highly cited

3. Sort your results by Citations: Highest First – note some titles which look relevant
Part 5: Alerts

- New articles matching search terms
- Tables of contents from selected journals
- New citations referencing ‘parent article’
Search Alerts (1/3)

- Create and save complex searches
- Receive alerts when new publications match your search
  - Newly published material
  - Material newly added to the database
- Saves you having to re-visit databases and running your searches again manually
- Receive alerts via email
Search Alerts (2/3)

• Most databases have these options – look for “alert” or “save”

• Some, like Web of Science, will need you to sign up for a free account first
• Go to Alerts to change the frequency, email address or turn off the alert

• Don’t set up alerts until you’re happy with your search, and don’t set up too many or you will ignore the emails!
Citation Alerts (1/2)

- Available in Web of Science and Scopus
- Create an alert for specific articles
- Receive alerts when new publications cites your chosen articles
  - Newly published material
  - Material newly added to the database
- Saves you having to re-visit databases and running your searches again manually
- Receive alerts via email
Citation Alerts (2/2)

• On the article page, click Create Citation Alert

• Go to Alerts> Citation alerts to modify/cancel an alert
Journal Table of Contents Alerts (1/4)

- JournalTocs: www.journaltocs.ac.uk
- Subscribe to journal titles relevant to you
- Receive alerts with a table of contents when a new issue is published
- Saves you having to check when new issues of relevant journal titles are released
- Receive alerts via email
• You will need to register for a free account
• Search for a journal
Journal Table of Contents Alerts (3/4)

- Search results show up on the left
- Tick the box next to a title to start following
• Go to Account Settings to change the frequency of emails
• Go to Followed Journals to turn off an alert
Have a go later:
Set up an alert

See Exercises 4 & 5 in your workbook (pages 17-20).

- Try setting up a search alert in a database, e.g. Web of Science https://libguides.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/wos
- Try setting up a journal alert in JournalTOCs www.journaltoocs.ac.uk
Thank you!

- This presentation will be available at
  - [https://www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/ask/workshops#/](https://www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/ask/workshops#/)

- For more help, contact your subject librarian:
  - [https://www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/ask/subject-librarians](https://www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/ask/subject-librarians)