Literature Search Workshop

PSY-300: Research Methods in Psychology

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1 Learning Objectives

1.1 Professor's Objectives

- Be able to locate scientific journal articles on a specific topic, within a certain time frame of publication

- Accurately identify an article as an original, empirical article, literature review, or meta-analysis

- Successfully discriminate between peer-reviewed and non-peer-reviewed sources

- Acquire full-text PDFs of selected journal articles for further reading

2 Getting Started

2.1 Launching Point

- Beginning any sort of literature review can be overwhelming (even for me). You need to know your available resources to best start your search.

- Whenever you are attached to an institution (e.g., university, hospital), you are likely to have access to many great guides, journals, and search engines

- For example, the GVSU library publishes a Psychology Research Guide, which is an excellent place to get started for all things research

- Wren Pierce is the library liaison for psychology stuff, you should definitely email her if you want more help looking for things!

2.2 Reputable Databases

The following information is readily found in the previously mentioned GVSU psychology research guide

- The first problem you have when looking for literature - where can I search?

  - Traditional search engines (e.g., Google, Bing, etc.) are likely to return unpublished and unhelpful results - I really wouldn't recommend these.
  - When looking for scholarly articles, you should rely on provided databases that will search many scientific journals to find peer-reviewed publications.

- You should first use a list of library-recommended databases for psychology.

- If you need to look even more broad, such as for topics that may fall under a different discipline, see the full list of library databases.

- If you need full books on psychology topics, take a look at this book list for psychology that tells you where to start looking

2.3 Google Scholar and Other Alternative Search Sites

- Google Scholar is an alternative google search engine that only looks at scientific writing

  - *However*, I find that it has a tendency to return non-published pre-prints, presentations, and dubious articles that may be from predatory journals
  - It also doesn't do an excellent job with finding very specific topics
  - I would strongly recommend you prefer those prior databases

- ResearchGate is another site for finding research, but suffers from similar problems as Google Scholar

3 Navigating the Literature Search

3.1 Database Search Practice

- I'll be showing everyone how to do searching, but I encourage you to follow along on your own devices for practice!

- This will be an essential skill for your later, major take-home assignments and your success in this will be vital for your references and introduction sections.

3.2 Citing the Articles

- Look for a "Cite" button on whatever website you are on, make sure you are using APA 7th Edition, and choose "plain text" for a citation you can paste into your references.

- Google Scholar shortcut for citations (but double-check!!)

- Citation management software - the best! But a bit more complicated