Overview of Literature Review Workshop

Handouts

- Journal Alerts: New issues of journals in your email
- Search Alerts: New articles on your topic in your email

Frequently Asked Questions

"What date range should I search?"
Focus on recent research (within the past 5 years) to determine state of the art, contemporary approaches, and current literature reviews conducted by other authors. Search earlier dates for important works that are cited by recent publications. Cite older sources to establish historical bases or when that's all there is.

"How do I know that I've searched enough?"
It's hard to guarantee that you're done, but consider the following tips:

- *Are there lots of sources?* If so, look at the most authoritative sources and see what studies and authors these sources cite. Also look for comprehensive literature reviews, since they've already done some or most of the work for you.
- *Are there too few sources?* See which sources are cited by others in order to identify additional studies and alternative search terms.
- *Consult a librarian* to help identify additional search terms, scour what's available, and explore pay-per-search databases.
- *Consider your goal*. If the review is to support you in publishing a scholarly work, then you'll be expected to be an authority on the topic, and your search should be exhaustive. If review is to support an early exploration of a topic, or something that might be published at a conference, then your search can probably be less comprehensive.

"How do I record and organize my search strategies and results?"
You have to have a method that works for you, but here are some ideas:

- Databases usually offer Clipboard (ERIC) or Folder (Academic Search Premier) services in which you can bookmark your sources for storage and collating.
- Print promising sources as you go. Printing your search results list will show your "search string" at the top. Consider labeling printouts by the topic(s) they cover or the key terms they include, to remind you why you chose the article.
- Paste potential sources into one Word document for sorting now or later.
- Consider organizing your search results based on whether they support or refute your hypothesis or theory. If you find that a lot of articles on one side of the argument, that helps you understand the general consensus about the topic, and also reveals potential avenues for research that may not have been explored.
- Consult your colleagues or a librarian for additional systems to consider.

Selected Resources

ERIC (Education Resources Information Center) Database

- Advanced Search: http://eric.ed.gov/ERICWebPortal/Home.portal?_nfpb=true&_pageLabel=advanced
- Searching ERIC's online or print Thesaurus for Descriptors
- Advantages and disadvantages of using Descriptors

Academic Search Premier (ASP)

- 4500+ full-text journal or magazine titles; 3600 of these are peer-reviewed
- Advantages and disadvantages of using Keywords
- Search and Journal Alerts available

Print Resources

- WorldCat: an international catalog of library materials (most are available through interlibrary loan)
- Landmark College Library: over 30,000 volumes, including a strong Learning Disabilities and AD/HD Research Collection that is searchable by tables of contents through WebCat
- Searching provides you with information about specific book content, such as a specific chapter or essay on social skills contained in a general book on AD/HD

Library Services

- Journal and Search Alerts
- Interlibrary Loan
- Acquisitions
- Assistance with search strategies
- Information about citation management options
- Help with hard-to-find sources
- Confirmation (as best one can) of "Is that all there is out there?"