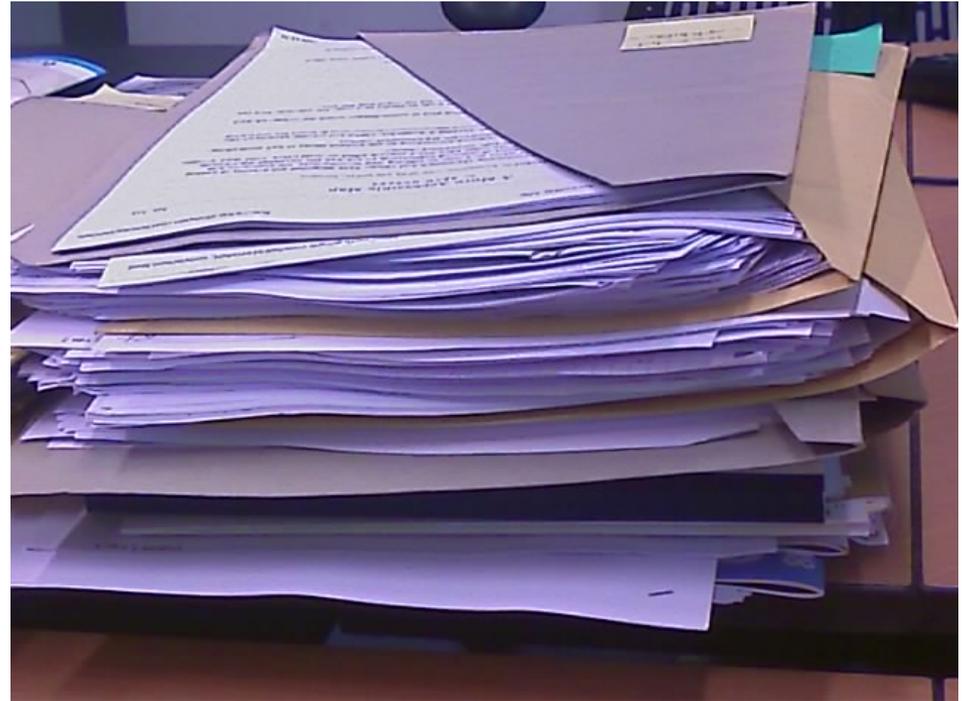




TAMING THE OCTOPUS

Research,
Literature
Searching and
Reviewing





Objectives

- Understand the key elements of a good literature search & review
- Formulate a literature search & review plan
- Search systematically
- Use critical appraisal skills to evaluate, summarise & synthesise literature
- Tell your research story



What is a Literature Review?

It is :

- A critical evaluation
- A synthesis of available research
- Broad & deep / clear & concise
- Rigorous and consistent in its approach





What is a Literature Review?

It is not:

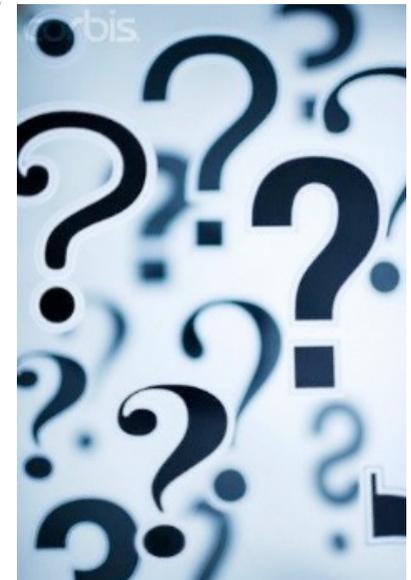
- A list or annotated bibliography
- An essay
- A simple summary of the literature or paraphrasing of works
- Confined to description
- Narrow & shallow





Literature Search/Review Concerns

- Getting full text online / paper is not online / no access to journal
- Missing crucial papers
- How do I know when to stop looking for information?
- How to select what to read first?
- Which articles are important / significant?
- Finding the most respected papers
- Checking for “top rating” research in the field
- What order should I read the literature in ?
- Organising my reading – by theme / topic?
- Distinguishing what is essential reading from what is not
- Reading methods - beginning to end?



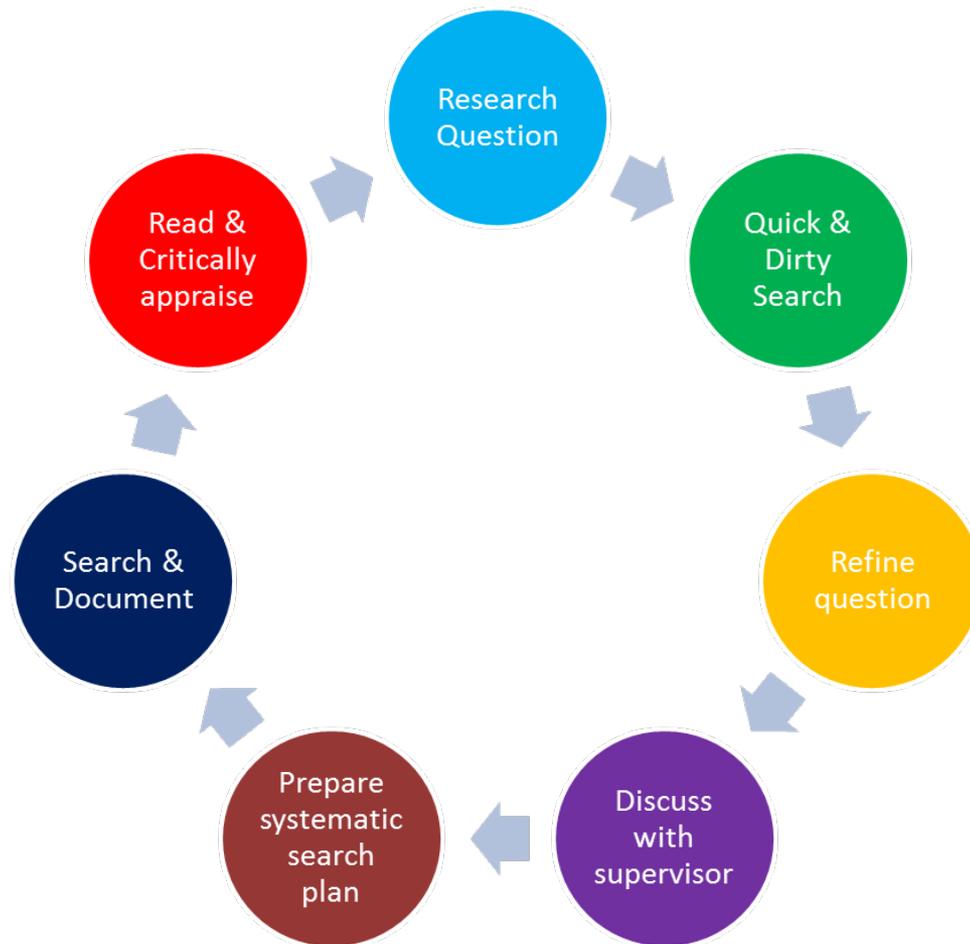


Where do I find the literature?

- Google Scholar
- Academic databases
- Library catalogues
- Theses/dissertations
- Government policy
- Specialist sources eg patents, standards
- “Grey literature”
- Social Media
- Professional networks



Literature Reviewing : Plan and Search

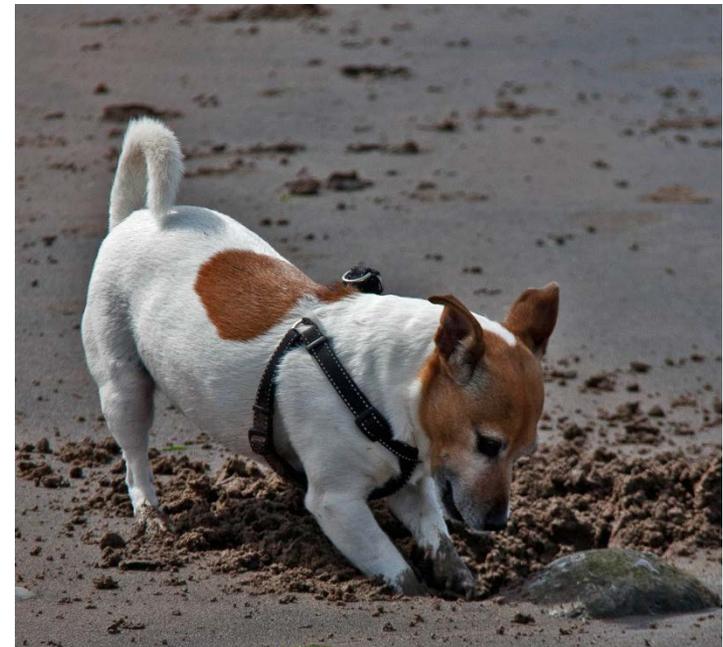




How do I plan a literature search / review?

Prepare & decide on:

- A search plan
- Sources to search
- Inclusion /exclusion criteria
- Time for the search
- Critical appraisal plan
- Initial review writing plan
- Talk to your subject librarian!





Google & Google Scholar

Good for:

- “Quick and dirty”, non systematic searching.
- Getting a feel for the language /key search terms in your field.
- Identifying key authors in your field.
- Locating “free” copies of articles, research reports, unpublished material, teaching materials.



Not good for:

- Comprehensive, systematic, structured searching.
- Accessing materials from all publishers –they are not all there !
- Finding needles in haystacks.....



Literature Search : Sources

LibrarySearch

<http://librarysearch.napier.ac.uk>

Search anything



ADVANCED SEARCH

Library Essentials



Opening hours
Find out when our libraries are open.



Service status
Check for eresource issues or planned maintenance.



Subject guides
Get started with a particular subject or literature review.



Contact us
Ask a question 24/7 by email or telephone.
For in-depth subject support, see [My Librarian](#).

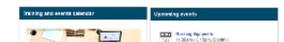
LibrarySearch - What am I searching for? and FAQs. For more information, see library webpages on [myNapier](#) and the [Staff Intranet](#).

Twitter

Tweets by @EdNapLib

 **Edin Napier Library**
@EdNapLib
Libraries open but unstaffed on Wed 31st August from 5.00pm due to Network Drive disruption. Zone 1 @ Merchiston Library open til 10pm.
3h

 Edin Napier Library Retweeted
 **Laura in the Library**
@004dot678
New way to book training & events that we run throughout the year. Check it out!
libguides.napier.ac.uk/sas/blog/new-t...



Literature Search : Sources

LibGuides

<http://libguides.napier.ac.uk>

The screenshot shows the LibGuides website for Edinburgh Napier University. The header includes the 'LibGuides' logo and the university's name. Below the header, there are navigation tabs for 'ALL GUIDES', 'BY SUBJECT', and 'BY TYPE'. A search bar is present with the placeholder text 'Enter Search Words'. The main content area displays a list of 43 subjects, each with a small icon and a number in a circle. The subjects are arranged in two columns. To the right of the subject list, there are three sections: 'A-Z Database List' with a 'Go to A-Z List' button, 'Training & Events Calendar' with a 'See the calendar' button, and 'Your Friendly Librarians' featuring two portraits of librarians, Sheena Moffat and Marian Kirton, with their names below them.

LibGuides Edinburgh Napier UNIVERSITY

My Napier - Library / LibGuides / Home

ALL GUIDES **BY SUBJECT** BY TYPE

Search: Search

Showing 43 Subjects Display: Alphabetically Go

Accounting & Finance	1	Hospitality	1
Acting	1	Information Skills	7
Animal & Plant Sciences	1	Journalism	1
Biomedical Science	1	Languages	1
Biotechnology & Chemical Science	1	Law	1
Built Environment	1	Learning & Teaching	1
Chemistry	1	Management	1
Communication, Advertising & PR	1	Marketing	1
Computing	1	Music	1

A-Z Database List
Full list of Databases the library subscribes to, including trial access.
[Go to A-Z List](#)

Training & Events Calendar
Information Services provides a variety of workshops and events throughout the year.
[See the calendar](#)

Your Friendly Librarians


 Sheena Moffat

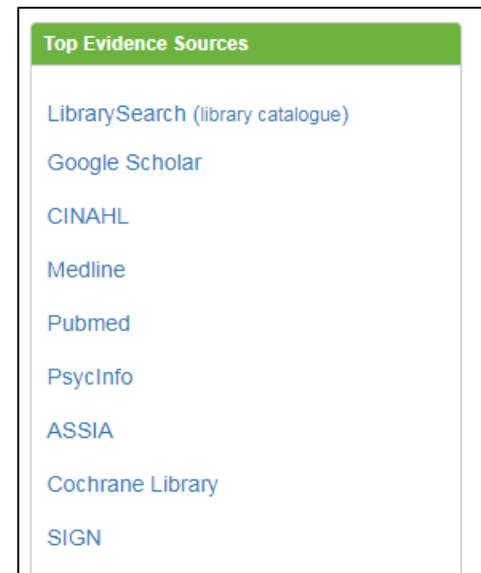

 Marian Kirton



Key Academic Databases For Your Subject

Consult your subject Librarian's
LibGuide

Get a full A-Z list of Academic
Databases on LibrarySearch

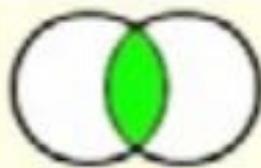


Academic Databases & Boolean Logic

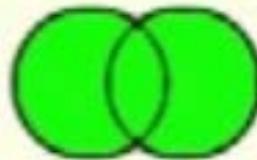
AND includes all the search terms

OR includes at least one of the search terms

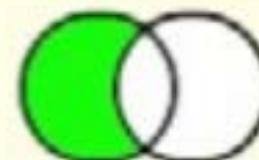
NOT excludes the search term from the result



"AND"



"OR"



"NOT"

Search Results

Too many?



Too few or
irrelevant?

Limiters - date, language, methodology
etc

Field Searching – which part of the
record to look in

Subject Searching – database
controlled, sets the context

Search Terms – just wrong?

Phrase Searching – overuse?

Spelling – mistakes ?

Abbreviations – non specific

Boolean Logic – wrong use of “and/or”

Concepts - too many combined

Limiters - overuse

Obtaining Full Text

- LibrarySearch

 Full text available  >

- Database link outs

 Check Library Search for more information

- Google Scholar - free copies



- Professional networks /
bodies

- Inter Library loan – access to
British Library





Organising references

- Managing your references – worth the learning curve!

Tools can:

- Organize / store references
- “Write & cite” in the required house style
- Share & collaborate with other researchers.





What To Read/Evaluate First....

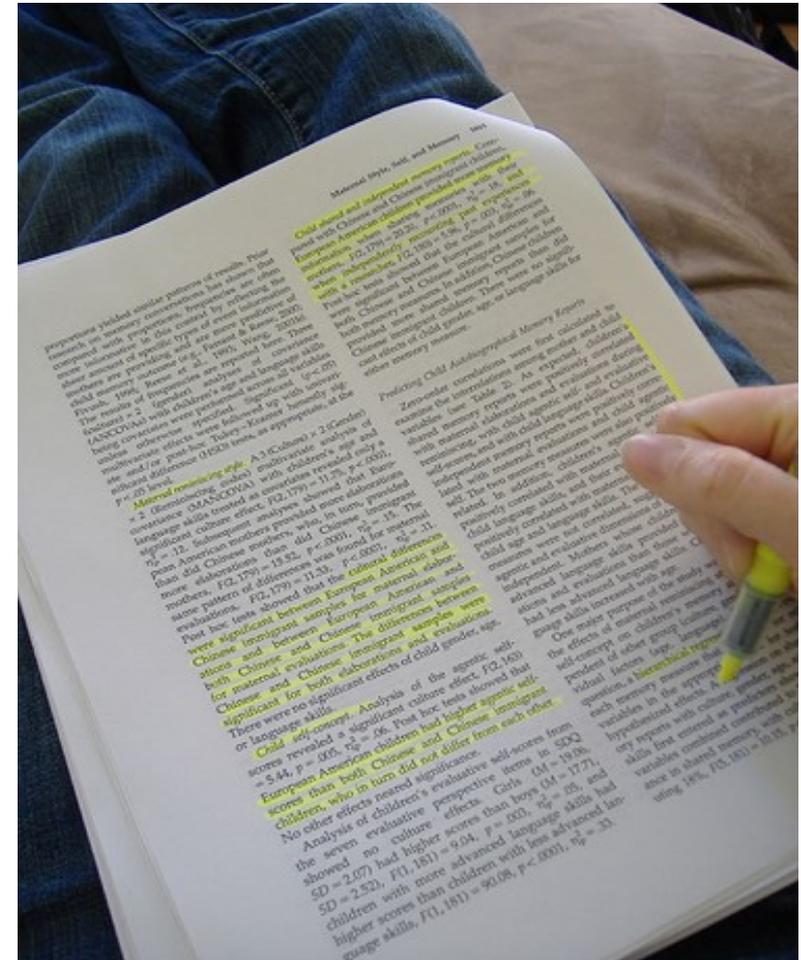
- Any recent *review* papers ?
- Recent papers from good quality journals?
- Apply your inclusion/exclusion search criteria to choosing papers
- Check paper importance – run the title through Google Scholar – how many citations does it have ?





How to Read a Journal Article

- Scan & skim
- Consider your own view
- What do you already know about the topic and the methods used
- Evaluate as you read
- Consider tables for recording data extraction, coding, thematic analysis and synthesis

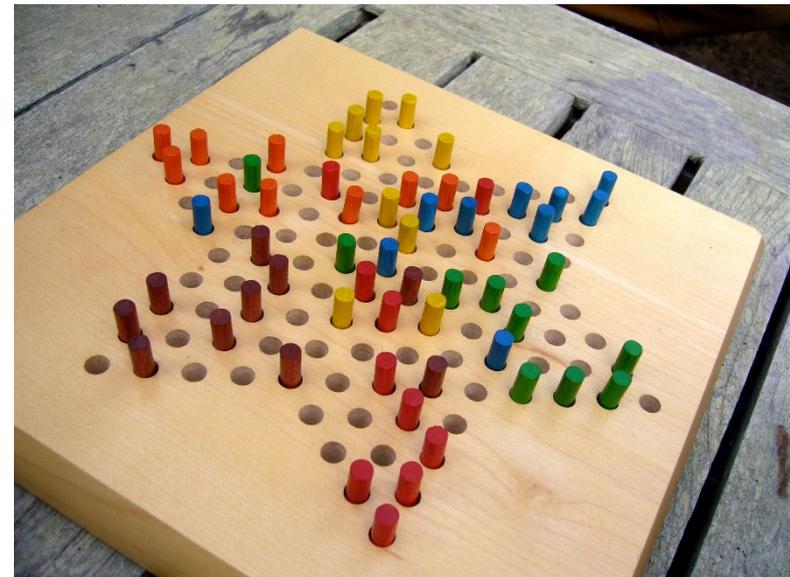




How to Evaluate a Journal Article

As you read different papers, look for:

- Themes
- Common ground
- Differences
- Controversy
- Gaps
- Dot joining
- More literature





Writing

- Review scope - what you are going to cover
- Research field – scope
- Establish a position (point of view) from which you are reviewing the literature
- Where is the gap?



Writing

- Tell your research story using the literature
- Organise the review into sections – use themes, methodology, frameworks



To Do List.....

Selection of literature

- Clear inclusion / exclusion of your research stated
- Focused on recent developments / research for that topic

Writing

- Logical flow. Follows the intellectual progression & major debates in the field
- Demonstrates wide, but focused reading
- Concentrates on current / most relevant issues

Interpretation

- Is the interpretation /evaluation of your reading obvious?
- Use the literature to give your own interpretation of the research?
- Identified the gap in the research / literature?

Common Literature Review Issues

- Trying to read everything
- Not evaluating
- Including every source
- Not writing & relating sources to your topic or view
- Ineffective organisation when writing
- Incomplete referencing



Conclusions

- Allocate time to the task
- Start early - iterative process, not foundational
- Keep track of references
- Read effectively
- Interpret, synthesise & identify gaps in the literature
- Keep up to date
- Share review with a critical friend



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<https://thesiswhisperer.com/2015/05/13/how-to-become-a-literature-searching-ninja/>

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