PSYC-452: Developmental Psycholinguistics

Learning Objectives

- Conduct a literature review on a topic.
- Search for scholarly journal articles in subject-specific databases such as PsycInfo.
- Save and organize library searches.

**Conducting a Literature Review: A 5-Step Process**

**Step 1: Define Your Topic**

- To find topics...
  - Browse through recent issues of journals such as *Psychological Bulletin*, for review articles which are an excellent source of information for someone starting research on a topic. Review articles give an historical overview of past research on a topic and provide a way in which to discover the main researchers in a particular area. *Review articles are secondary sources.*
  - Conduct preliminary searches using the Library’s resources.
- Start broad, then narrow or focus your topic.
- Choose something current.
- Choose a topic that interests you.

**Step 2: Find Background Information**

The Library’s [Research by Subject](http://guides.library.queensu.ca/psychology) guides include one for Psychology, located at: [http://guides.library.queensu.ca/psychology](http://guides.library.queensu.ca/psychology). It was designed to advise you where to look for information on a particular topic.

A good way to begin research is to look at information sources that give you basic or a broad overview of a topic. The most common information sources are encyclopedias, dictionaries, biographical dictionaries and almanacs.

*Use encyclopedias, dictionaries and handbooks* to:

- Obtain background information on a topic.
- Focus your topic.
- Clarify concepts.
• Provide **relevant keywords** that can be used when doing your research.
• Identify experts related to the field.
• Obtain recommended sources for further reading.

For Example:
- **Oxford Reference: Linguistics**
- **The Oxford Handbook of Psycholinguistics,** BF455 .O94 2007
- **Blackwell Handbook of Language Development**

**Finding Books: QCat Library Catalogue**

Search the library catalogue (QCAT) to find materials (such as books, electronic books, videos, journals, newspapers and government documents) available, in print and online, at Queen’s University Library. Books are an excellent provider of “background information.”

There are many different ways to search QCAT:

- Search by **Author**: last name first name
- Search by **Title**: omit initial articles (the, a, an, le, la, etc.)
- Search by **Journal (Periodical) Title**. For example, *Journal of Linguistics and Language Teaching*
- Search by **Keyword** (like a Google search, “and” is automatically placed between words).

The **best way** to find books(secondary sources) on your topic are with a **Keyword Boolean search**, which allows you to control your search results by combining various words and phrases using the Boolean operators **and, or, not**. Group search terms by using parentheses.

A keyword (Boolean) search looks for words located anywhere in the record.

**Keyword Boolean Search Examples:**

- Use **AND** to combine search terms and narrow results: language and learning
- Use **OR** to expand search results: teenagers or adolescents

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**Search Tips:**
Use **“quotation marks”** for phrases e.g. “sign language”
Use ? for plural forms and variant word endings e.g. child? Retrieves child, children, child’s

**ACTIVITY #1**
1. Using QCAT, use a **Keyword Search** to find information on:
   
   language development infants

2. Look at search results.

3. Using QCAT, use a **Keyword Boolean** Search for the same topic:
   
   “language development” and infants

4. How are these search results different from the first search? Why?

**ACTIVITY #2**

1. Using QCAT, use a **Keyword Boolean** search to find information on the topic:
   
   Second language acquisition children

2. From your search results, select the title, *How languages are learned*.

3. Click on the assigned **Subjects** to find additional materials on your topic.
   a. Would any of these subject terms be useful to search on or to add to your keyword Boolean search terms?

4. In the item record, click **Full Details** to determine whether there is a useful chapter or chapters on your topic.

**Search Tip**

When selecting **keywords**, remember to think of synonyms, alternate spellings, other terms or phrases that express the same concepts.

Use subject terms in keyword searches that you perform in database searching.
**Step 3: Formulate your Specific Research Question**

State your information need as an answerable question. A clinical question should incorporate at least three elements and it is often referred to by the acronym **PICO:**

1. **Patient** - describe the patient as a member of a population group e.g. age, sex, ethnicity, disease etc.
2. **Intervention** - e.g. patient education, treatment, self-care etc.
3. **Comparison/Intervention (if necessary)** – e.g. What is the main alternative to compare with the intervention? For example, deciding between two therapeutic treatments.
4. **expected Outcome** - keep in mind what is the anticipated effect of the intervention on the patient.

**Step 4: Identify Specific Information**

Since you have formulated a research question, you can now extract the main concepts/subjects and search the appropriate databases.

**Multidisciplinary databases** index a greater number of publications than discipline-specific databases, and they allow you to search across the disciplines. Examples of multidisciplinary databases include:

- Summon
- Scholars Portal Search
- Academic Search Complete

For **in-depth searching**, use **subject-specific databases**. Each academic discipline has its own specialized article indexes and databases. The content varies from database to database - some contain full text articles, others contain images and music.

You can access article indexes and databases from the following places on the library homepage:

- The [Psychology Subject Guide](#) lists core and related recommended databases for each discipline.
- Use the **Databases** tab, when you know the name of the database you wish to search.

The key indexes and databases relevant to **developmental psycholinguistics** are:

- [Linguistics and Language Behavior Abstracts](#)
- [PsycARTICLES](#)
- [PsycINFO](#)

**PsycINFO** is the premier resource for locating research and scholarship in psychology and its many subfields.
Getting Started with PsycINFO:

- Click on the HELP button to find out how to search the database effectively.
- Use Advanced Search for more precise searching.
- Start with a keyword search. Identify keywords by using terms and subject headings that worked well in your QCAT or Summon search.
- Use the Only Show Content Where section to limit your search by specific age group, population, document type, research methodology, and more.
- Use Date to limit to a date range.
- Use “quotation marks” for exact phrases.
- Use an * for truncation or different word endings.
- Check Peer-Reviewed Journals only.
- Use the thesaurus (Term Finder) to find controlled vocabulary or Thesaurus of Psychological Index Terms.
ACTIVITY

Using PsychINFO, search for information on:

Factors influencing second language acquisition in early childhood

1. Perform a keyword search.
2. Limit/refine your search results to peer reviewed/scholarly journal articles.
3. View search results list. Narrow your results by using the Index Terms on the left side of the screen.

4. Or select one key journal article and note the Index Terms assigned to the article. Are they different than the keywords you used to describe your topic?
5. Perform a new search, using the same search terms, using terms from the index.
6. Do your search results look more relevant to your topic than before?
7. Mark three articles and Export them to your RefWorks account.

**Step 5: Evaluate Your Findings**

- Do the articles retrieved during the lit search process fulfill your information need(s)? Is your question answered?
- Modify your search strategy if necessary.
- Look for resources to fill in gaps or clarify other materials.
- Is the information recent? Credible? Authoritative? Reliable?

*If you come up empty-handed, revisit your research question and tweak as necessary. The process is not always a linear one, whether we like it or not!*

**Organizing Your Research**

**RefWorks** is a web-based research management tool that allows you to:

- Organize your research by creating folders;
- Format bibliographies automatically in any of the major bibliographic styles including APA; and
- Import citations from database and library catalogue searches.

Connect via the [RefWorks](http://library.queensu.ca/help/cite-sources) link on the Queen's Library home page.

**Citing Sources**

Citing sources is an important part of your research. It documents what sources you have used in writing your paper and gives credit to the author's work that you have. It also gives information to identify and retrieve the cited sources.

The Library has print and electronic copies of the various citation style guides. Please go to [http://library.queensu.ca/help/cite-sources](http://library.queensu.ca/help/cite-sources) to access these resources.

For more information on *APA formatting* go to the [Purdue University](http://library.queensu.ca/help/cite-sources) online guide.

**Questions?**

Contact your Psychology Liaison Librarian, Gillian Akenson ([gg2@queensu.ca](mailto:gg2@queensu.ca))