Library Resources and Research for SOWK 546: The Science of Social Work

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Where do I start?

USC Libraries Website: https://libraries.usc.edu/

- Start your research
- Access scholarly databases
- Access scholarly journals
- Access research guides


- Social work related content
- Tips for Literature Searches
- Background information
- Data
- Tests and Measures
Research as Inquiry

● What do I know?
  ○ Existing knowledge and data

● What do I need to know?
  ○ Asking questions, developing keywords, refining research question

● How am I going to find out?
  ○ Literature search and review
Icebreaker - Heads Up!

- Player must guess the word based on their team’s hints.
- Team can’t say any part of the word.
- Player can say “PASS” to skip a word.
- No acronyms or acting out the word.

Example: Shoelace

Credit: original HeadsUp activity by Camille Robin Davis of http://emerging.commons.gc.cuny.edu/
Transformed for CCL use by Kirsten Hansen
Team 1

1. September
2. Teenager
3. Crime
4. Book
5. Phone
6. Midterms
7. Patient
8. Therapy
9. Suitcase
10. Door

Credit: original HeadsUp activity by Camille Robin Davis of http://emerging.commons.gc.cuny.edu/
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Team 2

1. Research Paper
2. Movie
3. Avocado
4. Apple
5. Mother
6. Lion
7. Database
8. Image
9. Public
10. Lemon

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How does this relate to research?

Keywords:
• Are the search terms that you use while looking for information
• Are the words or phrases that describe the content of an article, book etc.
• Are words or phrases that describe the “big idea” that you are looking

Synonyms:
• Are words that mean nearly the same thing as another keyword
• Can help expand your search results

Related terms:
• Are words that are related to, but not the same as, your keywords
• Can help narrow or broaden your topic

Credit: Claremont Colleges, Kristen Hansen
Searching Tools

• **Abstract and citation databases**
  – Social Work Abstracts, Web of Science, Sociological Abstracts, Scopus, PsycINFO

• **Full-text databases**
  – JSTOR, ERIC, etc.

• **Library search system**

• **Google Scholar**

• **Google**
AND

Use AND to tell the database that your search results must include both or all of your keywords.

Helps to narrow results by combining keywords.

Helpful when searching a broad topic to retrieve less results.
Use OR to connect two or more similar concepts.

Helps to broaden your search and retrieve more results.

Not all results will contain both concepts.
NOT

Use NOT to exclude concepts from your search.

Narrows your search

It tells the database to ignore results with one concept - even if those results contain other concepts used the search.

crime NOT poverty
Phrase Searching

- Used when searching an exact phrase such as an intervention, name of a policy, a type of therapy, etc.
- “cognitive behavioral therapy”, “affordable care act”, “traumatic stress”
- Can be used to narrow search
Filtering results

• Refine your results using advanced search options
• Refine by publication date, methodology type, format, etc.

**You can also search methodology type as a keyword**
Theoretical and Conceptual Knowledge

Reference Sources

- Encyclopedia of Social Work
- Credo Reference
- Oxford Bibliographies
- Dissertations
- Gale Virtual Library

Use keywords: theory, framework, conceptual, perspective, etc

Access these reference sources by searching the library or on the social work research guide: https://libguides.usc.edu/socialwork/references
Empirical Evidence and Knowledge

Empirical research is published in books and in scholarly, peer-reviewed journals.

- Direct and indirect observation or experience rather than belief or theory
- Focus on research articles that note specific research questions, define the population, behavior or phenomena being studied, describes the process used and testing instruments or measures.
- Some search terms to include: quantitative study, research, experiment, observation, survey
Hierarchy of Research Evidence

http://libguides.usc.edu/socialwork/socialworkEBP
Finding Policy Information

http://libguides.usc.edu/socialwork/policy

- PAIS INdex
- CQ Researcher
- Policy Institute of California
- PolicyArchive

**If you Google policies, look for URLs ending in .gov or .org

congress.gov - for federal policies
Tests and Measures

http://libguides.usc.edu/socialwork/measurements

You can use the same strategies to find an instrument, test or measure, that you would for peer-reviewed and research articles, but it is a different process.

- Search by either topic or name of test
- Databases
  - PsycTESTS
  - Mental Measurements Yearbook
  - PsycINFO
  - CINAHL Complete
  - Google Scholar

**Sometimes authors of a journal article will describe a scale, test, or measure that they either used or created for their research. The authors will occasionally include the scale in the appendix of their article.**
Data - Where to start?

http://libguides.usc.edu/socialwork/SOWKdemographics

Statistical Abstract of the United States

- compilation of national statistics from many sources -- government and private. It also is used as an index, or finding tool, to find the source of the statistics.

U.S. Census Bureau - American FactFinder

- local, state and national statistics relating to poverty, educational attainment, overcrowded housing, single parent families, etc.
Evaluating Sources

http://libguides.usc.edu/evaluate

- **Scholarly v. Popular**
  - **Scholarly sources** are intended for academic use with a specialized vocabulary and extensive citations; they are often peer-reviewed.
  - **Popular sources** are intended for the general public and are typically written to entertain, inform or persuade.

- **Source Type, Currency, Accuracy, Authority, Neutrality (SCAAN)**
Database Exploration

- Go to: tinyurl.com/araque2
- Groups of 3
- Choose a research question
- Each group should have a “searcher” and a “notetaker”

Searcher - search for sources in assigned database

Notetaker - In the Google doc, they take note of the research process

Everyone in group participates and gives suggestions for search strategies, take note of any questions that come up.

**One citation and one useful feature of database**
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