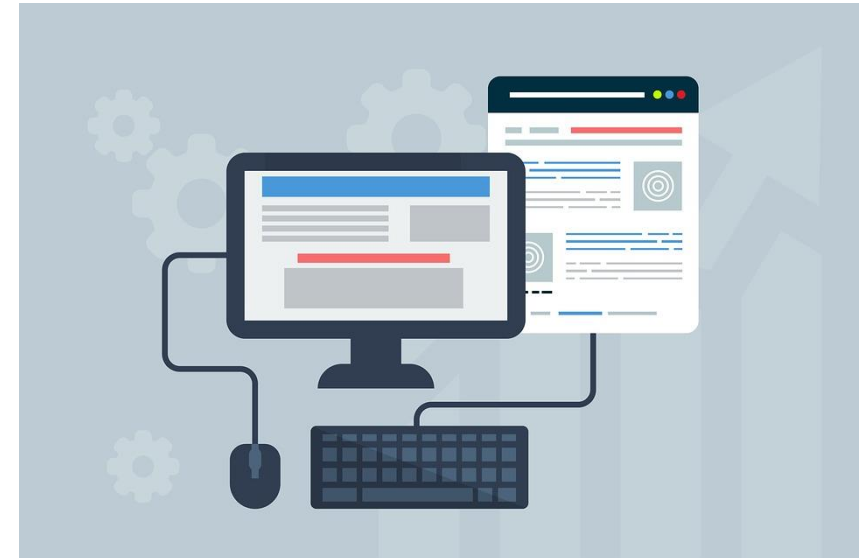




Introduction to Health Research

Lesson 2: Evaluating & Searching Literature



Learning Objectives

By the end of this lesson, you should be able to,

- Search for literature on the UWTSD database
- Perform a reliability test on different types of literature



Literature & Other Sources?

In academia, literature is broadly defined as ‘the scholarly or writing on a topic’.



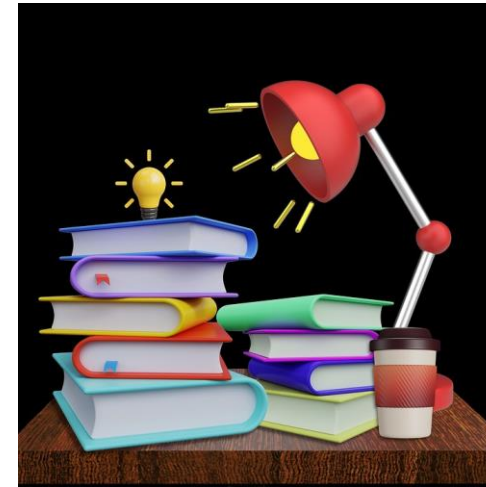
Sources that you may use in your work include,

- Scholarly/journal articles
- Books
- Book chapters
- Conference papers
- Theses and dissertations
- Reports
- Government documents
- Legislation
- Website articles
- Newspaper and magazine articles
- Other sources relevant to the topic

(University of Westminster, no date)

Books & E-books

A written work, available in either paper or online form
(e-book)



Advantages	Disadvantages
In-depth coverage of a topic	Can be bias
Quality checked by a publisher	Can take a long time to be published
Can be a good source of additional references	Go out of date quickly
Easy to access	Time-consuming to search for
Portable	Not always accessible in the library
Can be borrowed from a library	Expensive to buy
Tend to be well researched	Heavy
E-books can be easy to access online	E-books can be difficult to read on a screen

(Norwich University of the Arts, no date: Solent Online Learning, no date)

Journal Articles

Written works (much shorter than books) that are published in a journal which is a collection of academic works that usually focus on a particular area.



Advantages	Disadvantages
Focuses on a specific area	Not as broad as books
Up to date	Can have restricted access
Contain the most recent research on a topic	Can be expensive to access
Specialist	Can contain specialised terminology that is difficult for non-specialists to understand
Usually written by experts in the field	
Often reviewed by other experts in the field (peer reviewed)	
Provide a source of additional references	

Websites

An internet based set of web pages that provide information and are usually run by a specific person or organisation



Advantages	Disadvantages
Up to date information	Not quality controlled
Quick and easy to access	Can be written and edited by anyone
Can provide information from a wide range of organisations such as charities, statutory organisations, educational institutions and medical/scientific organisations etc.	Not always reliable; can be inaccurate or bias
Can provide access to reports, publications statistics, legislation and other important information	Limited scholarly information
Can access a wide range of resources such as video's, images, academic blogs etc.	

- High degree of caution should be used when using websites to support your work
- Always evaluate a websites reliability (we will be learning how to do this in an upcoming lesson)

Reports

A written document that identifies and examines issues, events and findings. Reports are often written or commissioned by charities, government agencies and other organisations.



Advantages	Disadvantages
Provide a detailed account of a topic	Potential to be bias
Good source of statistics or official findings	Not as broad as books

(Norwich University of the Arts, no date: Solent Online Learning, no date)

Newspapers

A daily or weekly publication that features current news, opinion pieces, advertisements and correspondence



Advantages	Disadvantages
Very up to date information on current affairs, news, events and opinion	Can be unreliable
Can provide a snapshot of history	Can be bias
Can provide factual information	Can be influenced by political allegiances
Useful research tool for gauging current opinions, topical issues, language, and social or cultural values	Some articles may be designed to entertain rather than provide balanced, factual information
Can direct you to relevant research and literature	Can be sensationalist, especially tabloids
Can be a source of unique information	Some newspapers are more reliable than others e.g. broadsheets such as the Guardian or Times

- High degree of caution should be used when using newspapers to support your work
- They need to be used in the right context

(Flierl, no date: Norwich University of the Arts, no date: Tanackovic, Krtalic and Lacovic, 2014)

Magazines

A periodical publication that contains a range of articles and imagery and is aimed at a particular readership and/or that focuses on a specific subject



Advantages	Disadvantages
Up to date news coverage	Can be bias
Can be used to gauge public opinion, trends and social values	Often used for entertainment purposes rather than to convey factual information
Useful source of images	

Similarly to newspapers, magazines should be used in the right research context

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(Norwich University of the Arts, no date: Solent Online Learning, no date)

Activity: Scenarios

- Elsie wants to evaluate current research into a specific Crohn's disease treatment. What literature sources would be most suited to her research? Are there any literature sources you think might be unsuitable?
- Jason wants to develop a broad understanding of research methods to help him design his own research project. What literature sources could he use for this? Are there any literature sources you think might be unsuitable?
- Ali wants to research changing social attitudes towards gender roles. What type of literature sources could he use for information? Are there any literature sources you think would be unsuitable?
- Magdalena needs to find out current statistics on asylum seeker applications. What literature sources would be best suited for this? Are there any literature sources you think might be unsuitable?
- Aisha wants to research how women are currently portrayed in the media? What literature sources could she use for this? Are there any literature sources you think might be unsuitable?

Why Evaluate Literature

- To ensure it is credible
- To assess its quality
- To ensure it is up to date
- To find the most suitable literature for your research



CRAAP Test

C	urrency	How old is it? Is it the most recent research in the field? Is any information in the source out of date or has it been revised?
R	levance	Does the literature source relate to the topic you are researching? Is it appropriate for the level you are studying at?
A	uthority	Who has written the source? Does the author have the qualifications and/or expertise to write about the topic?
A	ccuracy	Where is the source from? Is it written objectively, supported by evidence and referenced? Is it peer reviewed?
P	urpose	Why has the source been written? Is it bias? Is it designed to teach and inform or to sell, persuade or entertain?

Extra Tips for Evaluating Websites

Tip	Further Info
What type of domain does the website have?	.gov, .edu and ac.uk tend to be the most reliable. .org and .com can also be reliable but require more robust evaluation.
Who does the website belong to?	Personal websites tend to be less reliable than websites supported by an organisation. • Look at top or bottom of website for name, email about us or contact us details to establish who the site belongs to • The name between http:// and the first / often shows which organisation owns the server the website is on • Look in the URL for the names of companies that sell web space to individuals, like Wordpress. • Look for a tilde (~). Tildes are often used to signify a personal web site.
Are the authors credentials on the website?	If credentials are not on website, type authors name into a search engine to find their credentials
What type of content is on the website	Preform the CRAAP test to see if the content is reliable
Are there 'spammy' adverts on the website?	Spammy adverts often indicate that a website's main purpose it make money rather than inform.

How to Check if an E-Journal is Peer Reviewed

- UWTSD Library catalogue has a peer review box you can check on the side
- Most databases also have this function
- Journals usually provide information about their peer review process on their websites. This will usually be in one of the following sections,
 - Information for authors
 - For authors
 - Publications, policies and procedures

Primary & Secondary Sources of Literature

Primary Source	Secondary Source
Original, first-hand record of an event or study	Analysis, interpretation, criticism or reporting of a primary source of literature
Peer reviewed research articles	Books
Legislation	Review articles
Government reports or documents that present original work	Magazine articles

When presenting findings of a study, always try to find and reference the primary source of literature

Primary & Secondary Sources of Literature

- Finding a primary source can minimise subjective interpretations of the primary source
- It is not always possible to find the primary source
- In these cases, it is acceptable to use a secondary source, if they are reliable
- Your reference must identify you have used a secondary source e.g., Rogers (2018, cited in Williams, 2020).

Primary & Secondary Sources of Literature

- It is acceptable to use a secondary source to highlight criticisms of a primary source
- Peer reviewed systematic reviews provide a robust, objective evaluation of primary sources
- It is acceptable to use peer reviewed systematic reviews to discuss primary sources

ACTIVITY: Perform the CRAAP test on the following pieces of literature and consider the following:

- Is the literature reliable?
- Why is it reliable/unreliable?
- Would you use it?

Group	Source
1	Webpage: Climate change and health https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/climate-change-and-health
2	Journal Article: Pandemic and student mental health: mental health symptoms among university students and young adults after the first cycle of lockdown in the UK Tang, Nicole K Y ; McEnery, Katharine A M ; Chandler, Laura ; Toro, Carla ; Walasek, Lukasz ; et al. BJPsych Open ; London Vol. 8, Iss. 4 , (Jul 2022). DOI:10.1192/bjo.2022.523 (Access via ProQuest Central on UWTSD library Catalogue)
3	Webpage: Unwanted Guests: Natural Parasite Cleanse https://martinswellness.com/wellness-connection/parasite-signs-symptoms.html
4	E-book: The World Book Medical Encyclopaedia: Your Guide to Good Health https://books.google.co.uk/books/about/The_World_Book_Medical_Encyclopedia.html?id=4B8hAXgeahwC&redir_esc=y
5	Online News: Dementia cases set to almost triple across the world by 2050. https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-59896819
6	Newspaper Article: Sick Bed: Grim Figures https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/politics/24104821/1-million-nhs-operations-appointments-axed-strikes/

How to Recognise a Research Article

- Research articles present data from original research.
- Not all journal articles are research articles.
- Research articles will contain a methods section that details the research design
- The methods section includes information on research methods, instruments, sampling approaches, participants, materials, data analysis techniques and ethical considerations.
- Research articles will typically use the following structure
 - Title
 - Abstract
 - Introduction
 - Methods
 - Results
 - Discussion/conclusion
 - References

Searching for a Research Article

- Formulate a research question
- Identify the key terms that apply to your research question
- Identify some synonyms (a thesaurus can help with this)

Example 1: Research question: How has Covid-19 impacted the self-esteem of nursing professionals?

Key Terms	Synonyms	Synonyms
Covid-19	Coronavirus	Pandemic
Self-esteem	Self-worth	Self-confidence
Nursing Professionals	Nurses	Health professionals

Search Strategy

- **Example 2: Research Question:** What is the link between high blood pressure and obesity?

Key words	Synonyms
Obesity	Overweight
High Blood Pressure	Hypertension

We will now have a practical session where we search for these terms on the UWTSD database.

Self-Directed Learning Activity

- Search for articles relevant to your chosen topic on the UWTSD database.
- Perform the CRAAP test on any relevant articles that you find and select three that you think are the most appropriate for your written assignment

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