SEEK AND FIND:

Preparing for the Literature Review

Student Workbook:

Program:

1. Develop your search strategy: Workshop (10am-11am)
   a. Know what you want – what is your research topic/question? Small group discussions.
   b. Tools to assist: mind maps, concept maps, thesaurus, specialist and general dictionaries, even Wikipedia would be useful at this stage!
   c. Compile synonyms into a table

2. Seek: What and where to find it?: Presentation (11am-12noon)
   a. What resources are available? what you should expect to find in each place and how to decide which is the best database? There are more than just journal databases too.
   b. Tips for keeping good records and managing what you find.

3. Lunch break 12noon-1pm

4. Workshops in Discipline Groups
   a. After lunch we will split into three groups and this is when you will have the opportunity to try searching for your topic using the search strategy you will develop this morning. The aim is that you’ll be in groups relating (roughly) to your subject discipline and with librarians who are experienced with your subject areas.
Develop your search strategy : Workshop

Activity 1: Talking about your Topics

Find a partner – preferably someone you don’t know. After you have introduced yourselves, spend about a minute to tell your new friend about your research topic as succinctly and as completely as you can.

Then the person you’re telling should have enough information about your topic to be able to identify back to you the most important concepts in the topic and write them down. There should be a central concept but might be 2, 3 or 4 altogether. Write those down — as they will be useful later. Any additional concepts you might think of are likely to be connected to your main 2, 3 or 4…

You will need to also develop a Research question — if you haven’t already. The research question can also be a good source to identify the major concepts of your topic. It doesn’t have to be perfect or your final question — as you will probably tease that out with your supervisor — but knowing what your research question is — is useful to identify your search terms.

Swap over and let the other person spend a minute to explain their research topic etc.

(Time permitting) Share with the wider group what your main concepts are… Keep it brief but share the following:

- Your name
- Your partner’s name (first names are fine) and general discipline
- Up to 4 Main concepts in your partner’s topic

Activity 2: Create a Mind Map of your topic.

Mind Maps can have wide application, but they are particularly good for exploring the concepts around your research topic.

Tools to assist this process: There are lots of Mind Mapping software options available on the net. Many are not free, but you can often get a free trial. Examples include:

http://www.thinkbuzan.com (iMindmap6) Tony Buzan’s 'official' mind mapping software.

Mashable has a list of them http://mashable.com/2007/11/02/mindmapping/

http://www.wisemapping.com/ gives you the option to try it without having to log in or set up a profile.

If you’re trying to decide which one to use, try to find a review, or site which provides some sort of evaluation about what they are good for (such as Mashable, LifeHack, LifeHacker). For example, Life Hacker has an article called “Five best mind mapping tools”:
http://www.lifehacker.com.au/2013/04/five-best-mind-mapping-tools/ (often user comments are worth a look too.)

James Cook University have some nice information about developing Mind Maps
Use this page to create your own MindMap:
Activity 3: Build a list of synonyms and related terms

For this task some good tools to assist will include: Dictionaries, thesauri, Subject specialist dictionaries even Wikipedia! The library also subscribes to several Reference databases such as Oxford Reference online and Reference Universe, but there are more.

Example topic: *Reducing the number of adverse events due to retained instruments after surgery in a large hospital.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Major concept</th>
<th>Concept 2</th>
<th>Concept 3</th>
<th>Concept 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adverse events</td>
<td>Surgery</td>
<td>Patient safety</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retained instruments</td>
<td>perioperative</td>
<td>Surgical count</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical errors</td>
<td>operation</td>
<td>Safety procedures</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Surgical complications</td>
<td>Theatre</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adverse effect</td>
<td>Surgical procedure</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Critical incident</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Accident</td>
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</table>

Your topic:  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Major concept</th>
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Activity 4: Keep a Record of your Searches

Once you have your topic represented by combinations of key words you can start trying some searches in individual databases. Don’t worry if you don’t have the perfect keywords yet, you can use these preliminary searches to help you identify further terms and concepts by looking at related literature to your topic. These additional terms can be used in subsequent searches… which you can keep changing until you are happy with the result. Therefore it is an iterative process.

The databases you choose to search will depend on your topic and your friendly librarian will be able to advise. Some people like to start with a ‘quick and dirty’ search in Google Scholar to get a general feel for the types of literature which might be written and also the specific terminology used for the key concepts. (UTS Library’s “Find Articles” is a good alternative). Others prefer to start with a familiar subject specific database. Whatever you do, keep a record of each search – perhaps in a table like the one below. Include the database, key terms searched, how many results were retrieved. And to help you evaluate the usefulness of each search, record how many of those results were items you think you might actually want to read in relation to your research topic.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Database</th>
<th>Search terms</th>
<th>Results</th>
<th>Useful results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Feb</td>
<td>CINAHL</td>
<td>(Adverse events OR Medical errors) AND (Perioperative OR surgery OR surgic*) AND (Patient safety OR surgical count)</td>
<td>179</td>
<td>56 *</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

You might also wish to consider what other limits you want to include … for instance are you only interested in research articles? Should there be a limited date range for when the articles were published? Language English? Peer Reviewed journals?

Once you start scanning down lists of results in databases, it may also be useful to start developing a set of inclusion and exclusion criteria. These are the things you will discover in the course of selecting the relevant articles in the results lists. What do you want the useful articles to include? And what are the things which you want to avoid/exclude? By doing this, it will help you to be more consistent with your selection process.

Keep a record of the relevant looking articles you find by exporting to your favourite reference management software (eg Endnote or RefWorks).
Further Reading


Jesson, J., Lacey, F.M. & Matheson, L. 2011, Doing your literature review : traditional and systematic techniques, Sage, Los Angeles, Calif. ; London.


Also:

UTS Library Research Blog post, 27 September 2013

UTS Library Research, Finding and Managing Information,