Information and Literature Searching for MPhil/PhD Students

# Course Readings (Weeks 1-4)

## About

The following lists the readings for weeks 1 to 4. See week 0 for readings prior to the course.

## Readings for Week 1

* [Boote, D. N., & Beile, P. (2005). Scholars Before Researchers: On the Centrality of the Dissertation Literature Review in Research Preparation. Educational Researcher, 34, 3–15.](https://www.jstor.org/stable/3699805)

Boote and Beile's criteria for the literature review can be used as a starting point evaluate an existing literature review. This gives the students an idea of what is expected of her/him.

* [Hart, C. (1998). Reviewing the Research Imagination. In Doing a Literature Review: Releasing the Social Science Research Imagination (pp. 26–43). London: Sage.](https://moodle-1819.ucl.ac.uk/pluginfile.php/666204/mod_resource/content/1/Hart%20and%20the%20Literature%20Review.pdf)

Chris Hart's book is a must read as it provides useful information on how to do a literature review. However, the chapter on 'releasing the research imagination' is particularly important as Hart discusses the importance of understanding context which can lead to making imaginative leaps into other disciplines.

* [Mapping your literatures](https://patthomson.net/2016/04/04/mapping-your-literatures/)

Just like a map of the physical environment, a map of the literatures highlights prominent features, shows how key points are connected or disconnected and establishes different aspects of what you have seen/read. A literatures map is a way of designing and framing your re-presentation of the reading you have done.

* [Randolph, J. (2009). A Guide to Writing the Dissertation Literature Review. Practical Assessment, Research & Evaluation, 14, 1–13.](https://pareonline.net/pdf/v14n13.pdf)

Randolph also provides a framework for self-evaluating a literature review. Of relevance is the list of common mistakes most frequently made by researches. Students are advised to read this and the Boote and Beile article.

## Readings for Week 2

* [Freathy, R., & Parker, S. (2010). The Necessity of Historical Inquiry in Educational Research: The Case of Religious Education. British Journal of Religious Education, 32, 229–243.](https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/01416200.2010.498612)

This is a case study which highlights the importance of historical inquiry as a method which can, as the authors state, 'add depth and range to our understanding of education... and can illuminate important longer‐term, broader and philosophical issues'.

* [Kuper, A., Whitehead, C., & Hodges, B. D. (2013). Looking Back to Move Forward: Using History, Discourse and Text in Medical Education Research: Amee Guide No. 73. Medical Teacher, 35, e849–e860.](https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.3109/0142159X.2012.748887)

This article highlights how historical, discourse and text analysis approaches that can help researchers and educators question the inevitability of things that are currently seen as ‘natural’. The article is offered both to emphasize the importance of historical inquiry but also to develop criticality.

* [Williams, R. (1985). Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society (Rev. ed). New York: Oxford University Press.](https://ucl-new-primo.hosted.exlibrisgroup.com/primo-explore/fulldisplay?docid=UCL_LMS_DS21161791050004761&context=L&vid=UCL_VU2&search_scope=CSCOP_UCL&isFrbr=true&tab=local&lang=en_US)

'Keywords' is a book by the Welsh Marxist academic Raymond Williams. It examines the history of more than a hundred words that are familiar and yet confusing and provides. Students are asked to consider the etymology of their key words in the same style as Williams.

## Readings for Week 3

* [Collini, S. (2018, November 8). Kept Alive for Thirty Days. London Review of Books, 40(28), 35–38.](https://ucl-new-primo.hosted.exlibrisgroup.com/primo-explore/fulldisplay?docid=UCL_LMS_DS51247299400004761&context=L&vid=UCL_VU2&search_scope=CSCOP_UCL&tab=local&lang=en_US)

Collini manages to take the mystery out of metrics and, to a large extent, our almost ridiculous reliance on metrics. He does this by using some humorous day-to-day examples.

* [Giustini, D., & Kamel Boulos, M. N. (2013). Google Scholar Is Not Enough to Be Used Alone for Systematic Reviews. Online Journal of Public Health Informatics, 5.](https://doi.org/10.5210/ojphi.v5i2.4623)

Google Scholar (GS) has been noted for its ability to search broadly for important references in the literature. However, is it appropriate for a systematic review or should students be using databases to ensure a more thorough search?

* [Hicks, D., & Wouters, P. (2015). The Leiden Manifesto for Research Metrics. Nature, 520, 430–1.](https://www.nature.com/polopoly_fs/1.17351%21/menu/main/topColumns/topLeftColumn/pdf/520429a.pdf?origin=ppub)

Evaluating research is essential to gauge impact and one way to do this is look at the number of citations for a journal article or author. However, citation metrics have been misused in the past and one way to counter this is through the responsible use of metrics. The Lieden Manifesto provides a comprehensive approach towards an improved assessment of research and proposes guidelines on best practice in the use of metrics in research evaluation.

* [Rekdal, O. B. (2014). Academic urban legends. Social Studies of Science, 44, 638–654.](http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/0306312714535679)

This article highlights the importance not taking for granted the information that is presented in journal articles. The importance of checking and evaluating content, even by experts, is something that a researcher needs to do as part of the workflow. This is because, as Rekdal states, 'authors have lazily, sloppily, or fraudulently employed sources, and peer reviewers and editors have not discovered these weaknesses in the manuscripts during evaluation'.

## Readings for Week 4

* [Akers, K. (2013, December 12). Data Journals: Incentivizing Research Data Dissemination [Organisation]. Retrieved from https://connect.clir.org/blogs/katherine-akers/2013/12/12/data-journals-incentivizing-research-data-dissemination](https://connect.clir.org/blogs/katherine-akers/2013/12/12/data-journals-incentivizing-research-data-dissemination)

Just as you can publish your literature review as a stand-alone journal article, you can also publish an article describing your data. Data papers in data journals are a new type of publication which enable researchers to describe their data, discuss the methodology used and the research questions that remain to be answered. Data papers help to increase the number of citations to research projects and allow for collaboration with other researches.

* [Minocha, S., & Petre, M. (2012). Handbook of Social Media for Researchers and Supervisors. London: Vitae Innovate and Open University. Retrieved from https://www.vitae.ac.uk/vitae-publications/reports/innovate-open-university-social-media-handbook-vitae-2](https://www.vitae.ac.uk/vitae-publications/reports/innovate-open-university-social-media-handbook-vitae-2012.pdf)

If used correctly, social media can help disseminate research more widely and to different audiences. It can also help establish your credibility as a researcher. The Handbook offers tips on how to use social media effectively through the use of case studies.

* [Pacher, A. (2018, October 4). Addressing the Unharmonised Metadata of RSS Feeds Would Support Research Discovery and Speed up Science. LSE Impact Blog.](http://bit.ly/2zGPSUP)

RSS feeds allow academics and others to keep track of the latest papers to publish in a chosen selection of research journals. They are machine-readable and aggregable, thus presenting a potentially simple solution for promoting content awareness on a large scale. However, there are problems which continue to the potential of RSS for research discovery.