Information and Literature Searching for MPhil/PhD Students

# Week 1

## 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/1153853/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.

## Week 1: On the Centrality of the Literature Review



In Week 1 of this course, we will look at the **searching and researching** process, as well as consider the literature review and what is expected of you in terms of writing a review which will form the 'back bone' of the thesis.

There are readings, videos and tasks to complete on this page.  There is also a list of resources.

## The Search Strategy

Familiarise yourself with the IOE LibGuide on Searching which is available at <http://libguides.ioe.ac.uk/searching>(Note how the URL for LibGuides always begins with http://libguides.ioe.ac.uk and this is followed by the name of the guide).

Make sure read the section on how to work out your search strategy and watch the video on [Boolean Searching](http://youtu.be/cr7LscBEYC8).

***Tip!***Don't forget the following:

* Spellings:  check alternative spellings e.g behaviour vs. behavior
* Terminology:  high school vs. secondary school
* Phrase searching:  "theory of mind', "theory of learning", "moral education" etc.  Use quotation marks to search phrases
* Truncation:  using a \* or $ (in the Library Catalogue) will allow you to find permutations of a word e.g. teach\* will bring up teaching, teacher and teachers or "work\*learning" to include "work-based learning" and "workplace learning"
* Boolean operators:  OR - used for synonyms e.g. girl OR female; AND - used to combine search terms e.g. female AND sports; NOT used to exclude search terms e.g. female AND sports NOT football.

## The Research Process

Researching is an iterative process. Watch this [video](https://youtu.be/RQgJr3To38k) to learn about what is expected of a literature review and the research process.

Each time you come across a new concept, you begin again the whole research process.  One way in which you can organise and keep a track of the search process is by creating a list of keywords and concepts which can usefully be portrayed visually as a mind map. This allows you to see the 'bigger picture'. It will also allow you to see how big your topic is and how you can fine-tune your research question.  Further you will be able to identify the gaps in the literature quicker if you develop the map as you find relevant literature

***Tip!*** It is important that you keep a note book/online document reporting on your search process.

## Resources for Week 1

* [Researching](http://libguides.ioe.ac.uk/researching)
* [Searching](http://libguides.ioe.ac.uk/searching)
* [Finding](http://libguides.ioe.ac.uk/finding)
* [Accessing](http://libguides.ioe.ac.uk/accessing)
* [Video: The Research Process](https://youtu.be/RQgJr3To38k)
* [IOE LibGuide on Thesis and Dissertations](http://libguides.ioe.ac.uk/c.php?g=482257&p=3298272)
* [Video: EThOS](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F8X8ai6xN-4&feature=youtu.be)
* [Video: Searching for Theses and Dissertations 1](https://youtu.be/Bo4r1MhKyxM)
* [Video: Searching for Theses and Dissertations 2](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mSaG8eEwE1Y&feature=youtu.be)
* [Documenting the search](https://libguides.ioe.ac.uk/ld.php?content_id=31995123)
* [Sample Concept Maps](https://libguides.ioe.ac.uk/ld.php?content_id=31995145)

## Task 1: Evaluating a Literature Review

1. Read the articles listed in the 'Readings for Week 1' box.
2. Find a thesis/dissertation from the database 'ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Global' or from UCL's research repository '[Discovery](http://discovery.ucl.ac.uk)' or from '[EThOS](http://ethos.bl.uk" \t "_blank)' which is the British Library's Electronic Theses Online Service. Note you will need to register to access the full-text on EThOS.  More information on access is on the IOE LibGuide for Theses and Dissertations.
3. Evaluate the literature review ONLY using the criteria set out in the readings, i.e. in Boote and Beile or Randolph or Hart.

## Task 2: Creating a Concept Map

1. Fill in the 'Documenting your Search' MSWord file.
2. Next, create a concept map so that you can visually see your subject - you can use some of the freely available software which has been mentioned and/or use MSPowerPoint or MSWord.  This will allow you to see how broad your research question is, the key concepts, themes, keywords, subject headings, authors, theorists etc.
3. Share your map with your colleagues and discuss your experience of doing this exercise with your colleagues.

## Theses and Dissertations

It is important that you find out whether there is a PhD thesis on your topic. Other theses will also give you an idea of what is expected of you for your PhD.  The task for Week 1 is to evaluate a literature review in a thesis and there are a number of places where you can find full-text theses.  For instance, many Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) have research repositories which hold the research output of the institutions. In addition, there are subject or country-specific portals which list theses.  The [IOE Library Guide for Theses and Dissertations](http://libguides.ioe.ac.uk/thesesdissertations) lists these, as well as lists the relevant databases.