

Bibliographic Instruction and Information Literacy
PSY 497 – Senior Seminar

Effective Research Strategies

1. Selecting a topic

- Browse your text book, great place to start since it is the first source that you have available.
- Browse articles relating to psychology in the popular press, such as *Psychology Today*, *New York Times*, *Wall Street Journal*, *Newsweek*.
- Listen to the news for reports regarding human and animal behavior.
- Browse psychology related sites such as American Psychology Association at www.apa.org.
- Browse psychology related books (e.g., *Ency. of Psychology*), and journals.
- Go over your class notes, since your professor and classmates will mention topics during class discussions that you would like to be more educated about.
- Most important, select a topic that is interesting and will keep you motivated to do the research.

2. Defining your topic

- Initially, your topic will be TOO BROAD. An example is *Post-traumatic stress (ask yourself, what about a topic that you would like to focus on)*.
- Once you have decided on a topic, do some background reading and this will help you to focus on a specific aspect of the topic.
- As you read more and more about your topic, you will be able to focus on a specific area of interest, thus narrowing your topic.
- You may need to modify your topic several times to get it just right.

3. Narrowing your topic

- Focus on an event:
 - Holocaust, World Trade Centre Disaster, Hurricanes, Iraqi War, Tsunami.
- Focus on a specific population:
 - Abused Children, Survivors, Women, Men, Elderly, Rape Victim, Prisoners.
- Focus on a specific geographic and demographic areas:
 - Asia, New York, Inner City, Foster Homes, Prison, Concentration Camps.
- Focus on time period:
 - Long-Term, Midlife, Neonatal Period, Postnatal Period.

Documentation and Citation of Sources

It is very **IMPORTANT** to keep correct documentation of the sources used during the research process for the following reasons:

- If the ideas and thoughts are not original yours, you must give credit to the owners of the works, otherwise this will result in **plagiarism**.
- Using the works of others without giving credit to the owners is also a violation of the copyright law.
- Proper citations enable your instructor and others to check the cited sources.

Scholarly vs. Popular Literature

Scholarly Journal	Popular Journal
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plain cover, paper, and black and white pictures • No advertisements • Page numbering continues from volume to volume in some journals • Articles are written by experts, or researchers in the field • Usually review by other experts in the field (before publication) • Literature is geared for a professional audience • New methodologies, theories, and research projects • Technical vocabulary • Abstracts of articles are usually presented • Bibliographies and footnotes • Usually published monthly, or quarterly • Examples: Journal of Experimental Psychology, Journal of Mental Health Counseling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Colorful cover, glossy paper, and color pictures • Advertisements • Page numbering start at page 1 for each volume • Articles written by the staff that works for the company • Review by other staff employed by the company • Literature is geared for general public • Current events, personalities, general interest • Easy to read • Abstracts of articles are usually not presented • No bibliographies or footnotes • Usually published weekly, or monthly • Examples: Psychology Today, Newsweek, National Geographic, Time

Primary vs. Secondary Source

Primary Source	Secondary Source
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Documents that provide original information; first hand data on a topic; original research or thought • The format of the article includes Introduction, Methods, Results, and Discussion sections • Number of participants, their ages, and task that they will be performing are usually included • Usually there are graphs and tables describing the data • Keywords, I, WE, OUR are usually included in the article • An acknowledgement thanking the participants and supporters is usually at the end of the article 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Documents that comment on (analyze, evaluate, describe, interpret) original information • The format of the article DOES NOT include a Methods and Results section • The detailed information relating to the population that participated in the research is NOT included • Sometimes graphs and tables will be included with limited description • I, WE, OUR keywords are not included in the article. • There is NO acknowledgement thanking the participants and supporters

Psychology Related Reference Sources

Dictionaries

- The Dictionary of Psychology - [REF BF31 .C72 1999](#)
- The Encyclopedic Dictionary of Psychology - [REF BF31 .E555 1983](#)
- Comprehensive Dictionary of Psychological and Psychoanalytical Terms-
[REF BF31 .E58](#)
- Longman Dictionary of Psychology and Psychiatry - [REF BF31 .L66 1984](#)
- Dictionary of Concepts in General Psychology - [REF BF31 .P665 1988](#)
- Dictionary of Psychology - [REF BF31 .S63 1982](#)
- The International Dictionary of Psychology - [REF BF31 .S83 1996](#)
- Dictionary of Behavioral Assessment Techniques - [REF BF176.5 .D53 1988](#)
- Dictionary of Social Behavior and Social Research Methods - [REF HM17 .S72](#)
- Campbell's Psychiatric Dictionary – [REF RC437 .H5 2004](#)

Encyclopedias

- The Concise Corsini Encyclopedia of Psychology and Behavioral Science – [REF BF31 .C66 2004](#)
- The Corsini Encyclopedia of Psychology and Behavioral Science – [REF BF31 .C66 2001](#)
- Concise Encyclopedia of Psychology – [REF BF31 .C67 1996](#)
- Encyclopedia of Human Behavior – [REF BF31 .E5 1994](#)
- Encyclopedia of Psychology – [REF BF31 .E52 2000](#)
- Psychology Encyclopedia - [REF BF31 .P7](#)
- Encyclopedia of Psychological Assessment – [REF BF176 .E53 2003](#)
- Encyclopedia of Learning and Memory - [REF BF318 .E53 1992](#)
- Encyclopedia of Stress – [REF BF575.S75 E52 2000](#)
- Encyclopedia of Adult Development – [REF BF724.5 .E53 1993](#)
- International Encyclopedia of the Social and Behavioral Sciences – [REF H41 .I58 2001](#)
- Encyclopedia of Health and Behavior – [REF R726.5 .E53 2004](#)
- Encyclopedia of Mental Health – [REF RA790.5 .E53 1998](#)
- International Encyclopedia of Psychiatry, Psychology, Psychoanalysis, and Neurology –
[REF RC334 .I57](#)
- Encyclopedia of Neurological Sciences – [REF RC346 .E53 2003](#)

Handbooks

- International Handbook of Psychology - [REF BF77 .I62 1987](#)
- Handbook of International Psychology – [REF BF121 .H2115 2004](#)
- Handbook of Child Psychology – [REF BF721 .H242 1998](#)
- Handbook of Industrial and Organizational Psychology – [REF HF5548.8 .H265 1990](#)
- Handbook of Social Psychology – [REF HM251 .H224 1998](#)
- Handbook of Educational Psychology - [REF LB1051 .H2354 1996](#)
- Handbook of School Psychology – [REF LB1051 .H2356 1999](#)
- Handbook of Forensic Psychology - [REF RA1148 .H36 1987](#)
- The Clinical Psychology Handbook - [REF RC467 .C586 1983](#)
- Handbook of Infant Mental Health – [REF RJ502.5 .H36 2000](#)
- Handbook of Child and Adolescent Clinical Psychology - [REF RJ503.3 .C37 1999](#)