

LITERATURE SEARCH

FINDING SCHOLARLY SOURCES

MARINO INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION LIBRARY



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Finding literature for your literature review

The literature review is one of the earliest parts of research. You will use library resources at lots of different stages during your research process, but the primary time you will be doing a lot of library searching is during the “Exploration” phase. This can be a time with some anxiety around it. This guide will help you to get the tools you need to tackle your library and literature searching head on. The goal is to get to the next phase, which is understanding.

This is what the research process can look like:

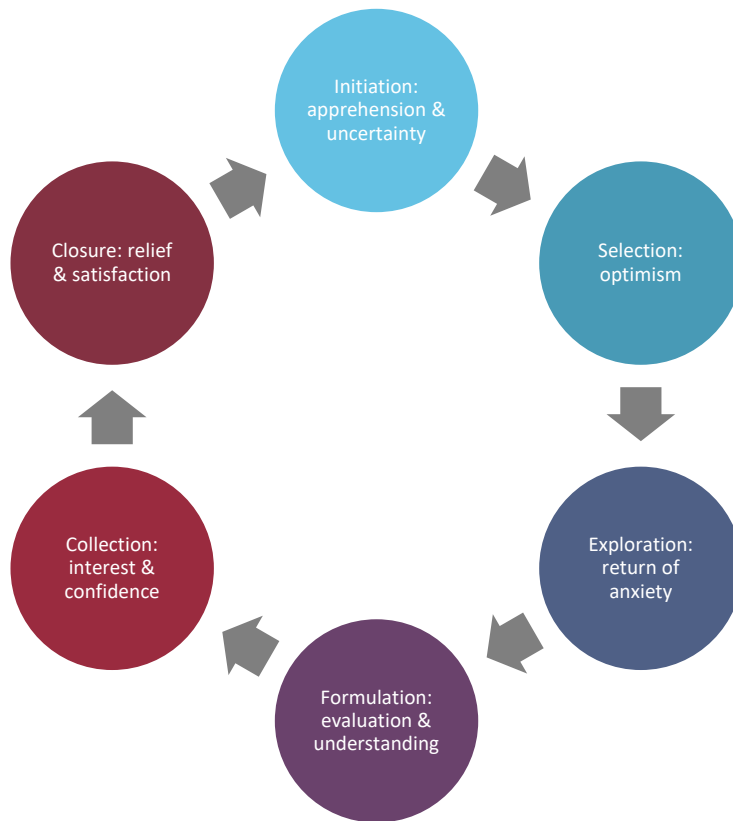


Fig. 1 Kuhlthau, C. (2004) *Seeking meaning: a process approach to library and information services*. Libraries Unlimited.

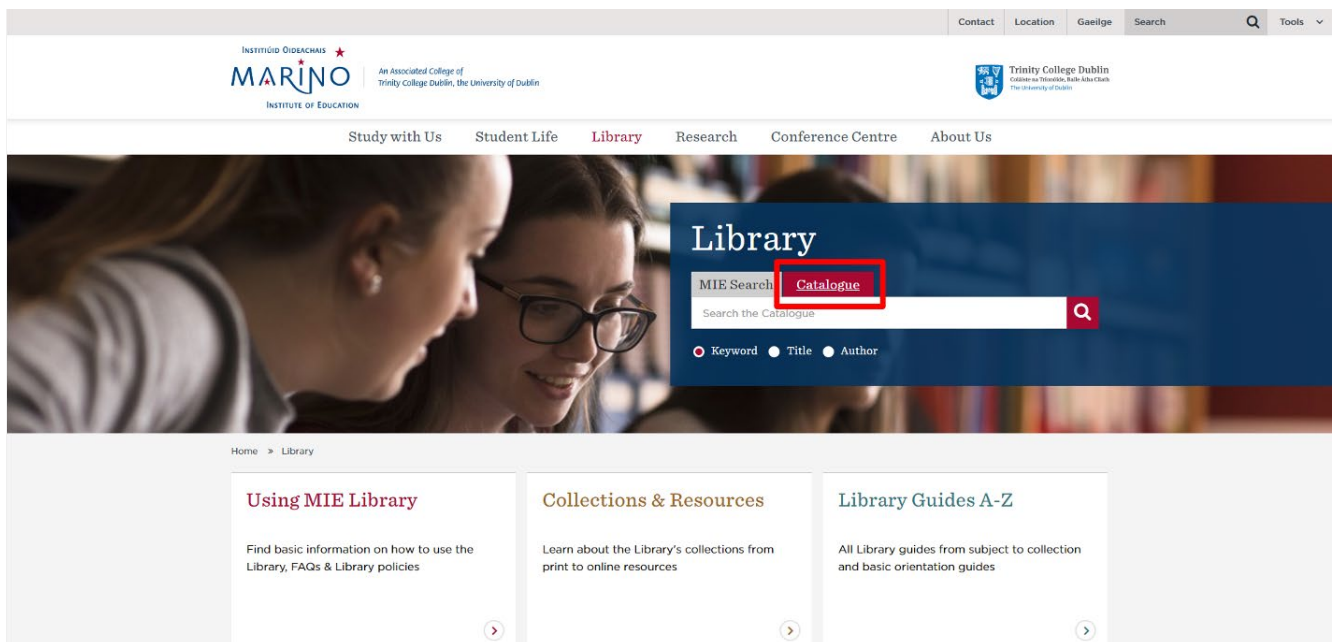
Searching the library catalogue

What is a catalogue?

The catalogue is essentially an online list of all the resources the library has access to. It includes all the physical items in the library such as textbooks, children's books, government publications, theses and more. It also includes all our online resources, such as e-books, journal articles and videos

Where do I find the library catalogue?

You can search the library catalogue on the [library website](#). In the blue search box, you will see two tabs: "MIE Search" and "Catalogue". Choosing "Catalogue" will limit your search to things that we have in the library building, such as textbooks. If you choose "MIE Search", you will expand your search results to include all of the library's online resources such as journal articles, e-books, videos and more.



The screenshot displays the library website's search interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for Contact, Location, Gaeilge, Search, and Tools. Below this, the MARINO logo is visible, along with the text "An Associated College of Trinity College Dublin, the University of Dublin" and "INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION". The main navigation menu includes Study with Us, Student Life, Library, Research, Conference Centre, and About Us. The central focus is a large blue banner with the word "Library" in white. Below "Library" are two tabs: "MIE Search" and "Catalogue", with "Catalogue" highlighted by a red box. A search input field is present with the placeholder text "Search the Catalogue" and a magnifying glass icon. Below the search field are three radio buttons for "Keyword", "Title", and "Author". At the bottom of the banner, there is a breadcrumb trail: "Home > Library". Below the banner, there are three columns of content: "Using MIE Library" (with a sub-heading "Find basic information on how to use the Library, FAQs & Library policies"), "Collections & Resources" (with a sub-heading "Learn about the Library's collections from print to online resources"), and "Library Guides A-Z" (with a sub-heading "All Library guides from subject to collection and basic orientation guides").

What to search?

You can search using lots of different terms including the author's name, the title of the book, a keyword or a subject or topic.

Searching for books

While you will be using a lot of articles and reports as sources for your dissertation, you may also want to use some books. Remember, that books in the library aren't just textbooks, we also have lots of edited books - these are volumes that have different chapters on related topics written by different authors. They are often a good way to get many perspectives on a single topic.

For instance, if you are researching digital literacy, you could carry out the following search:

- Open Print Catalogue
- The benefit of using the print catalogue is that, when you know you are looking for a book, the search results aren't cluttered with online articles
- Search "digital literacy"
- The benefit of using quotation marks is that it tells the search engine to search online the phrase within quotes. See the tip on "truncation" later in this guide on page 10.
- There are three search results in the MIE print catalogue for this search
- Click on any of the results to see the shelfmark of the book, which you can use to find the book in the library. Ask at the library desk if you need help with this

You can also carry out that search using the "MIE Search" option. You will see the same three results from the print catalogue alongside lots of online resources. This year, the library is offering a "Click & Collect" service. You can use it to request up to 6 books that are available on the shelf, library staff will then retrieve the books and you collect them 2 days later in the Reception building.

Another term you may hear for “shelfmark” is “call number” or “classification”, all the terms mean the same thing. It refers to the series of numbers on a sticker on the spine of the book. For instance: one of the results for our “digital literacy” search was the book *Digital literacy for primary teachers* by Moira Savage and Anthony Barnett. This book has the shelfmark LL 372.1334 / SAV. The letters “LL” mean “long loan”, which means you can borrow the book for 2 weeks. The numbers are the Dewey decimal classification for the book, so they refer to the subject area of the book. All books about this topic will have this number. The letters “SAV” refer to the first three letters of the author’s name; Savage. That is included to help you to find the book on the shelf among lots of books with the same number.

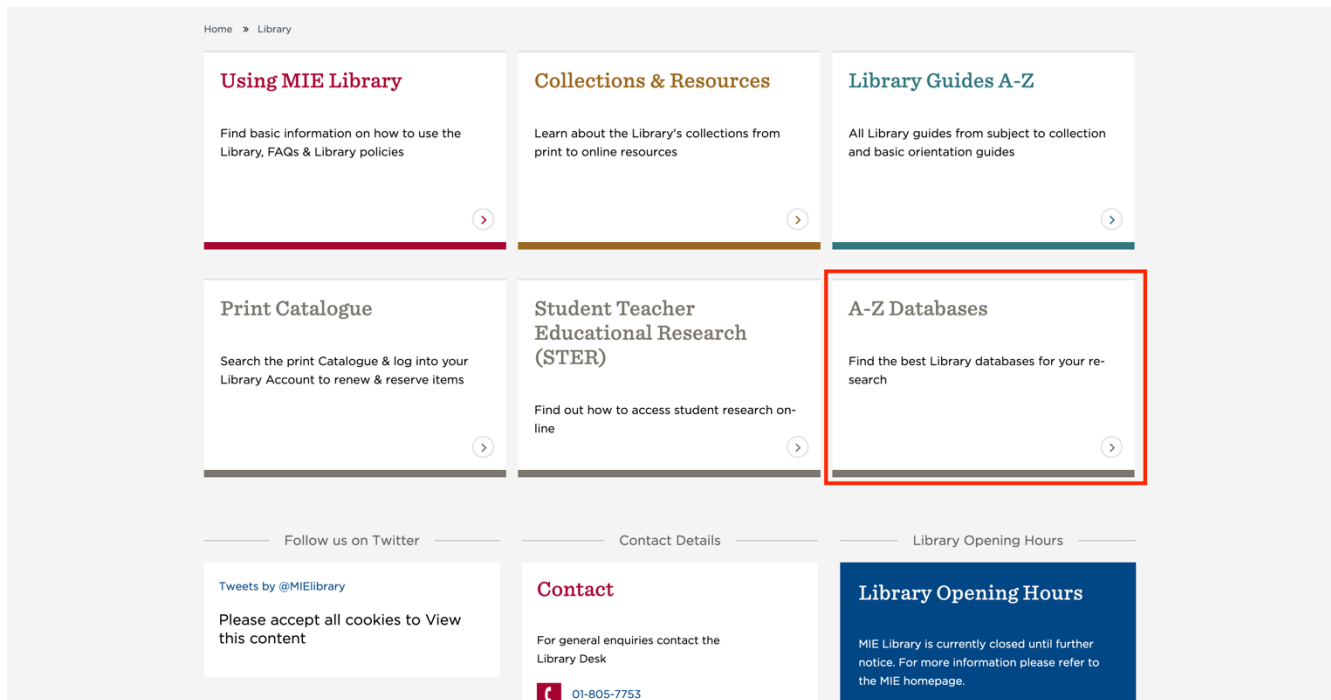
Searching for articles, e-books and online resources

You can use the “MIE Search” option to search for journal articles, e-books or any other online resources. This is a good place to search for the peer-reviewed, scholarly research that is necessary for your essays and dissertation. Input your search into the search box and the results will include print resources in the library and all of the library’s online resources pulled from the databases that we subscribe to. Tips for planning your search strategy and filtering your results can be found later in this guide on page 9.

Library databases

What is a database?

The library currently subscribes to 9 databases. These are provided by academic publishers. Each database is essentially a collection of academic material behind a paywall. Databases have lots of different resources in them, such as many different academic journal collections. The databases that the library subscribes to have reliable, appropriate scholarly materials in them, which are suitable for use in your dissertation. Access to these databases is through the library website, halfway down the home page click on the link “A-Z Databases”.



Finding e-books

One of the library databases is a collection of e-books which you can read in your browser (EBSCO E-Book Education Collection). Because of publisher restrictions, you cannot download these e-books to your own e-readers, like a kindle. However, you can download a portion of the book as a PDF.

There are also e-books available through the Sage Research Methods database that focus on skills for research.

Finding news articles

One of our databases is the Irish Newspaper Archive. This is great for looking up news articles through older or recent history. This is an especially good resource if you are researching regional topics, as many of the newspapers are local papers such as the Ballina Herald.

Finding multimedia resources

One of our databases is a video collection, SAGE Video Education. This collection features over 600 education videos on teaching in a range of settings.

Finding academic articles

Most of our databases contain academic journal articles, including Eric, Education Source, Academic Search Complete, Sage and Taylor & Francis. Eric is particular good for finding US government reports.

Search strategies

Breaking down your research question into keywords

If you type your whole research question or essay title into the library search system, you will find your results won't be very satisfying. Instead, you need to do a bit of work beforehand to identify the key words and phrases to use to search. Then, you can use those keywords to structure a really effective search, filter your results and find the information you need.

Take the following research question as an example:

What is the impact of gender on literacy development in young children?

We can highlight the three most important concepts:

What is the impact of **gender** on **literacy development** in **young children**?

They are:

1. Gender
2. Literacy development
3. Young children

When searching in a database or reading academic articles, you may find that different terms are commonly used for the same subject. For instance, you may want to

research teenagers, but find that the commonly used term in the literature is “adolescents”. To carry out the best possible search, you need to find synonyms for the keywords you have identified and utilize those alongside your original terms. You can use a thesaurus to help you find synonyms for the keywords you have highlighted.

Gender	Literacy development	Young children
Girl*	Reading	Child*
Boy*	Writing	Primary school
Sex stereotype	Language development	Toddler

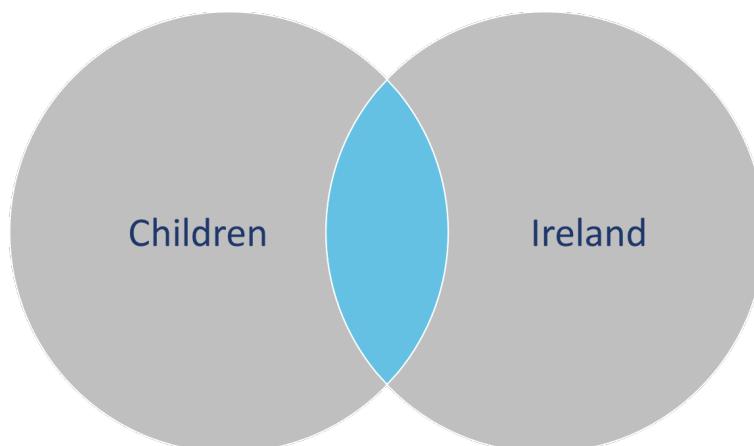
Truncation

Some of the terms above have an asterisk (*) after them. Putting an asterisk * at the end of a word will tell the database to search variants of the word. This is called truncation. For example: searching **boy*** will tell the database to search for the words **boy** and **boys**. You can also use an asterisk in the middle of a word. For example: searching **wom*n** will tell the database to search for the words **woman** and **women**.

Boolean operators

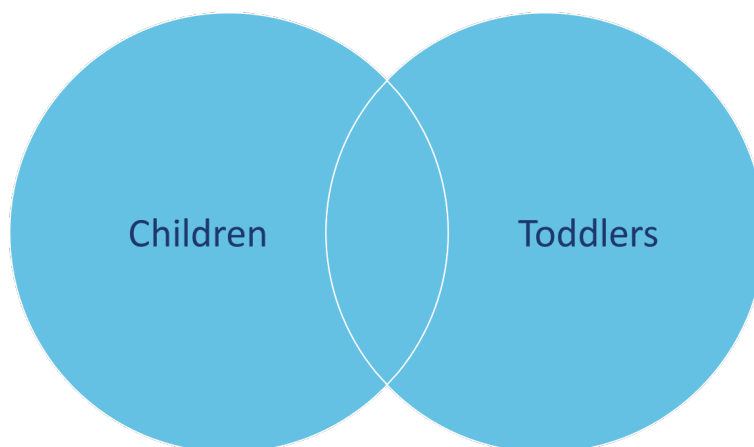
One of the most effective ways to maximize the effectiveness of your search is to use Boolean operators. These are short terms that you use between keywords that give the database different specific instructions. You use Boolean operators to either broaden your search results, giving you more results, or narrow your search results, which gives you fewer results. There are three Boolean operators; AND, OR and NOT.

AND



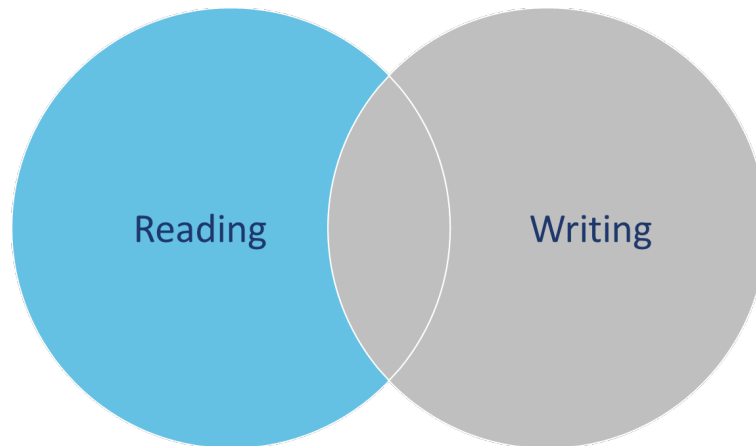
And **narrows** your search. Your results include only results which have both terms. So, if you searched “children AND Ireland” in an academic journal database, your search results will only include articles which mention both children and Ireland and will exclude any articles that mention children, but don’t mention Ireland or articles that mention Ireland without mentioning children.

OR



Or **broadens** your search. Your results include only results which have either term. SO, if you searched “children OR toddlers” in an academic journal database, your search results will include articles that mention children and articles that mention toddlers and article that mention both children and toddlers.

NOT



Not **narrows** your search. Your results will exclude the term you have specified. So, if you searched “reading NOT writing” in an academic journal database, your search results will include articles that mention reading, but will exclude any articles that mention writing and any articles that mention reading and writing.

Using quotation marks

If you want the database to search a specific phrase, rather than the individual words which make up a phrase, you can put the term in quotation marks. For example, if you search: digital literacy, in an academic journal database, your search results will include all of the articles that mention the word ‘digital’ (even those that don’t mention ‘literacy’), and all of the articles that mention the word ‘literacy’ (even those that don’t mention ‘digital’), and all of the articles which mention the term ‘digital literacy’. However, if you search “digital literacy” in quotation marks, your search results will only include articles which mention the exact phrase “digital literacy”.

Filtering your results

Even the best search done in a database may return too many articles for you deal with. In this instance, you can utilize the database tools to refine and filter your results. Some common and effective ways to limit your search results are:

- Language: restrict results to only those in English
- Resource type: restrict results to only journal articles
- Scholarly: restrict results to only articles that have been peer-reviewed

- Time: restrict results to only those from the last few years

Evaluating sources

Once you have found some articles on your topic, you need to evaluate them to ensure that they are suitable for use in an essay or in your dissertation. It is your responsibility to scrutinize critically all of the sources you use. There is a handy framework you can use to do this; CRAAP. For each of the five categories, ask yourself whether the article you are reading meets the required criteria.

Evaluating Scholarly Sources				
C Currency	R Relevancy	A Authority	A Accuracy	P Purpose
When was this information published?	Does the information relate to your topic?	Who is the publisher?	Where does this information come from?	Is the purpose to inform, teach, sell, entertain, or persuade?
Has it been updated since then?	Who is the intended audience (academics, researchers, students, or the public)?	Who paid for or sponsored the research?	Is the information supported by evidence?	Do the sponsors/authors make their intentions clear?
Does your topic require current information or will older sources work as well?	Is this source appropriate for your research paper?	What are the author's credentials or organizational affiliations?	Has the research been peer-reviewed?	Is this information fact, opinion, or propaganda?
		Is the author qualified to write about this topic?	Can you verify this information using another source?	Are there political, ideological, cultural, religious, institutional, or personal biases?
			Is the language unbiased?	

Sources beyond the library

Sometimes, you will want or need to use sources that are not provided by the library. When you are doing so, make sure to use good judgement and choose scholarly sources that are suitable for an academic essay or dissertation.

Open Access research

Open Access (or OA) publications are published online and are free to read by anyone. Open Access articles still go through the same peer-review process as journal articles that you or the library must pay to read. Some books are published through Open Access publishers.

There are a number of Open Access Education journals that are published in Ireland. Click on the title to follow the link:

- [Irish Journal of Academic Practice](#)
- [Irish Journal of Technology Enhanced Learning](#)
- [All Ireland Journal of Higher Education](#)
- [Irish Educational Studies](#)

There are also a number of reputable international Open Access journals focused on Education. Here are just a few:

- [Journal of Montessori Research](#)
- [Transformation in Higher Education](#)
- [Education Sciences](#)
- [Open Education Studies](#)
- [Compass: Journal of Learning and Teaching](#)
- [Contemporary Issues in Technology and Teacher Education](#)

You can find more Open Access journals by using the Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ): <https://doaj.org/>

Institutional Repositories

Researchers, lecturers and postgraduate students often deposit copies of articles they have written and published in their institutions own database, called a repository. There are a number of Irish Institutional Repositories that you can use to find Irish educational research, including MIE's own repository, which is part of the repository of TCD. Here are some of the main Irish institutional repositories:

- [TARA](#) (including MIE papers & dissertations)

- [DORAS](#) (DCU)
- [CORA](#) (UCC)
- [ARROW](#) (TU Dublin)
- [ARAN](#) (NUIG)
- There is a search engine dedicated to Irish Open Access research publications, called [RIAN](#)

Where to go for help

Library

You can go to the library desk to ask for help with your searching for literature, or you email librarydesk@mie.ie. You can also phone the desk on [01-805-7753](tel:01-805-7753).

Online

The library has a guide to Research Methods on the website: <https://mie-ie.libguides.com/ResearchMethods>

Select Bibliography

E-books

Becker, L. M. (2015). *Writing successful reports and dissertations*. Sage.

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