

Tutorial 7 transcript - Research process (Part 2)

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Okay, so in the previous video, we had a look at the basics of extracting keywords from a question and combining them in a search engine. But you might be asking ... well, which search engine should I use? Or, more importantly, which one should I begin with?

Again, it's up to you – there's no right or wrong way to do a search – but I want to share with you a strategy – or a model if you like – that you may wish to follow.

So having a look on the right-hand side here, basically there's a school of thought that encourages you to start very broad and gradually narrow your search. Now, the reason why this is suggested is because different information sources have different levels of depth. So we've all used (or I hope we've used) encyclopedias. And so while an encyclopedia has a very broad and basic overview of an object or a subject, a journal article – which is towards the top there – tends to be a narrow and detailed examination of a specific part of that object or subject. Okay, and a journal article will assume – or rather it requires – a base level of knowledge, so you need to be able to get that base level of knowledge before you can approach the detailed level. And this is basically what this pyramid is showing. So, it encourages you to start at the bottom. So things down there are things like lecture notes – reviewing your lecture notes is a really good idea; the lecturers – or your teachers, rather – are trying to put you on the right track. They're giving you that base level.

You're Reading List: your lecturers are trying to provide you with a list of materials that is a very good starting point for the research that they are looking for from you. And, of course, dictionaries and encyclopedias: very general, very broad, really good introduction to concepts.

As you move up, you're moving into another detailed level there: books. So books will give you a little bit more detail than dictionaries and encyclopedias and so on. And that will give you a nice platform from which to launch into journal articles, which are very narrow, very specific, and are really highly prized in an academic institution as well; it's a very good idea to use those. So in the following three modules, we're going to have a look at each of these levels and how to find information and some good resources and search engines to start with. Okay ...