

Research Proposal

Suggestions and guidelines

Topic

- A problem of theoretical interest to field of personality
- Of interest to you!
- Can be straight correlational, prefer if experimental with an individual difference parameter

Requirements

- Systematic review of the literature
 - What is the current understanding of the problem?
 - What has been done before
 - What problems have been detected
- Proposed research technique
 - Method and procedure
- Expected results (how to analyze them)
 - What are they expected to be if your hypothesis is right
 - What are some of the alternatives

Proposal Requirements (detail)

- Abstract
- Introduction
 - Literature review
 - Hypothesis
- Methods and Procedure
 - What is to be done
 - What instruments will be used
 - Who are the subjects

Proposal Requirements (continued)

- Expected Results
 - How will the data be analyzed
 - What do you expect to find if your hypothesis is correct
 - (Include a graph of expected results)
 - What are alternative possible results
- Discussion
 - What would the results mean if they turn out they way you expect

Searching the Literature

- Science does not occur in a vacuum
 - Current research reflects the contributions of previous studies
 - “I can see so far only because I stand on the shoulders of giants”
- Published results have been reviewed by peers and judged to make significant contributions

Searching the Literature

- Read current articles in reputable journals
- Search for articles based upon keywords in their abstracts (Psych Lit)
- Search for articles based upon the previous work they cite (Social Science Citation Index)

Journals

- Not all journals are equal
 - Quality of peer review
 - Breadth of distribution
- General APA, APS journals
 - Psychological Review
 - Psychological Bulletin
 - Psychological Science
- Field specific
 - Journal of Personality and Social Psychology
 - Journal of Experimental Psychology

Searching the Abstracts

- Examples from Psych Info (<http://gateway1.ovid.com/ovidweb.cgi>)
- Boolean logic allows for complex searches
- A and (B or C)
- Example search for terms
- See the very helpful handout from the reference library at

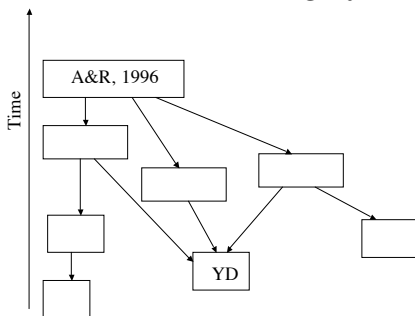
http://www.library.northwestern.edu/reference/instructional_services/electronic_handouts/psych398.html

Example of Psych Info

Find references to personality, arousal, and cognitive performance

	Search Term	Number of Hits
1	Physiological Arousal	12928
2	Personality	131460
4	1 and 2	1261
6	Cognition	4807
8	Memory	22443
9	1 and 8	288
10	9 and 2	24

Literature searching by articles



Literature searching by citations using Social Science Citation Index

