Week 5, Assignment 1: Finding Peer-Reviewed Empirical Research Articles

For this assignment you will locate and evaluate one peer-reviewed empirical research article (not a review article) that addresses at least one aspect of your research question. Contact your instructor if you need further clarification about review versus empirical research articles.

As you did for Assignment 1 ("Finding Articles") last week, this assignment requires you to turn in the following for one empirical research articles you select that relate to your research question: (1) a proper citation for the article using APA format, (2) an annotation for the article, and (3) note the steps taken in your search process to locate the article, including your rationale for why you took these steps (see Part 2 on p. 4 of these instructions). **This assignment is worth 80 points and is due by Sunday at midnight.**
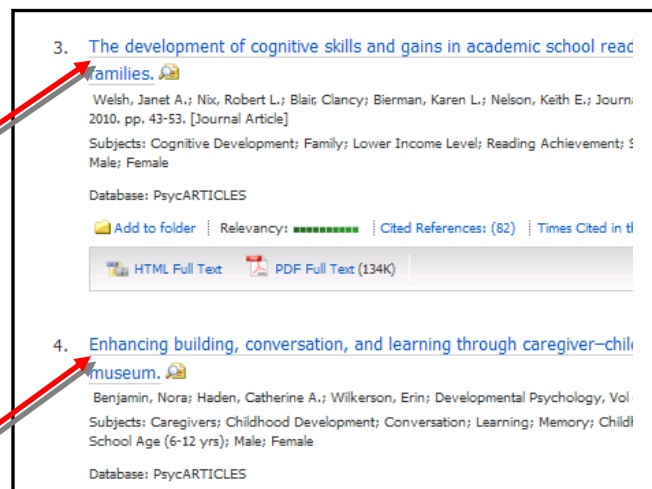
Preparation:

- Have the guide "Subject Specific Databases Guide" from "Additional Resources" handy so you know which databases will be best to search depending on the subject of your research question. This guide will also help you figure out how to access relevant subject-specific databases within corresponding LibGuides located on the Leatherby Libraries website.

- Have your Badke text handy so that you can refer to Chapter 4 when analyzing the metadata in the records of the research articles you locate.

- Be prepared to take notes of your search process and rationale (see more information under "Bringing It All Together" near the end of this document).

- Remember that time and patience is key to doing thorough and meaningful research.

- If you experience any issues connecting to or using the databases, refer to the Brandman University Library Services page to contact a librarian for assistance. http://www1.chapman.edu/library/centers/

PART 1: Searching for Empirical Research Articles

- **Refer to the guide "Subject Specific Databases Guide"** located in the Additional Resources folder.
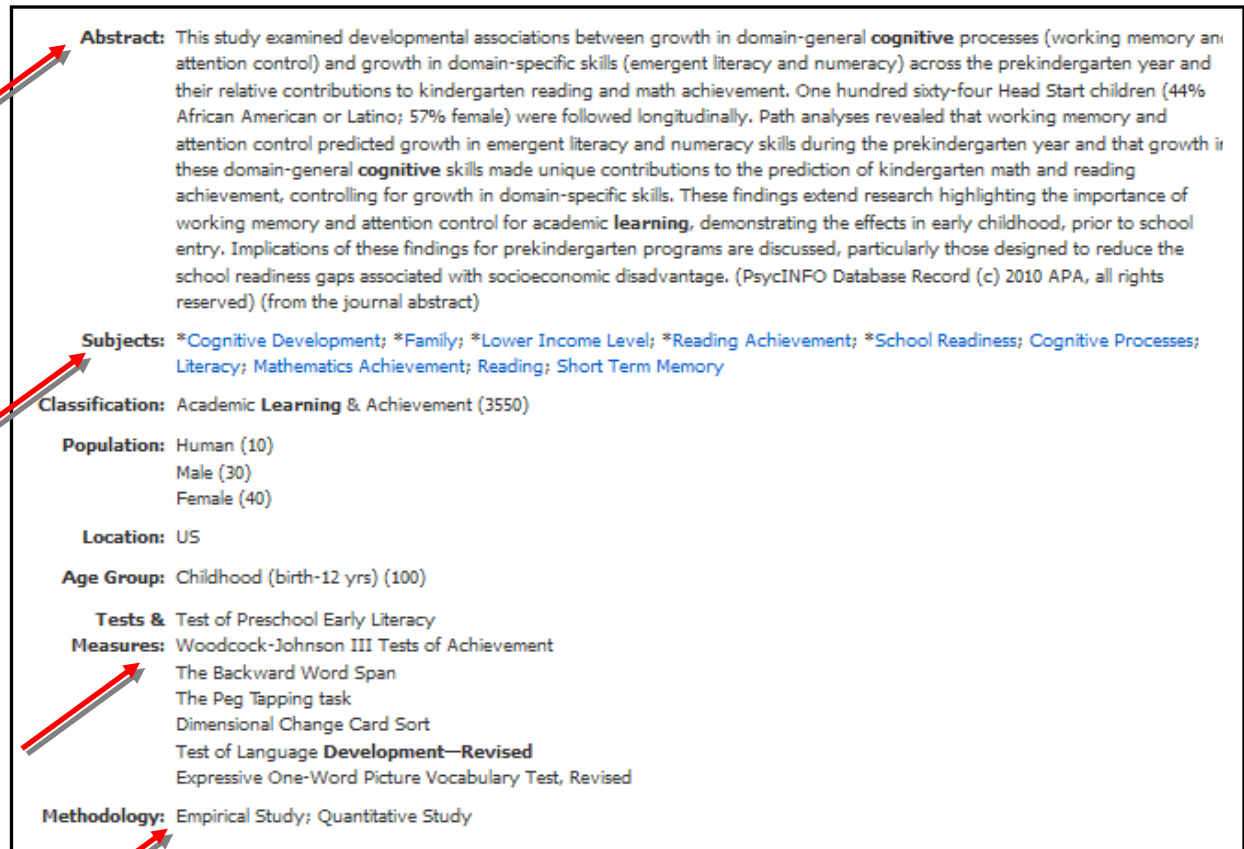
  Look for the databases within the subject area most appropriate for your topic and research question. You will be searching multiple databases to complete this assignment, and you may be using databases from more than one subject area if the topic of your research question is multidisciplinary. For example, if your question had something to do with the cognitive development of children and learning, you would want to look at both Education and Psychology subject-specific databases. Remember that if you are having a difficult time figuring out which databases would be good for the topic of your research question, consult with your instructor or librarians.

- **Use the database's thesaurus tool to identify subject headings in addition to the keywords you think of.** Before entering terms you think of (keywords) that describe the main concepts of your research question, review pp. 87-90 in your Badke text (beginning with Section 4.6.2 "Other databases"). This part of the chapter provides search strategies using controlled vocabulary terms (e.g., subject headings and descriptors) in your searches. Use the database's thesaurus tool to identify controlled vocabulary terms that relate to the main concepts of your research question. Use these controlled vocabulary terms along with the keywords you think on your own to build your search. Some searches are going to yield better results than others. You will need to do multiple searches using different keywords and terms you gather from your thesaurus searches. Be aware that some databases name the thesaurus tool something other than "Thesaurus" (e.g. Subject Terms, Descriptors, CINAHL Headings, and MeSH Database). If you cannot find the thesaurus tool within the database you're searching, you can contact a librarian for assistance (contact information listed on the previous page under "Preparation") and/or conduct a search using terms you think of and look at the metadata provided in an article's record which usually lists subject headings assigned to the article somewhere around the abstract. Be sure to note the terms that you feel most apply to your research. You may find them useful in future searches!

- **Limit your search to peer-reviewed, if possible.** Make sure you have limited your search to retrieve only peer-reviewed research articles. Some databases have a box you can check that mentions the terms scholarly and/or peer-reviewed. Such limiters may also be located below the search boxes where you entered keywords and subject headings. You may even need to scroll down the page to locate these limiters. If you do not find such a limiter and are not sure if the research articles you would like to use for the assignment are peer-reviewed, you can use the Ulrich's database at http://cufts2.lib.sfu.ca/CRDB/COU/resource/1413/goto (peer-reviewed journals are marked as "refereed"), or you can ask a librarian for assistance.

- **Analyze the research article records to efficiently assess usefulness for your research.** When viewing the list of results you obtain in your searches, (as shown to the right).

In many databases, you can click on the titles of items listed to view the full or detailed record.

The record contains the metadata that describes the article and provides useful information to help you determine the relevance of it for your research. For example, the abstract and subject headings found in the records can quickly tell you if the article is going to be useful for your research. See below for the kind of information a record's metadata can provide.

Abstract: This study examined developmental associations between growth in domain-general **cognitive** processes (working memory and attention control) and growth in domain-specific skills (emergent literacy and numeracy) across the prekindergarten year and their relative contributions to kindergarten reading and math achievement. One hundred sixty-four Head Start children (44% African American or Latino; 57% female) were followed longitudinally. Path analyses revealed that working memory and attention control predicted growth in emergent literacy and numeracy skills during the prekindergarten year and that growth in these domain-general **cognitive** skills made unique contributions to the prediction of kindergarten math and reading achievement, controlling for growth in domain-specific skills. These findings extend research highlighting the importance of working memory and attention control for academic **learning**, demonstrating the effects in early childhood, prior to school entry. Implications of these findings for prekindergarten programs are discussed, particularly those designed to reduce the school readiness gaps associated with socioeconomic disadvantage. (PsycINFO Database Record (c) 2010 APA, all rights reserved) (from the journal abstract)

Subjects: *Cognitive Development; *Family; *Lower Income Level; *Reading Achievement; *School Readiness; Cognitive Processes; Literacy; Mathematics Achievement; Reading; Short Term Memory

Classification: Academic **Learning** & Achievement (3550)

Population: Human (10)
Male (30)
Female (40)

Location: US

Age Group: Childhood (birth-12 yrs) (100)

Tests & Measures: Test of Preschool Early Literacy
Woodcock-Johnson III Tests of Achievement
The Backward Word Span
The Peg Tapping task
Dimensional Change Card Sort
Test of Language **Development**—Revised
Expressive One-Word Picture Vocabulary Test, Revised

Methodology: Empirical Study; Quantitative Study

Sample record

- **Make sure the article you select is actually an empirical research article.** Some records you find for research articles will indicate this (as does the sample record above). If you need help determining if an article is indeed an empirical research article, contact your instructor or a librarian for assistance.
- **Once you have selected an applicable research article, carefully read it before completing the rest of this assignment.** As you read the article, think about the points you will need to address in your annotation (see below for more information on what should be included in your annotation). Note the literature review in the article since you will be writing a literature review for your research question/topic during Week 8.

Search Tip: As you read your research article, you may encounter terms involving methodology or statistics that are new to you. For a basic definition of a term, it can be helpful to consult an encyclopedia, dictionary or glossary. You may also find it helpful to use some of the resources available through the Leatherby Libraries online reference collection at

http://www1.chapman.edu/library/tips-tools/onlineref.html (particularly Sage eReference, Gale Virtual Reference, and Blackwell Reference Online). There are also open access resources available online covering research methods and statistics terms that have been created just for students and new researchers. Below are some that may be helpful, depending on the article you're investigating.

- Research Glossary (American Academy of Orthotists & Prosthetists)
  http://www.oandp.org/glossary/
- Glossary of Key Terms (Colorado State University)
  http://writing.colostate.edu/guides/research/glossary/
- Glossary of Mixed Methods Terms/Concepts (Florida International University)
  http://www2.fiu.edu/~bridges/glossary.htm
- Glossary of Qualitative Research Methods (The University of Liverpool)
  http://tinyurl.com/438kuuq

You may consult other sources for definitions of terms, but remember to evaluate the source of information, as you have for previous assignments, to check for reliability and appropriateness.

PART 2: Citing, Assessing, and Reflecting (What you will turn in for this assignment)

Once you have decided on an empirical research article that you think is appropriate for your topic, create a citation and annotation for it. Also, include the search steps you took and your rationale for doing so. Steps A-C below walk you through how to construct a citation; draft an annotation, and compile your notes on your research process and search path. You can use the sample assignment provided in Week 3's Assignment 1 (Finding Books) as an example for how to format this assignment. Save your work as a doc or rtf with your name and the assignment name in the file, using Last Name_Assignment. For example, if your name was Jane Doe, you would name your assignment Doe_Assignment 1. Upload your paper to Blackboard where this assignment is located.

A. **Citation:** For the article you select, please provide a proper APA citation.
   You may want to review the section "Some tips on journal article citations" (pp. 109- 110) in your Badke text. Below is a suggested guide for citing articles using APA, if you do not have the official style guide handy -- https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/664/1/ .

   Read the section titled "Online Scholarly Journal Article: Citing DOIs" (you may need to scroll down the page to locate this section).Use the example provided under "Article from an Online Periodical with DOI Assigned" as a model for your citation. If you cannot locate a DOI for one or both of your articles, see "Article from an Online Periodical with **no** DOI Assigned." Please note there are a number of other ways to cite

journal articles, depending on how you obtained the article (e.g., in a print version of a journal or through the journal's website).

B. **Writing an Annotation:** Write a 4-5 sentence annotation for each article you've selected. The annotation should provide the following elements:
   o A brief summary of the article (do not copy from the abstract – write the summary in your own words!)
   o How you think the research article helped you gain a better understanding of your topic/research question
   o How the article will enhance your research and move you forward in the investigation of your research question (e.g., what new ideas does it present for you that you want to research further?)

C. **Noting Your Research Process and Search Path**: Include the search path you took and search strategies you implemented to locate the article you selected.

– End of Assignment –