SEARCH PLAN for Music Students

Searching for reliable information effectively requires a structured approach.

1. Research Question

- Describe your topic as a research question (a complex question requires sub-questions). Take your time to formulate this: a well-defined search question makes your search for information more efficient.
 - Refine your subject in advance, use limitations such as:
 - Specific period in history
 - language, specific area/country
 - perspective /approach
- What type of information sources do you need: general, current or in-depth?
 - general information: for instance handbooks, dictionaries, encyclopedias
 - current information: for instance specialist journals, newspapers, websites, statistics
 - > in-depth information: for instance books, (scholarly/scientific) journals, statistics, reports

More information: LibGuide Research Question

2. Search terms

- Decide on the search terms for your search question.
- Brainstorm for each term: synonyms, related terms, other language, different ways to spell a term, singular/plural
- Consult reference works: (online) encyclopedia, <u>Wikipedia</u>, <u>Encyclopedia Britannica</u>, dictionary (<u>Online</u> <u>Van Dale</u>), handbook
- Use key words and abstracts from your previously found search results
- Which authors and/or organizations are authorities in the field of your topic?

More information: LibGuide Research question - Search terms

3. Information sources

It is important to choose the most suitable sources for your research Use as tool : <u>LibGuides Music</u>

- Databases bibliotheek.zuyd.nl, <u>A-Z list databases</u> and <u>Zuyd Library search engine DiZ</u>
 - ➔ Tip: Use more than one database and several search engines to obtain information from different sources.
- (E)Books: Zuyd Library Search Engine DiZ, Zuyd Library Catalogue, Worldcat, Google Books, E-journals & Ebooks
- Articles: Zuyd Library Search Engine DiZ, Google Scholar, A-Z list databases, E-journals & E-books
- Tip: Adjust the settings of Google Scholar, add FullText@Zuyd to your Library links or add <u>Library Access</u> to your preferred browser
- Sheet Music: <u>Zuyd Library Search Engine DiZ</u>, <u>Zuyd Library Catalogue</u>, <u>nkoda</u>, <u>online sheet music library</u>, <u>Worldcat</u>
- Internet: Google Scholar, Google (advanced search), websites

More information: LibGuide Searching and finding

4. Searching

- Start searching generally, then more targeted.
- Combine search terms by using Boolean operators (AND, OR, NOT)
- Use quotation marks to search for a whole phrase or a specific word combination. (for instance: "baroque music")
- Use specific search fields (key words, title, author)
- Use the literature you have found to select new search terms and new sources.

Search tip:

Too many search results:

- Specify your search by using more search terms (AND)
- Use quotation marks ("...") to find specific word combinations
- Use specific search fields (title, key word)
- Define limitations such as publication date
- NOT (in Google: minus sign) to exclude search terms

Too few search results:

- Use synonyms (use OR to combine)
- Look up official terms (dictionary, thesaurus, handbook, encyclopedia)
- Truncation (e.g. in catalogue): psycholo* searches for psychologist, psychology, psychologists, etc.
- Use references from publications which you have already found
- Use "cited by" (e.g. in Google Scholar)

More information: LibGuide Searching and finding

5. Selecting information

Use only relevant and reliable information.

- Relevance: the extent to which the information contributes to answering the research question.
- Reliability: the extent to which you can be confident that the information is correct

Assessing information, what is important:

<u>Authority</u>: who is the author (an official organization/a person), what is his/her background, can you verify this?

Topicality: is the information up-to-date, how do you know?

Objectivity: what is the purpose of the information, is there a particular point of view, does this influence the content, is the author open about this, is it acceptable, are there sponsors or advertorials, how detailed is the information?

Accuracy: is the information correct, can you check this, is a reference list available?

<u>Websites</u>: what does the url tell you? (e.g.: gov= government, edu=education, com= commercial/business, org=non-profit)

More information: LibGuide Assessing and selecting

6. Processing information

- Avoid plagiarism: use in-text citations + reference list
- Citing and reference list according to APA-style
- EndNote is a software program that enables you to store and manage your information and generates a reference list automatically.

Note-taking

You need to name your sources in your reports and other assignments. Keep good notes of your sources, a valuable skill for citing and recalling your sources.

Take notes on:

- Source + previously used search terms
- Data of publications, e.g.:
 - Book: title, publication date and author
 - Additional information for articles: journal title, volume, issue, page numbers
- Information about availability: online, library, shelf mark

More information: LibGuide Processing and evaluation

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