

### **Clip 3: Existing literature on your subject**

I want to discuss ways of finding existing literature on a new subject. This is particularly important in a research project or a dissertation where there isn't an existing reading list such as you would find for many modules you might undertake for your university.

So one of your first places to start is with search engines, so identifying key terms in relation to your topic, that you are interested in and looking on your library webpages for instance and looking at which databases you have access to. So, for instance, there may be tutorials on how to use particular databases. You probably are familiar with Google scholar which is an appropriate source of information or you might want to use things like social care online or you might be interested in web of knowledge. Now when you are searching for those key terms you've identified it may be that you've identified far too much literature to manage and you have to identify processes to restrict that and find the most relevant articles. So you might use options like limiting it to UK-based literature or indeed focusing on particular years as particular relevant where a particular policy has come out. You may also want to use Boolean logic whereby you ensure that you only locate literature that uses particular terms. So for instance, you might be interested in social work and mental health not just social work. So you incorporate both of those in your research strategy.

In addition to using search engines, there are other strategies you can adopt. For instance, if you've got really relevant key articles you identified through that research strategy you may well have a look through the bibliography or reference list for those articles and then try and access those particular article sources. Look at which articles have been cited that are relevant to your particular field. In addition you may want to have discussions with staff that have similar interests. They may be able to direct you to relevant literature. You can also look on the webpages of some of those key authors that you've identified to see if they have any further literature in their reading list that you might want to explore.

So there are a number of strategies you can adopt in order to find existing literature in your topic and there are a number of skills you need to develop in order to do that.