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Managing Your Management Information Literacy: A Focus on Interdisciplinary Research

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Managing Your Management Information Literacy:

A Focus on Interdisciplinary Research

Janet Hauck

Introduction

Management education is unique among the business fields because it is almost always interdisciplinary. As an academic librarian teaching information literacy in management courses, I have heard students choose topics like “What intrinsic or extrinsic factors motivate a team within an organization?” or “How does a team leader’s style of leadership affect a team within an organization?” When planning to teach students how to search for information on these topics, I’ve noticed that a good portion of the relevant literature comes from the business literature, of course, but another sizable portion is found in the psychology literature. In fact, several of the management faculty at my institution hold PhDs in industrial-organizational psychology rather than business degrees. These faculty are pleased when I teach students to conduct interdisciplinary research across both fields, even though they may not have stipulated this in their assignments. Students also have a better grasp of their topics after doing so. This chapter outlines the business research activities in a one-shot session I have taught numerous times for various management courses. This session can be adapted for any assignment that benefits from interdisciplinary research.

While the newly released *Business Research Competencies* are helpful in defining disciplinary research as “investigating the existing knowledge within business-related disciplines ...in accordance with the frameworks and protocols established,” I believe that

students in management courses need more. They are business majors just becoming familiar with the terms and concepts of the business discipline, and they need a strategy for incorporating the terms and concepts of another discipline about which they know little. I have found that teaching them to use controlled vocabulary while searching two databases simultaneously is the best path to take. This allows students to realize that authority is constructed and contextual within disciplines while giving them a concrete strategy for entering the literature of a lesser-known field. Once they learn this strategy, their searching truly becomes a strategic exploration. I am pleased that student evaluations verify this, with comments like “I discovered how to search for articles outside my major” and “I learned about searching different databases at the same time, to combine knowledge.”

Planning

Number of participants

A typical management class at my institution enrolls 35 students.

Audience

At my institution, the audience for this information literacy activity is made up of second-, third-, and fourth-year students majoring in nine business administration tracks (economics, finance, general, information systems, international business, management, marketing, public policy, and social enterprise.) It is a required course for all majors in these tracks, so a large number of students will be able to apply these search strategies to assignments in other courses.

Preparation and Resources

Preparation

1. Librarian obtains course assignment for a human resource management course (example).
 - Observe and interview a team within an organization.
 - Establish a key finding from your observation.
 - Conduct research on your findings.
 - Include at least five peer-reviewed journal articles.
 - Make a presentation to the class.
2. Librarian creates a research guide for the human resource management course using LibGuide software.

Resources

- Springshare's LibGuides software (<https://www.springshare.com/libguides/>)
- EBSCOHost databases (<https://www.ebsco.com/products/research-databases/>)
- Business Source Complete
- Psychology & Behavioral Sciences Collection
- ProQuest databases (<https://about.proquest.com/products-services/databases/>)
- ABI/INFORM Trade and Industry
- Psychology Database

Description of Lesson/Activity

Goal

- Students will apply a strategy for searching two databases simultaneously to locate a set of relevant results for use in completing a management course assignment.

Learning outcomes

- Students will select two disciplinary databases, one in business and one in psychology, within a single vendor platform.
- Students will learn about controlled vocabulary and provide real-life examples, such as social media tags.
- Students will locate subject terms relevant to their topic that are common to both databases.
- Students will use quotation marks around multi-word terms.
- Students will build appropriate Boolean searches.
- Students will apply relevant limiters for retrieving peer-reviewed articles to establish authority.
- Students will analyze the resulting set of relevant articles.

Time required

This activity is designed to be completed in 30–40 minutes since this is the time allotment most often provided by management faculty at my institution.

Teaching Outline

1. Librarian demonstrates how to search EBSCO's Business Source Complete and Psychology & Behavioral Sciences Collection simultaneously.
 - 1.1 Sample topic: "How does a team leader's style of leadership affect a team within an organization?"
 - 1.2 Open Business Source Complete, click Choose Databases, and add Psychology & Behavioral Sciences Collection.
 - 1.3 Type "leadership style" and encase the phrase in quotation marks; click Search (figure 16.1).
 - 1.4 In the results list, examine the subject terms for exact matches, and note any terms that mean the same or similar.
 - 1.5 These subject terms are known as "controlled vocabulary," assigned to articles to focus a search and bring articles on the same topic together, like social media tags.
 - 1.6 Clear the search, type "management styles" and select Subject Term from the drop-down menu (figure 16.2).
 - 1.7 Verify that the results list includes articles from both databases; this verifies that both use "management styles" as a subject term and may be searched simultaneously.
 - 1.8 Perform a Boolean AND search by typing "teamwork" (figure 16.2).

- 1.9 Repeat the step of examining subject terms, noting any terms that mean the same or similar.
- 1.10 Replace “teamwork” with “teams in the workplace” and click Search (figure 16.3).
- 1.11 Limit search to Scholarly (peer-reviewed) Journals by checking the box on the left (figure 16.3).
- 1.12 Repeat step of verifying that both databases have yielded articles.
- 1.13 Examine several articles from each database and note the interdisciplinary nature of the topic (figure 16.4).
- 1.14 Demonstrate a search on the same topic using similar subject headings chosen from the lists above; observe search results.
2. Students open laptops and conduct a similar search in tandem with the librarian.
 - 2.1 Sample topic: “What intrinsic or extrinsic factors motivate a team within an organization?”
3. Students conduct searches on their own topics while the librarian circulates to provide guidance.
4. Students report back to classmates, offering tips and insights.

Additional details

Every librarian has their own pedagogical methods, and this activity is easily embedded. Various ways of engaging with students during a class session should be tailored to each librarian’s taste along with preferred methods of assessment.

The screenshot displays the EBSCOhost search interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for New Search, Subjects, Publications, Company Information, Images, More, Sign In, Folder, Preferences, and Languages. The main search area features a search bar with the text "leadership style" and a green Search button. Below the search bar are three rows for adding more search terms, each with an AND/OR dropdown and a Select a Field (optional) dropdown. To the right of the search bar is a link to Choose Databases. Below the search bar are links for Basic Search, Advanced Search, and Search History. On the left side, there is a Refine Results panel with a Current Search section showing the Boolean/Phrase "leadership style" and an Expanders section with a checkbox for Apply equivalent subjects. Below the Expanders section is a Limit To dropdown. On the right side, there is a Search Results section showing 1 - 10 of 9,899 results. The first result is titled "1. How work redesign interventions affect performance: An evidence-based model from a systematic review." and includes a thumbnail of a document. Below the title is the author information: By: Knight, Caroline; Parker, Sharon K. Human Relations. Jan2021, Vol. 24 Issue 1, p69-104. 36p. DOI: 10.1177/0018726719865604. , Database: Business Source Complete. Below the author information is the Subjects section, which lists various topics related to the article, including Job descriptions, Job satisfaction, Organizational effectiveness, Personnel management, Work design, Work environment, Management styles, Job performance, Human Resources Consulting Services, Administration of Human Resource Programs (except Education, Public Health, and Veterans' Affairs Programs), Learning, Motivation (Psychology), Professional employee training, Systematic reviews (Medical research), and Individual development.

Figure 16.1
Class lesson 1.3.

The screenshot shows the EBSCOhost search interface. The search bar contains the query "management styles" AND teamwork. The search results show 1 - 10 of 223 results. The first result is titled "1. Fostering team innovation and learning by means of team-centric transformational leadership: The role of teamwork quality." by Klaic, Anamarija; Burtcher, Michael Josef; Jonas, Klaus. The result is from the Journal of Occupational & Organizational Psychology, Dec2020, Vol. 93 Issue 4, p942-966. 25p. DOI: 10.1111/joop.12316. The database is Psychology and Behavioral Sciences Collection. The subjects listed are COMMUNICATION; CORPORATE culture; DIFFUSION of innovations; LEADERSHIP; LEARNING; TEAMS in the workplace; MANAGEMENT styles; PEER relations; TEAM building.

Figure 16.2
Class lessons 1.6 and 1.8.

The screenshot shows the EBSCOhost search interface. The search bar contains the query "management styles" AND "teams in the workplace". The search results show 1 - 10 of 115 results. The first result is titled "1. Fostering team innovation and learning by means of team-centric transformational leadership: The role of teamwork quality." by Klaic, Anamarija; Burtcher, Michael Josef; Jonas, Klaus. The result is from the Journal of Occupational & Organizational Psychology, Dec2020, Vol. 93 Issue 4, p942-966. 25p. DOI: 10.1111/joop.12316. The database is Psychology and Behavioral Sciences Collection. The subjects listed are COMMUNICATION; CORPORATE culture; DIFFUSION of innovations; LEADERSHIP; LEARNING; TEAMS in the workplace; MANAGEMENT styles; PEER relations; TEAM building. There are links for "Check For Full Text" and "Request via Interlibrary Loan".

Figure 16.3
Class lessons 1.10 and 1.11.

Term

Subject >

Publication >

Publisher >

Language >

Geography >

NAICS/Industry >


Database v

☒ All Databases

☐ Business Source Complete (103)

☐ Psychology and Behavioral Sciences Collection (12)


4. The effects of high-involvement work systems and shared leadership on team creativity: A multilevel investigation.



Academic Journal

By: Song, Zhigang; Gu, Qinxuan; Cooke, Fang Lee. Human Resource **Management**. Mar2020, Vol. 59 Issue 2, p201-213. 13p. DOI: 10.1002/hrm.21988. , Database: Business Source Complete

Subjects: Industrial relations; Employee participation in **management**; Mathematical models; Personnel **management**; Problem solving; Questionnaires; Research funding; Work environment; **Teams** in the **workplace**; Organizational structure; **Management styles**; Job involvement; Descriptive statistics; One-way analysis of variance; China; Human Resources Consulting Services; Administration of Human Resource Programs (except Education, Public Health, and Veterans' Affairs Programs); Chi-squared test; Confidence intervals; Creative ability; Factor analysis; Motivation (Psychology); Scale analysis (Psychology); Surveys; Theory; Peer relations

 [Linked Full Text](#) [Check For Full Text](#)

Notes: SPU holds this title.

5. PERFORMANCE POTENTIAL. The importance of boundary management.

Figure 16.4
Class lesson 1.13.

BUS 3657 Human Resource Management

Search this Guide Search

Get Started

Course Assignment

Encyclopedia

Business and Social Sciences Librarian

Journal Articles

Companies

Industries


APA Citation

Course Assignment

Group Project

- **Observe and interview** a team within an organization
- **Establish a key finding** from your observation
- **Conduct research** on your finding
- Include at least **five peer-reviewed articles**
- **Make a presentation** to the class


Encyclopedia



[The Encyclopedia of Human Resource Management: Short Entries](#) by William J. Rothwell (Editor)

Publication Date: 2012

Volume 1



[The Encyclopedia of Human Resource Management: Thematic Issues](#) by William J. Rothwell (Editor)

Publication Date: 2012

Volume 2

Figure 16.5
Class preparation 2.

Transferability

Substitute databases

The preferred vendor platform for this activity is EBSCO because EBSCO’s Comprehensive Subject Index uses expanded and adapted subject terms from the Library of Congress Subject Headings database. These headings are applied to all articles indexed by EBSCO, which makes simultaneous searching of any two databases relatively seamless. (An exception is EBSCOHost’s APA PsycINFO, which applies the Thesaurus of Psychological Index

Terms, with the result that the subject term “human resources management” replaces LCSH “personnel management.”)

As substitutes, the ProQuest databases of ABI/INFORM Trade & Industry and Psychology Database may also be searched simultaneously. However, it should be noted that the ProQuest Thesaurus is used to index the subject field, and most ProQuest databases have an associated thesaurus. When instructing students to search these databases simultaneously, the librarian must place extra emphasis on examining subject terms to find ones common to both databases, since this is not a given. The learning outcomes of quotation mark use, Boolean searching, and limiting to scholarly journals are still applicable in ProQuest databases.

Ability to transfer to online or to in-person

This lesson has the ability to be taught either in person or online. For student engagement, Poll Everywhere may be used in the classroom, and Zoom Chat or Zoom Polling can be activated online. For the active learning portion of the activity, students will be asked to use their laptops to practice the strategies being taught, whether in the classroom or online. The librarian can physically circulate among students in person or assign students to breakout rooms online, which can then be visited one at a time by the librarian. For a flipped approach, students may watch pre-recorded videos and submit questions ahead of the class visit, and the librarian can incorporate answers into the instruction.

Ability to transfer to different class sizes or audiences

This lesson can transfer to different class sizes or audiences. If taught in person, the students can pair up or work in groups, and the librarian will circulate among them during the last part of the activity. If taught online, the librarian can assign the pairs or groups to breakout rooms and visit each room to offer guidance. The course instructor can also be asked to allow more time for the activity or to assist the librarian in circulating among the students.

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