

How to search literature?

Most professional dilemmas are not unique, so the chances are high that others have encountered the same issues and have shared their expertise on this.

Sometimes academic research has been done, sometimes more practical insights are shared. The internet offers a great lot of opportunities you can use to find sources.

A good search starts with a plan. The plans consist of four steps:

- 1) what am I looking for?
- 2) where and how do I search?
- 3) what have I found?
- 4) what do I do with the information?

Each step will be elaborated below.

1) What am I looking for?

Setting boundaries and defining the issue.

- write down in **keywords** what your dilemma is about.
 - Try to find alternatives for the keywords as well. *For example:* the professional dilemma is about behaviour in the class. Keywords can be behaviour- pupils- class. To enlarge the scope, one could look at the contrary: misbehaviour , behavioural disorder.
- maybe you know already some authors who have published on the topic. Their names could also serve as a starting point for further searches.

2) Where and how do I search?

Search on the internet, preferably in google scholar. Searching in Google mostly leads to websites with content, searching in Google Scholar more often leads to finding documents.

- Use your keywords. Type in your keyword and make sure the keyword is between “ “ . this helps to narrow down the results. Use the name of the authors you already know. Find what else they have written and who are co-authors. The co-authors might also be a source
- you can use ‘filters’ to search sources from a specific period (*for example 2018-now*).
- you can add ‘pdf’ in your search, to make sure you only find pdf documents.

<https://www.worldcat.org/> is also a search machine you can use, it is a library

3) What have I found?

Step 2 most often leads to a busload of documents and hits.

You need to narrow this down by selecting those sources that help you with your dilemma.

A first checklist can help you to decide

- a) is it a recent source (1985 is rather old, 2019 might be more suitable)
- b) is it a book, is it a scientific paper?
- c) is the author an expert (either an academic expert or a more practical expert)
- d) if it is a website: is the website reliable (a site with advertisements is less reliable), what organisation is behind it?

After having concluded that the source is reliable and in other ways acceptable, you look at the contents of the source. Read the abstract and decide if it is of use.

4) What do I do with the information

Make a note of the title and other characteristics of the source you found. the authors have done their best to work on this and they should have the credits. If you use their information, you need to mention them as the source (avoid plagiarism!)

Make an abstract of the source. Make notes that help you grasp your professional dilemma.

For Dutch teachers: de Kennisrotonde van het Nationaal Regieorgaan Onderwijsonderzoek biedt voor veel vragen al een overzicht van wat er in de wetenschap bekend is over dat onderwerp.

<https://www.nro.nl/kennisrotonde/>

Je kunt hier antwoorden lezen op vragen die anderen hebben gesteld. Het is vaak al erg behulpzaam om de samenvatting en het uitgebreide antwoord te lezen. Vaak worden er ook suggesties gedaan voor andere bronnen die je kunt raadplegen.

Je kunt ook zelf een vraag stellen, een team van wetenschappers formuleert dan op basis van wat er in de wetenschappelijke literatuur bekend is een antwoord.

Andere landen (nationale) nascholingsinstituten?