

The University of Toledo

From the Selected Works of Jolene M. Miller

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Jolene's Not-So-Secret Scholarly Project Hints 2017

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Available at: https://works.bepress.com/jolene_miller/11/



Jolene's Not-So-Secret Scholarly Project Hints 2017: For the University of Toledo Physician Assistant Program

In general

- You will likely underestimate the time it takes to complete your scholarly project. To counteract this, give yourself a personal deadline of having the project complete by the end of summer semester.
- Your scholarly project is a big project. Consider breaking it into more manageable sections, then set deadlines for each section, such as complete methodology section; submit draft of project to advisor; submit IRB application; complete subsection A; complete discussion; proofread paper; submit another draft to advisor; revise project; etc. until give presentation; submit final draft of project; graduate!
- Searching for articles is the easy part. Reading them, thinking about the information in them, and integrating their ideas with your ideas is the hard part, so allow yourself plenty of time.
- Take advantage of free time whenever you can during your clinical rotations to work on your project – some offer more free time than others, so take advantage of it.
- Back up both your project and your EndNote library early and often, and make sure you save the backup copy on another disk (network drive, flash drive, external hard drive, Dropbox, etc.).
- Don't procrastinate. If you do, it's better to admit that to your advisor sooner rather than later. We love you a lot and love having you here with us at UT, but we also want you to graduate in December. 😊

Keeping organized

- Keep a research journal: databases you searched and the keywords/subject headings you used; search terms that might be helpful for future searches; ideas and questions that come up for you as you search for and read articles.
- What criteria are you going to use when deciding which articles you are going to use for your project? Only articles available in English? Only research on adults?

What is your exclusion criteria? Research conducted outside of the US? Research on patients on a combination of drug A and drug B? Note: Excluding articles that are not available online is **NOT** an acceptable exclusion criteria.

For those of you doing clinical review articles, you will need to report the databases, search terms, and inclusion/exclusion criteria in the methodology section of your paper.

- Decide how you want to keep your articles organized: A three-ring binder with print copies of the articles? PDFs on a drive or in the cloud? Something else? If you will be using

EndNote for this (which I recommend), store your PDFs together in a directory, then link the EndNote record to its PDF. If you have any book chapters, you can use the photocopiers on campus to create a PDF copy.

Regardless of what system you choose, it is important to take time to make sure that it is complete. When you are trying to find an article that was never incorporated into your system, it is frustrating and a waste of your time.

- Make a spreadsheet to keep track of key information for your research articles. Consider columns for information such as the first author, the year of publication, study population, number of participants, type of research, independent variable(s) and how they were operationalized, intervention(s), dependent variable(s) and how they were operationalized, conclusions, etc. This will help you see if you are comparing apples to apples or apples to oranges.
- Ask your advisor what organizational methods he or she prefers. Consider using a shared cloud service like Dropbox or Google Drive to share documents with your advisor.

Writing

- If you aren't comfortable with writing, get help sooner rather than later. The UT Writing Center is a great resource, and they offer appointments in room 420 of the Mulford Library. Request an appointment with a professional writing tutor via the web site: <http://www.utoledo.edu/success/writingcenter/>
- I love my *St. Martin's Handbook* because I always have to look up how to use apostrophes, how to make comparatives and superlatives, and how to choose the right word for a situation (like affect vs. effect). I've heard good things about the *Little, Brown Handbook*. (Like many of you, I didn't really learn how to write well as a science major, so I had to learn on my own.)
- We have two copies of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, 6th edition*, on reserve at Mulford, so you can check their writing guidelines in addition to reference formats.
- Consider using a detailed outline to guide your writing. What are the main sections? What are the subsections? What are the sub-subsections (if any)? Is there more than one way to organize your project? Which is better for the reader? Eventually, you can start adding references within each section so you remember which articles you want to include. Your advisor will be able to help with this.
- After working on a project for a long time, your eyes can become desensitized to mistakes. Lock yourself in a room and read your paper out loud. Your ears will catch the mistakes and awkward constructions that your eye misses.
- Swap projects with a classmate who will give you constructive feedback about the paper to identify parts of the paper that are confusing, transitions that are awkward, conclusions that aren't supported, etc., as well as parts that are clearly written and easy to follow. Do the same for their project.

Searching for articles

- At the minimum, search PubMed, Web of Science (Science Citation Index/Social Science Citation Index), Embase, and Google/Google Scholar. Other databases might be relevant based on your topic: CINAHL (nursing and allied health index), the psychology databases, Sportdiscus (sports med), the education databases, ProQuest Dissertations and Theses (formerly known as Dissertation Abstracts, etc.). Ask a librarian for help choosing and searching these databases.
- Do both quick searches and subject heading (tag) searches, if available. To do subject heading searches:
 - PubMed: use the **MeSH database** to search subject headings (you can also select **MeSH** from the dropdown menu by the quick search field). Do not search from the advanced search page.
 - Embase: Under the **Browse** menu, select **Emtree**.
 - Web of Science: WoS doesn't have subject headings, but it does have broad subject hedges that you can use to narrow your searches to a particular discipline. These hedges are in the left-hand column of the search results page.
 - CINAHL: click **Suggest subject headings**
- Google Scholar hints: If you are logged in, check your settings:
 - Search results >> Bibliography manager >> Show links to import citations into EndNote** (review these imports carefully; sometimes they are sloppy)
 - Library Links >> Search for and add: University of Toledo – Find It @ Utoledo; and OhioLINK – Find it with OhioLINK.** These will add full-text links to the results of your Google Scholar search.
- Take advantage of database accounts to save references (we can export these into EndNote) and/or search strategies (so you can run them again in August to make sure no important studies have been published that need to be addressed in your project). Alerts are saved search strategies that run automatically every so often and email you the references it finds.
 - PubMed (MyNCBI): Save references in **Collections**; save searches/alerts
 - Web of Science: save groups of marked references as **Lists** (but once a list is created, you can't add more citations to it); save searches/alerts
 - Embase: Save references in **Saved Clipboards**; searches/alerts
 - Google Scholar: Save references in **My Library**
 - CINAHL and other EBSCO databases: Save references in **Folders**; save searches/alerts

- Citation pearl growing is library jargon for the time-honored practice of checking reference lists for other relevant references. It is a great technique, but it nearly always takes you to older articles. To check for articles which have cited a certain article (moving forward in time), search Web of Science for the article of interest and click on **Times Cited**.
- How old can an article be and still be used for the scholarly project? That's a conversation you need to have with your advisor. ☺ Typically, the more recent the research the better. On the other hand, pay attention to older articles that are cited by many other articles. This suggests that the older article might be a seminal article: early research that is an important foundation for the topic. You may or may not cite the article in your project, but it is worth obtaining a copy and reading it.

Searching for research instruments

- If you're planning on original survey research, you will want to check to see what relevant instruments have already been developed. Unfortunately, there aren't any decent databases that just list research instruments. Two databases have fields that capture the instruments used in research reported in an article: CINAHL (*Instrumentation* field) and PsycINFO (*Tests and Measures* field). Search for a term in those fields (select from the drop-down menu).
- Even if you find an article that uses an instrument that looks relevant, it is likely that there is not a copy of the instrument in the article. In this case, you will need to contact the author of the article for a copy of the instrument for review.
- If you decide that you would like to use or adapt the instrument, contact the author for permission and explain how you would like to use the instrument. If the author grants permission for use, you must abide by all of the author's stipulations. For example, he or she may not want you to change it in any way, or he or she might want a copy of your raw data. **KEEP A COPY OF THE PERMISSION LETTER/EMAIL**, and make sure to give your advisor a copy as well.
- If the instrument you are interested in has been formally published, such as the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator or the Beck Depression Inventory, you will need to contact the publisher of the instrument for more details. Usually you will need to purchase the copies that you need and may also need to pay for scoring of the instrument.

Finding the full text of articles

A quick summary, in recommended order:

- (1) Click on FindIt@UT. If that doesn't call up the article then try:
- (2) Look at Check our Library Catalog; can you get to the full text that way? If not, then try:
- (3) Search for this Journal in the UT Libraries Catalog. No luck? Try:
- (4) Searching for this article title in Google. This is surprisingly successful. If not, then:

- (5) Submit an article request in ILLiad (our interlibrary loan system). The University Libraries will get a copy of the article for you for free from another library. Make sure to download the article from ILLiad as soon as possible; it will be deleted after 30 days.

A note about articles that you find in a Google search: sometimes you will find the full-text of a preprint of an article (the approved manuscript that hasn't been formally published yet). Preprints are great to read, but check with your advisor to see if it is okay for you to cite the preprint or if you need to wait for the officially published article.

Formatting basics

The *PA Program Scholarly Project Manual* is your friend, particularly when it comes to formatting your project. It addresses basic formatting like line spacing and more advanced formatting such as having two styles of page numbers in the same project and setting up a clean table of contents (without using the automatic one, which causes more problems than it is worth for the scholarly project).

EndNote

In EndNote training, we took a quick peek at the Libraries' EndNote LibGuide (<http://libguides.utoledo.edu/endnote>); it contains a wealth of information about using EndNote, including information on entering references manually and on getting references from databases into EndNote.

Setting up EndNote

- Download EndNote from <https://myutaccount.utoledo.edu/>
- In EndNote, under **Help >> Check for Updates...** You may need to run this a couple of times, so that you have the most recent version of the software
- When you create a new library, the first thing to do is to download the updated list of medical journal abbreviations from **Tools >> Lists >> Journals**. Click on **Lists**, make sure **Journals** is selected, then click on **Import List**. EN should take you to a directory of term lists. Select **Medical** and click **OK**. This will import many thousands of journal titles with abbreviations. (This will allow EndNote to use full journal titles for APA format. Note that there may be some journal abbreviations you will need to correct manually in EndNote.)

Finding DOIs

- DOI = digital object identifier. APA 6 requires that the DOI be included in article citations when there is one. DOIs start with the number 10 and contain a prefix and a suffix separated by a slash. Not all articles have DOIs assigned.
- Some databases (such as PubMed) include the DOI in the export. Check the records imported into EndNote to make sure that it is only the DOI in the DOI field (sometimes other numbers are imported there too).
- An article's DOI can sometimes be found on the front page of an article.
- It can also be found on the journal's website, in the article information. Some journal publishers are assigning DOIs retrospectively, so older articles may have them at the publisher's site, but not in databases or on the articles themselves.

Entering website information in EndNote

- **Reference >> New Reference.** Change reference type to **Web site**. Information needed: **Author** (if it is an organization, add a comma to the end of the name), **Year** of last update, **Title** of page/report in sentence case, **Last Update Date** (if there is one), and **URL**

EndNote as a catalog of your references and PDF files

- Link PDF files to the reference in EndNote for easy organization; this is much easier than shuffling paper copies of articles.
- With EndNote, you can highlight relevant sections of text (in native PDF documents) and add use digital sticky notes to annotate the PDFs

What to do in August 2017

- Search the literature again to make sure that there are no new major studies on your topic that you need to address in your project. (If you saved your search strategies in your database accounts, this will be an easy process.)
- If you find one or more that either support or refutes the conclusion of your paper, check with your advisor about how to handle the information. You may end up adding a new section to the end of your project talking about the new research. You will also want to make sure that the new research is reflected in your presentation, so that you are giving your colleagues the most current information.

Finishing up when your advisor says the project is DONE

- Break the link between EndNote and your finished project: In Word from the **EndNote** menu: **Convert citations and bibliography >> Convert to plain text**. This might goof up the wacky Roman/Arabic numeral combination page numbering that is required for the project. If you aren't able to get them fixed, let me know.

Give this unlinked copy of your project a new name (include your last name and something about final scholarly project). This is the copy that you or your advisor will email to Roni for the program's files.

- Check the spacing and font of your reference list. It needs to be double-spaced, with a 0.5" hanging indent, in the same font/font size as your project.
- On the last day of scholarly project presentations, you will be asked to complete and sign a form that gives the University Libraries permission to store your finished project in the institutional repository. You may designate on the form if you would like us to wait for 6 months or a year before releasing the project publically on the repository. This will give you and/or your advisor time to submit the project for publication in a journal.

Getting help

- If you need help with searching the literature, formatting your project, or using EndNote, please email me (jolene.miller@utoledo.edu). I am happy to help! There may be times when I am unavailable to help. In those situations, I'll recommend that you contact MulfordReference@utoledo.edu to make an appointment with another Mulford librarian.



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