Locating Experts in your Research

There are multiple ways to find experts on any subject, any of which or in combination will yield results for you. Using the example of nutrition of school lunches versus home packed lunches, here are five different ways to not only locate research, but narrow to the theorists or experts who study this particular area.

1) **Use encyclopedias or handbooks.** Locate your topic in an encyclopedia or handbook which offers background information, and in the case of handbooks, often contains names of theorists or other researchers mentioned in a literature review. Your search, though, must be broad! Look in Sage Knowledge, Gale Virtual Reference Library, or Routledge Handbooks for such information. These are available from the JCL subject guide. A broad search could be something like “school lunches” or “school lunches and nutrition” or just nutrition.

2) **Use Web of Science.** Do a deeper search in Web of Science to find scholarly articles and how much they are cited by other researchers. An article that has been cited over and over is a good indicator that the author is an expert. Do a search in Web of Science, for example, nutrition and home and children, then select Citation Reports on the right of the results page. This will pull together a chart and information based upon the core collection of journals from within Web of Science. By the way, you can also find scholarly articles in the other databases on the JCL page. It is just a bit trickier to determine who is an expert.

3) **Find bibliographies or bibliographic research on your topic.** Who is being cited in them? Bibliographies can be found after scholarly research articles, dissertations, or stand-alone research. You can search on Google, but also in Proquest’s Dissertations and Theses database, located on the JCL page, as well as the Oxford Index, also on the JCL page.

4) **Find non-profits and research centers (usually housed at universities).** What organizations and universities offer in-depth research in your area of research? This can also include Think Tanks (which are usually more biased). The organizations and centers often discuss the important scholars in their fields. For example, doing a Google search: nutrition site:edu looks for mentions of nutrition with a Web domain of .edu (used for colleges and universities in the United States). This search yielded: American Society for Nutrition at UC San Diego, The Nutrition Source at Harvard, and and the Nutrition Policy Institute at the University of California. You can do the same search nutrition site:org to find organizations outside the college and university system.

5) **Ask a faculty member!** If you know a faculty member here or at another institution that does research in a particular area, contact them and see if they can recommend experts to your notice.

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