Preparing for your literature review in the Social Sciences

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Plan for today

Part 1: The literature review process

Part 2: Searching

Part 3: Search tools

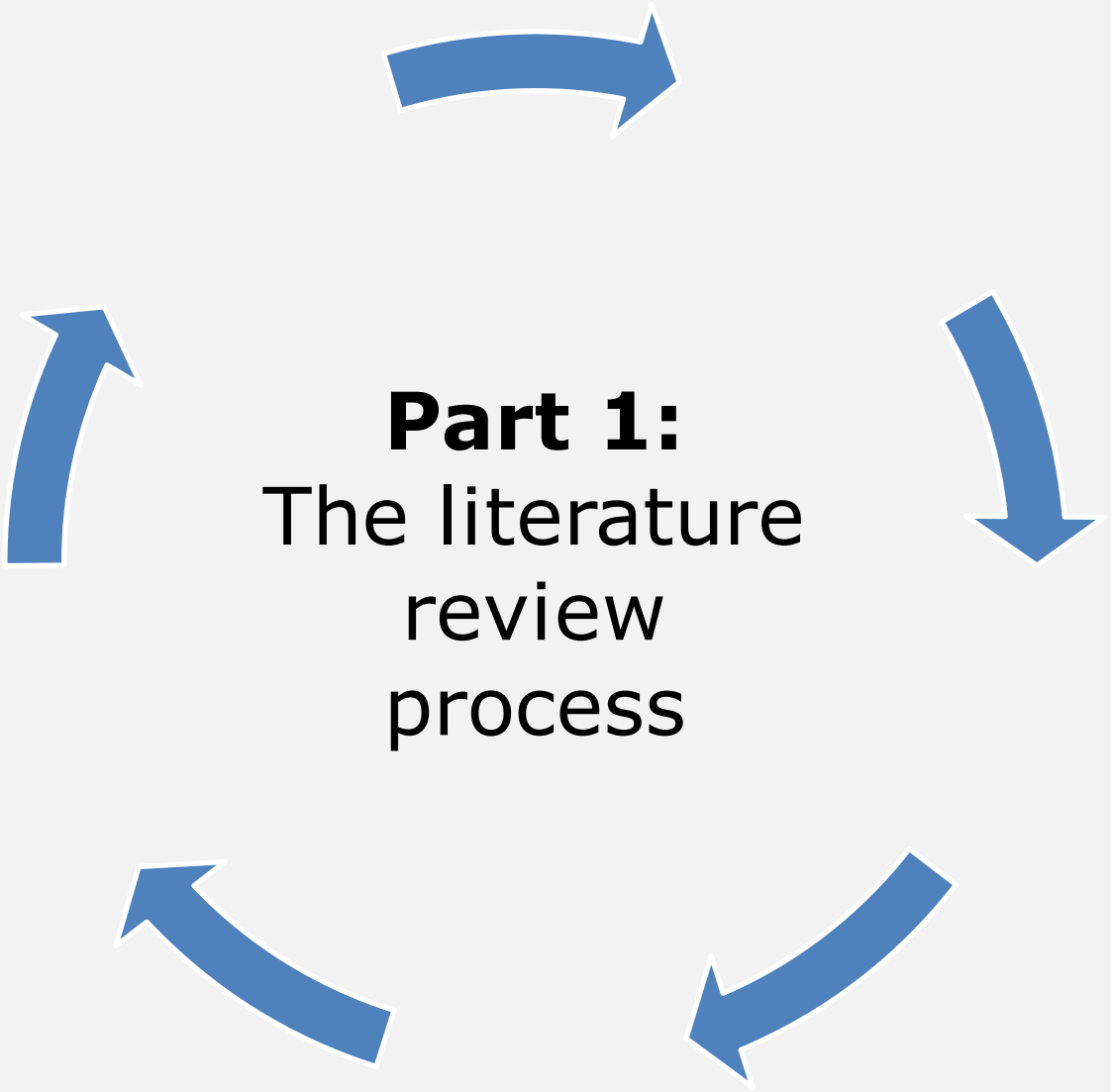
Part 4: Citations

Part 5: Alerts

Learning outcomes

By the end of the session, you should

- Understand the literature review process
- Be able to plan an effective and structured search on your dissertation or thesis topic
- Know where to look for different types of information
- Have considered different methods of searching
- Know where to come for future help


Part 1:
The literature review process

Developing your literature search (1/3)

1. **Preliminary searching and browsing**
   - Scan abstracts and skim-read papers
   - Identify current directions of research
   - How will you contribute new knowledge?

Developing your literature search (2/3)

2. **Structured searching with appropriate syntax**
   - Identify the key articles and heavily-cited papers
   - Establish key authors, organizations and sources
   - Commit to in-depth consideration and re-reading of papers

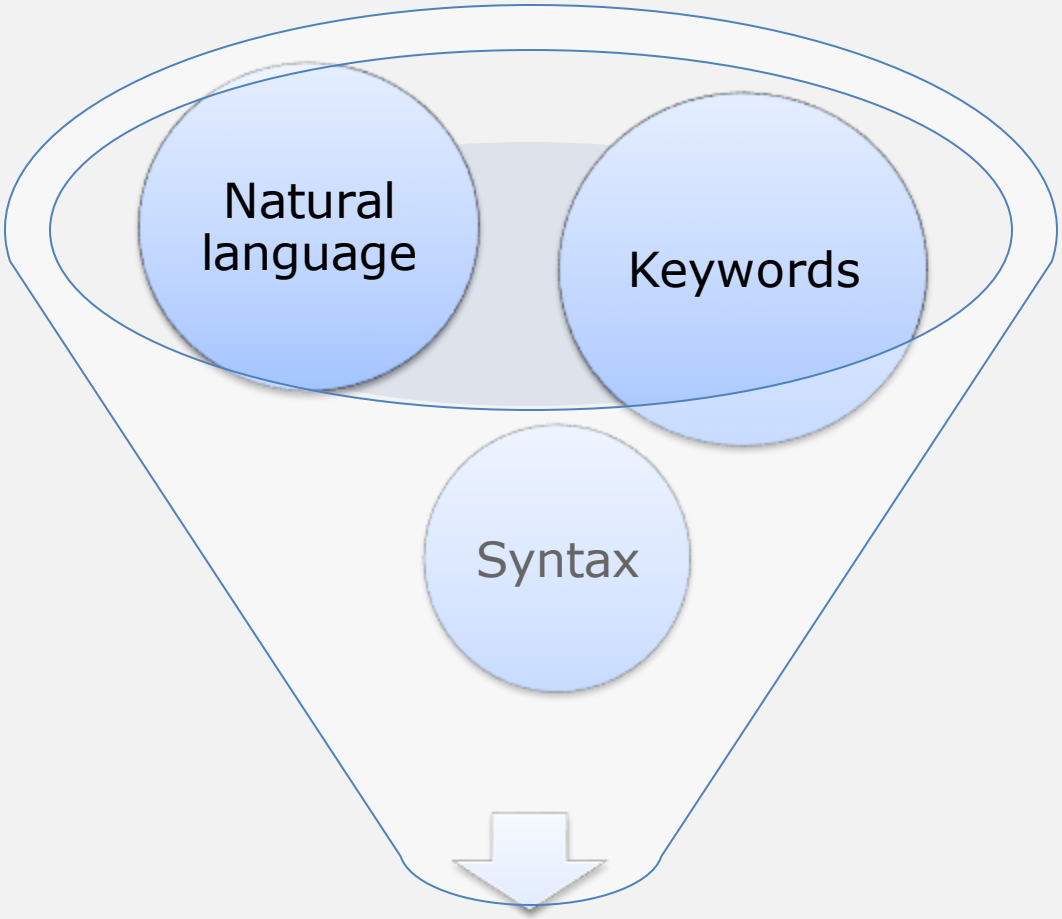
Developing your literature search (3/3)

3. Develop search

- Track citations to follow research connections
- "Cast net more widely" in terms of resources searched
- Set up alerts for new content

Stay focused on the research question and keep a search log

Part 2: Searching

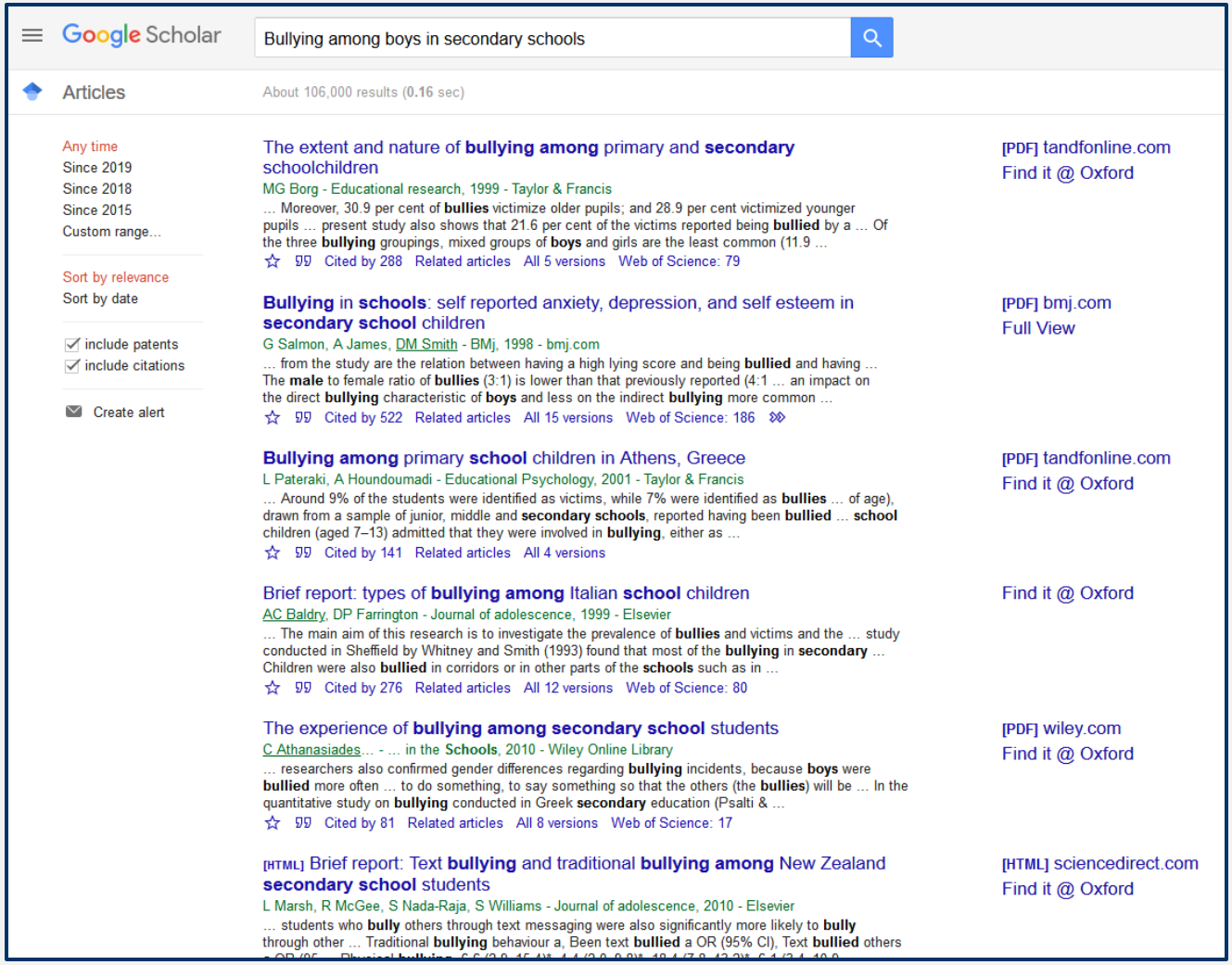


Relevant research

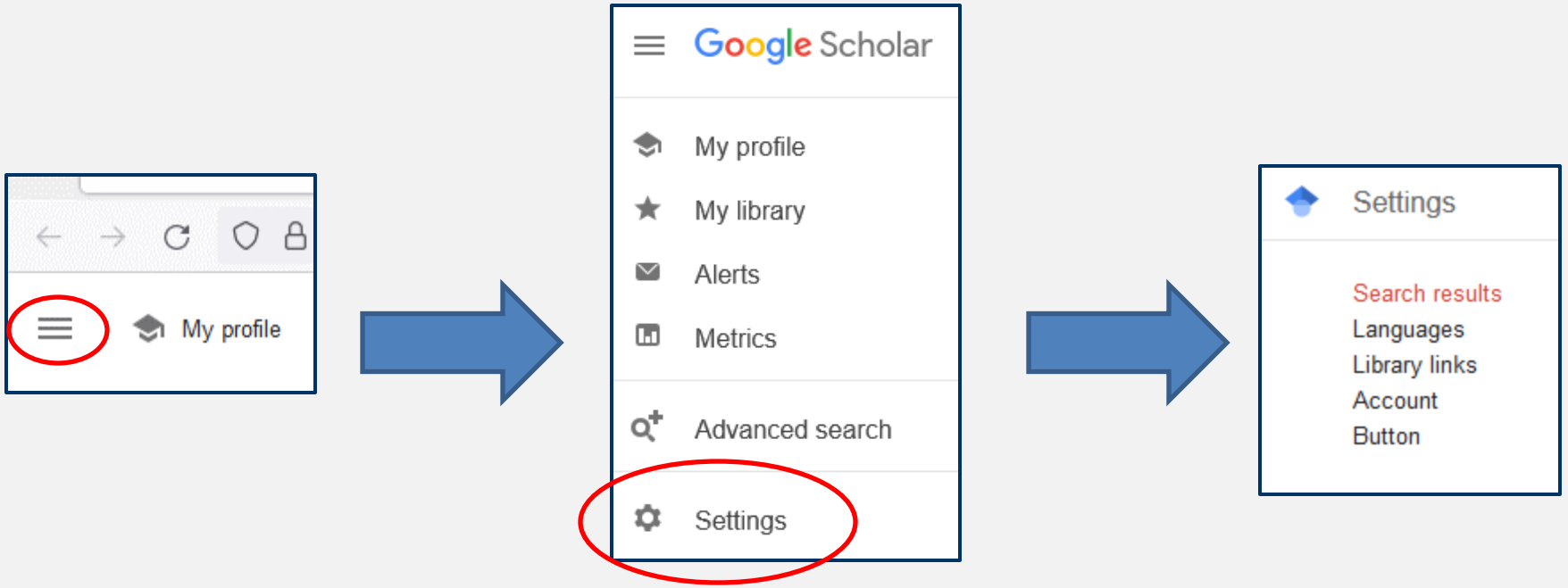
Start with a clear research topic

Bullying among boys in secondary schools

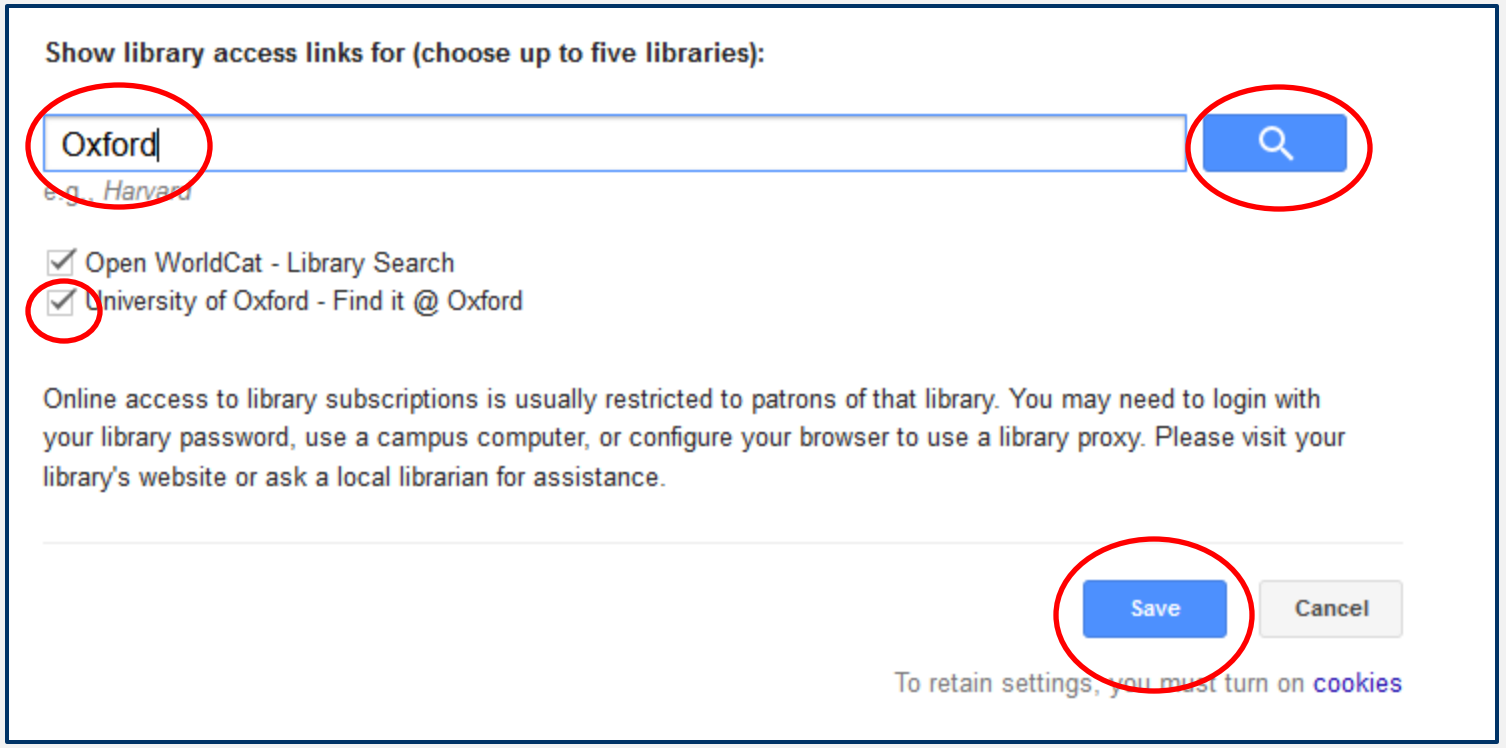
Search method 1:
Natural language searching



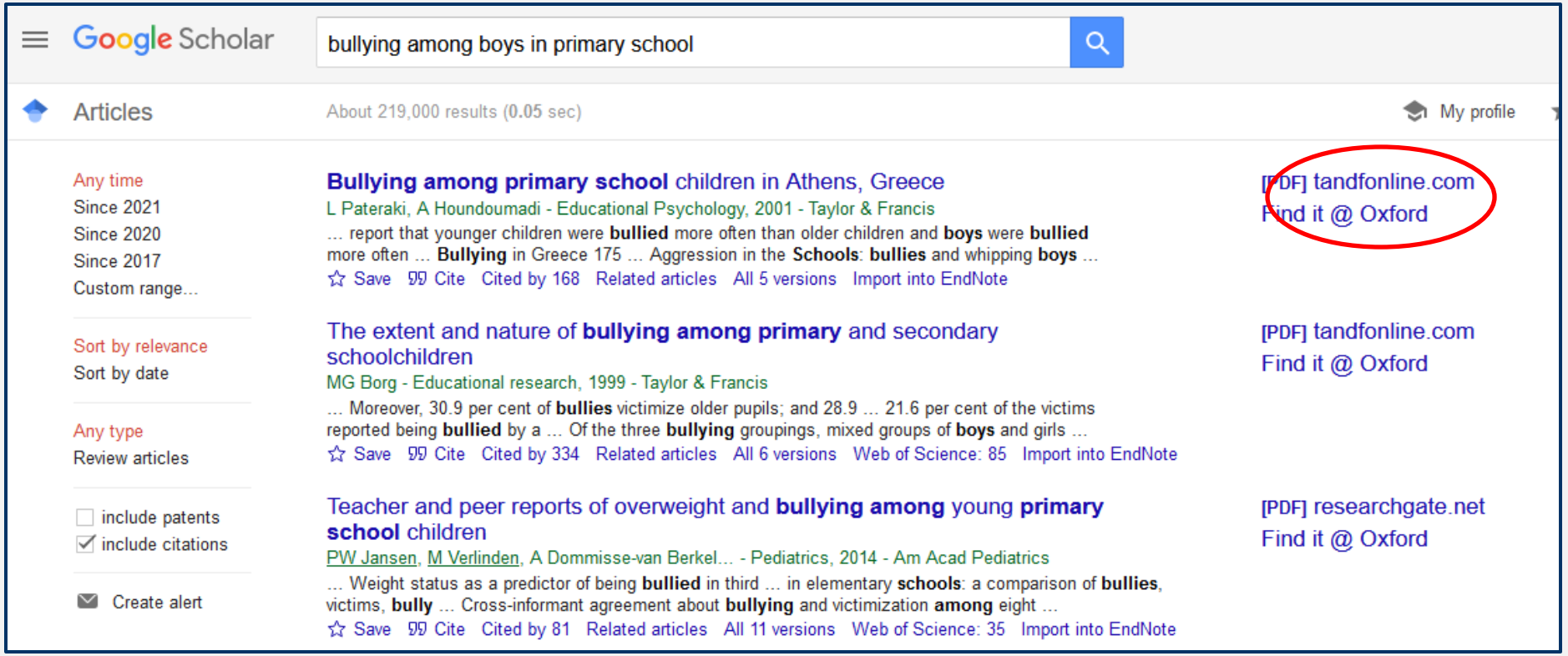
Adding Google Scholar Library links (1/3)



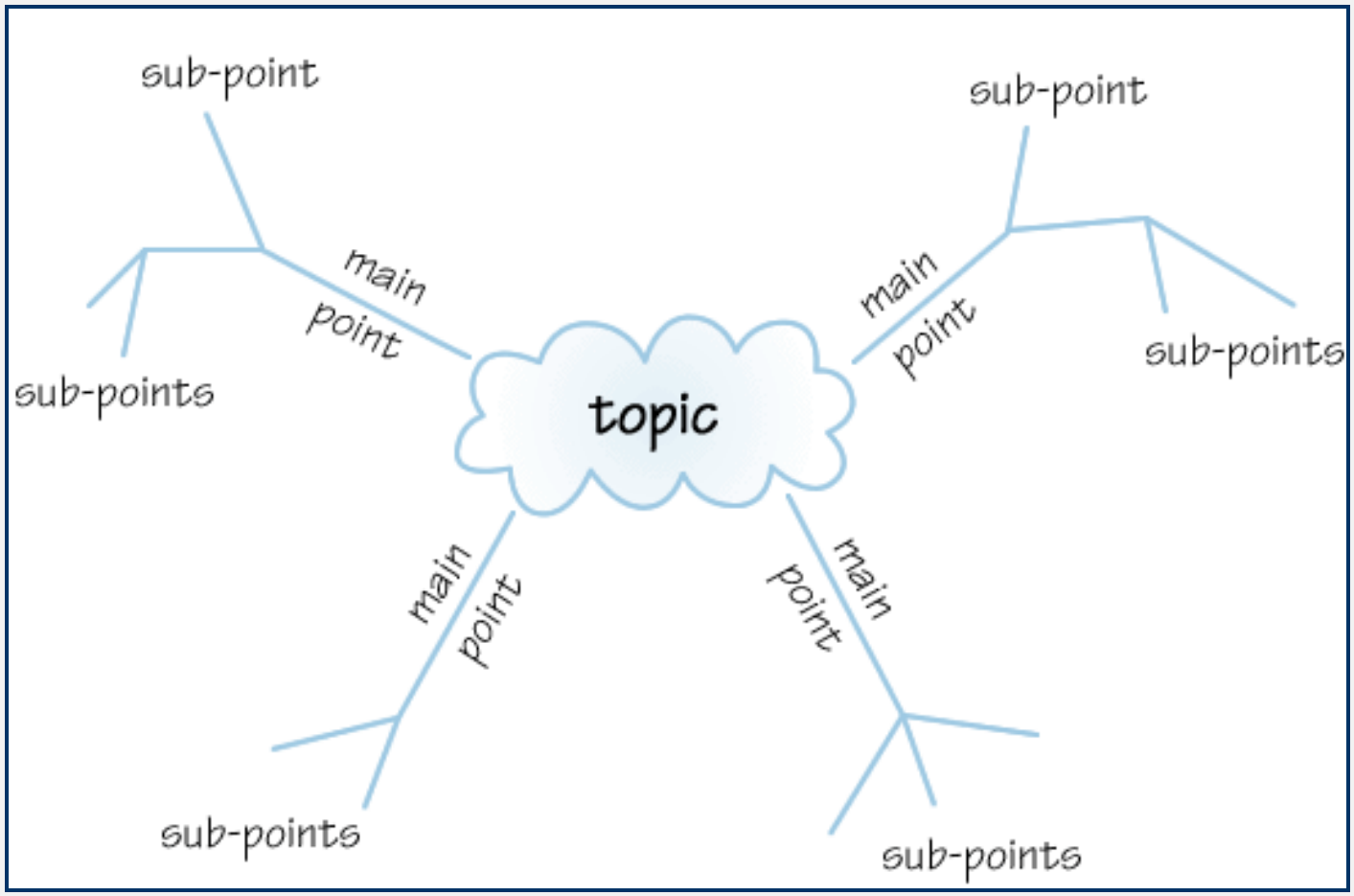
Adding Google Scholar Library Links (2/3)



Adding Google Scholar Library Links (3/3)



Search method 2: Keyword searching



Search preparation: Identify main concepts (1/2)

Bullying among boys in secondary schools

Search preparation: Identify main concepts (2/2)

Bullying among **boys** in **secondary schools**

Search preparation: Keywords

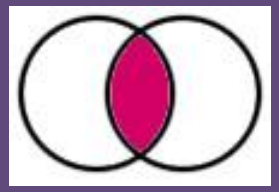
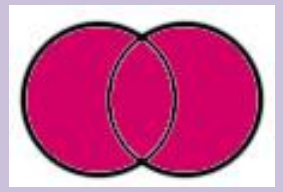
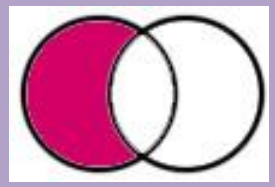
Research Topic: Bullying among boys in secondary schools			
	Concept 1	Concept 2	Concept 3
Row 1	Bullying	Boys	Secondary schools
Row 2	Harassment Victimisation Physical Verbal Fighting Teasing Cyber-bullying Aggressive behaviour	Young men Males Adolescents Teenagers Youths Young people Gender	High schools Post-primary education Private schools State schools Colleges GCSE A level KS3 / Key Stage Three

Have a go later:
Search preparation

See Exercise 1 in your workbook (pages 9-10).

1. Write a short sentence about your research interest
2. Underline key concepts
3. Write down alternative words/phrases for each concept (rows 1 and 2 of the table)

Search syntax: Boolean logic (1/2)

AND	Bullying **AND** boys		Narrows search
OR	Boys **OR** males		Broadens search
NOT	Secondary **NOT** primary		Narrows search

Search syntax: Boolean logic (2/2)

- **AND** is used to combine different concepts
  - Finding articles about both bullying AND boys
- **OR** is used to combine synonyms for the same concept
  - Finding articles about boys OR males (or both)
- **NOT** is used to exclude terms (can be risky!)
  - Excluding articles about primary education

Further search syntax (1/2)

Search for a phrase by using double quotation marks “ ”

This will find the whole phrase together, rather than **secondary** in one place and **schools** in another.

e.g. “secondary schools”

Further search syntax (2/2)

Truncation and wildcards

e.g. boy*, behavio?r, wom?n, victimi?ation

* will match **zero** or **more** letters. It is used to find different word prefixes or suffixes (endings):

boy, boys, boyhood

? will match **one** or **zero** letters. It is often used for variant spellings:

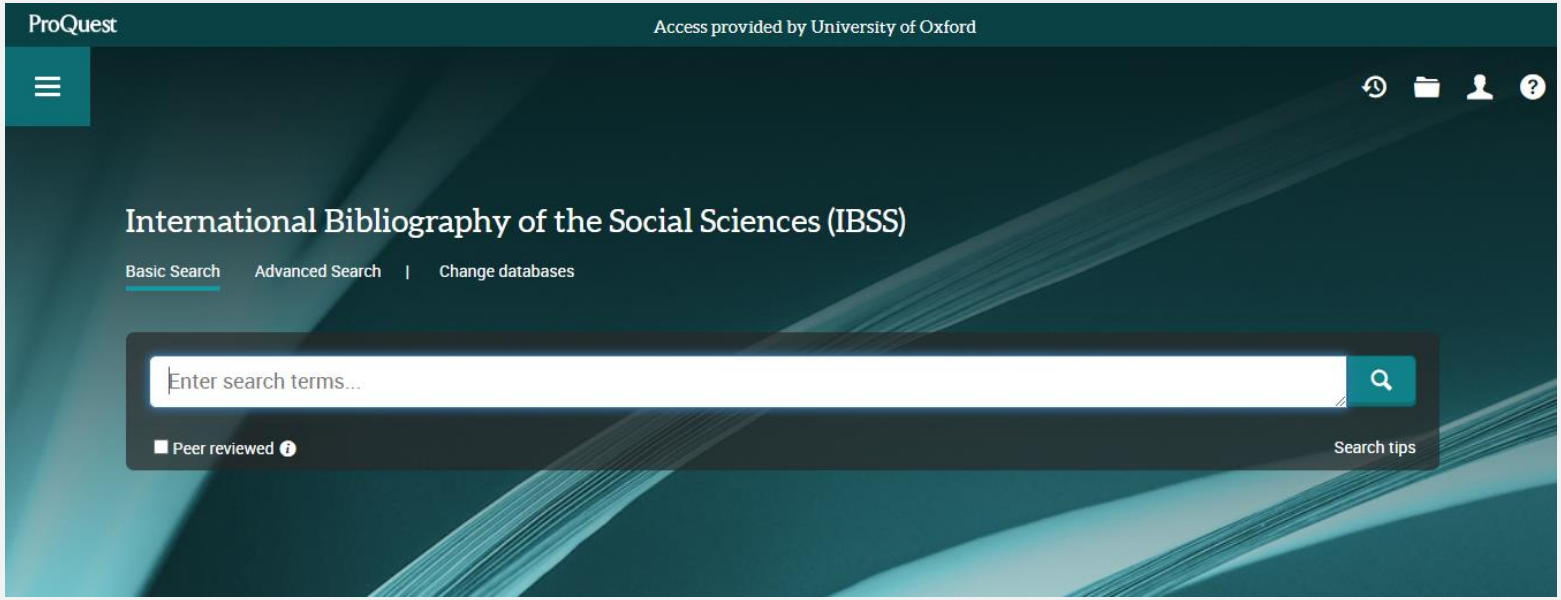
behaviour or behavior
women or woman
victimization or victimisation

Combining keywords and syntax

Research Topic: Bullying among boys in secondary schools			
	Concept 1	Concept 2	Concept 3
Row 1	Bullying	Boys	Secondary schools
Row 3	bull* OR harass* OR victimi?ation OR "aggressive behavio?r" OR teasing OR fighting	boy* OR "young m?n" OR adolesce n* OR teen* OR youth* OR "young people" OR gender	"secondary school*" OR "high school*" OR "post-primary education*" OR college*

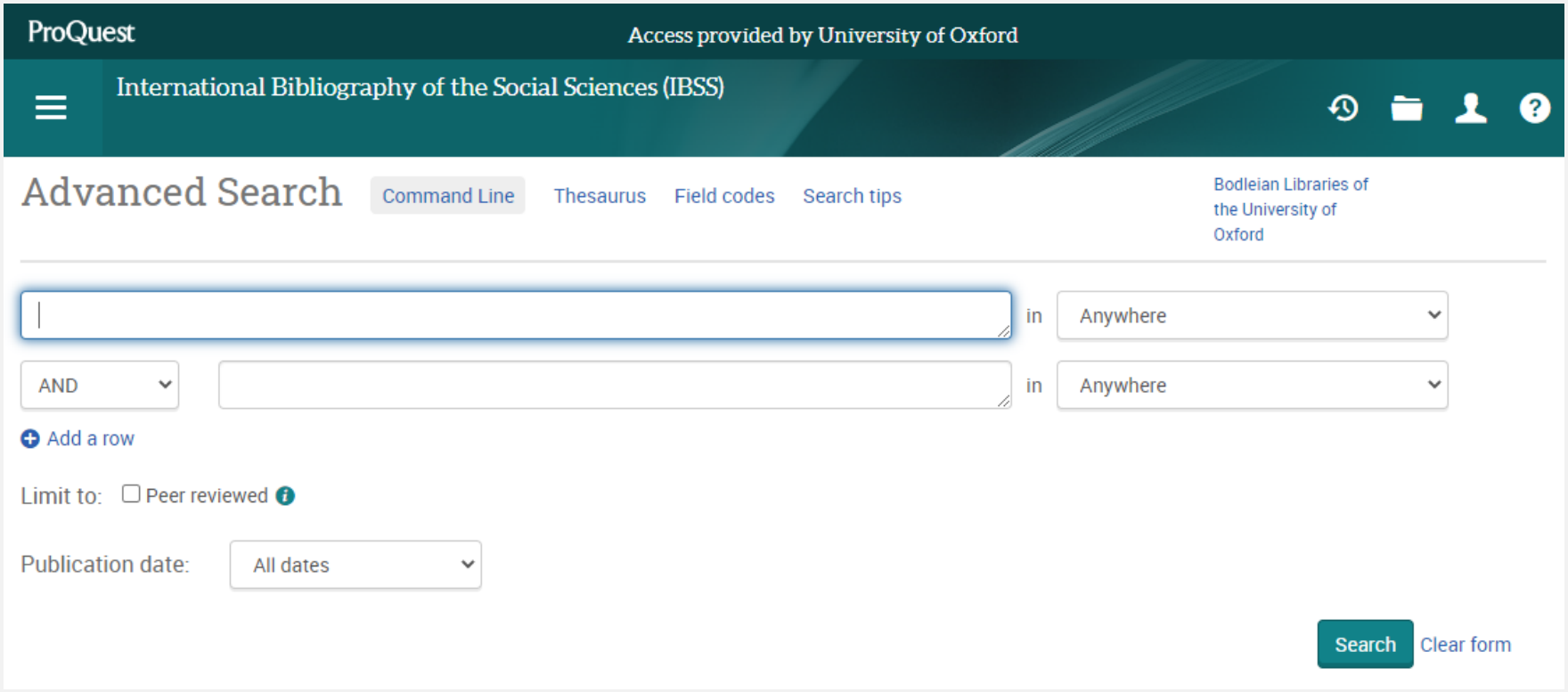
IBSS: International Bibliography of the Social Sciences

Accessible via SOLO
https://solo.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/permalink/44OXF_INST/35n82s/alma991025213864907026



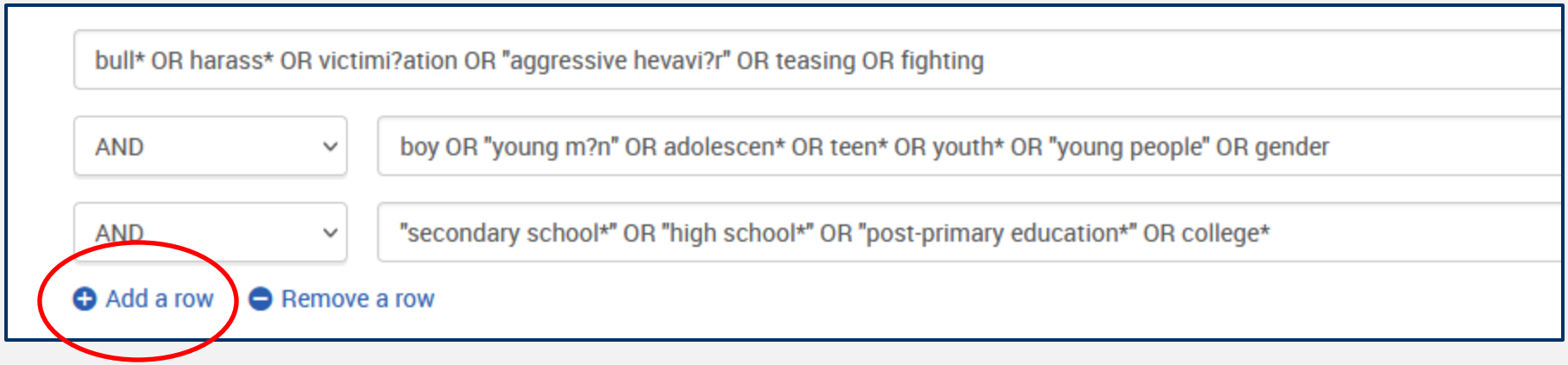
IBSS Example 1/5

Use Advanced Search to get more flexibility when searching



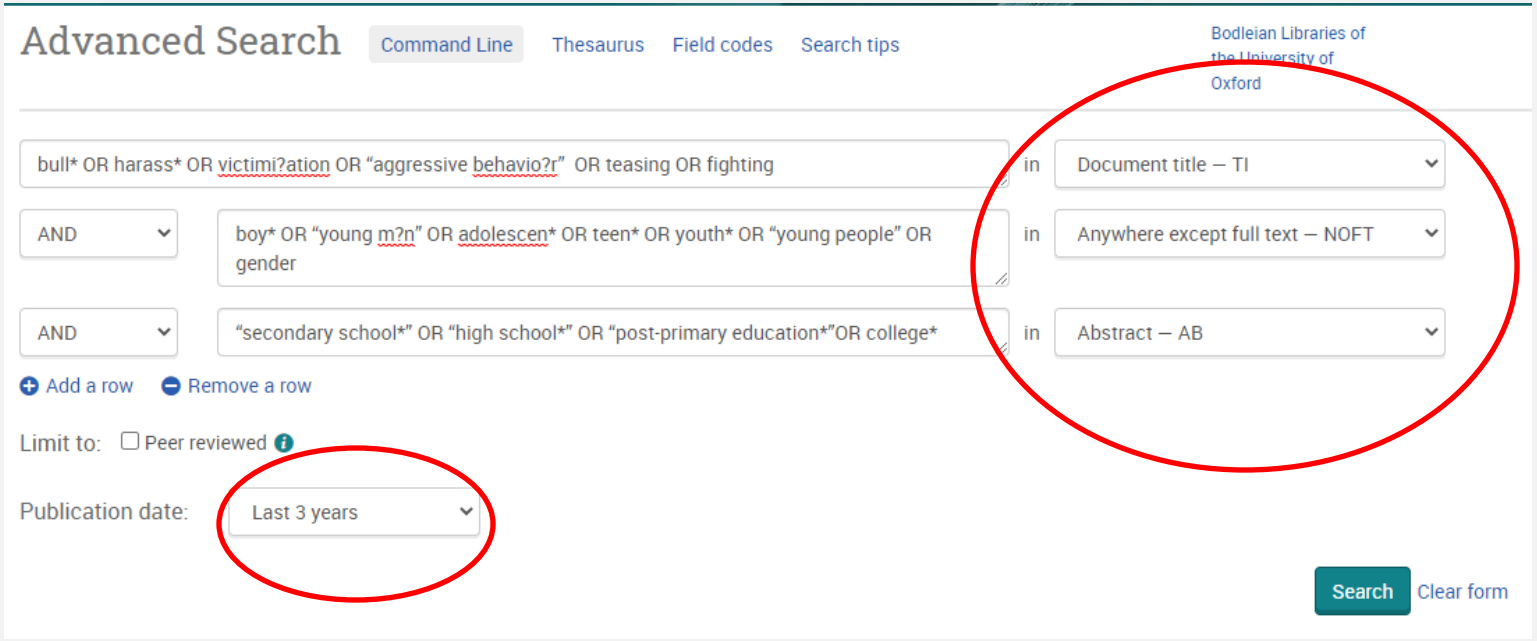
IBSS Example 2/5

- Add search terms for one concept into each box
- Use **Add a row** to create more boxes



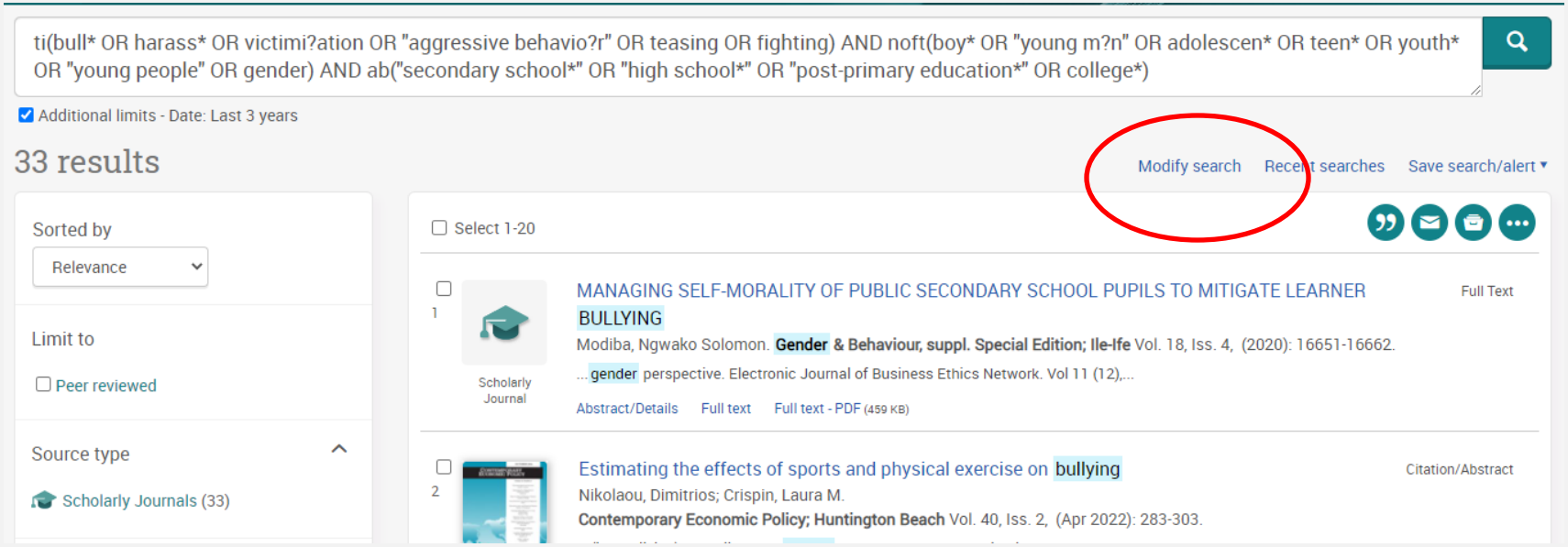
IBSS Example 3/5

- Use the drop-down menus to choose where to search – Abstract, Document title, and Anywhere except full text (abstract, title, keywords) are good
- If you are only interested in recent publications, use the date filter



IBSS Example 4/5

Use **Modify search** to change your search terms and settings



IBSS Example 5/5

Use the filters on the left to restrict by type (e.g. scholarly journals) or date

Have a go later:
Building a structured search

See Exercise 2 in your workbook (pages 9-10).

1. Create a structured search from your keywords (row 3)
2. Apply the search to one of the following:

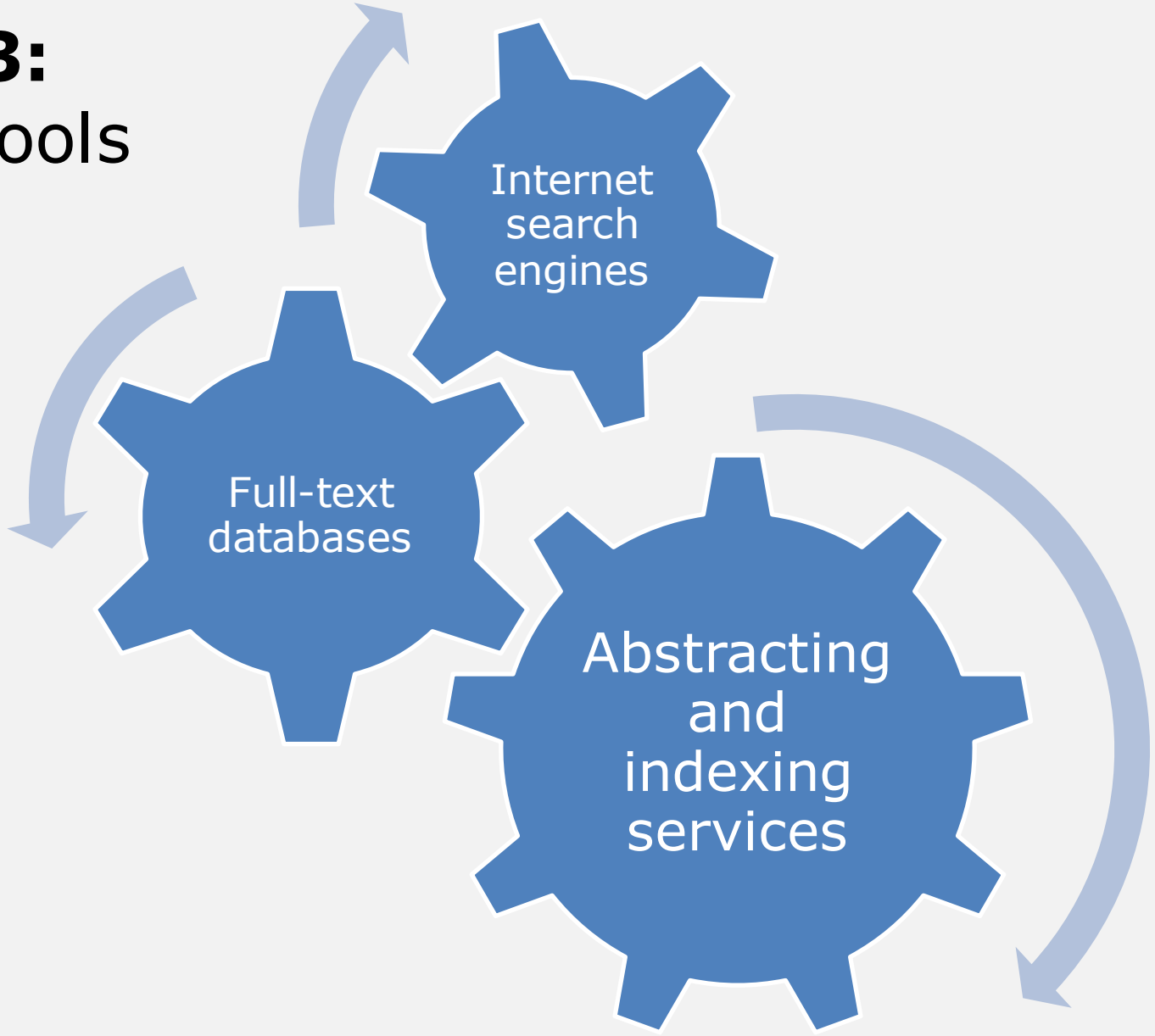
   IBSS:

   https://solo.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/permalink/44OXF_INST/35n82s/alma991025213864907026

   Or a key database in your field

3. Explore the database search functionality
4. Modify and refine your search

Part 3:
Search tools



Accessing online resources provided by the Bodleian Libraries

- SOLO

  https://solo.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/

- Databases A-Z

  https://libguides.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/az.php

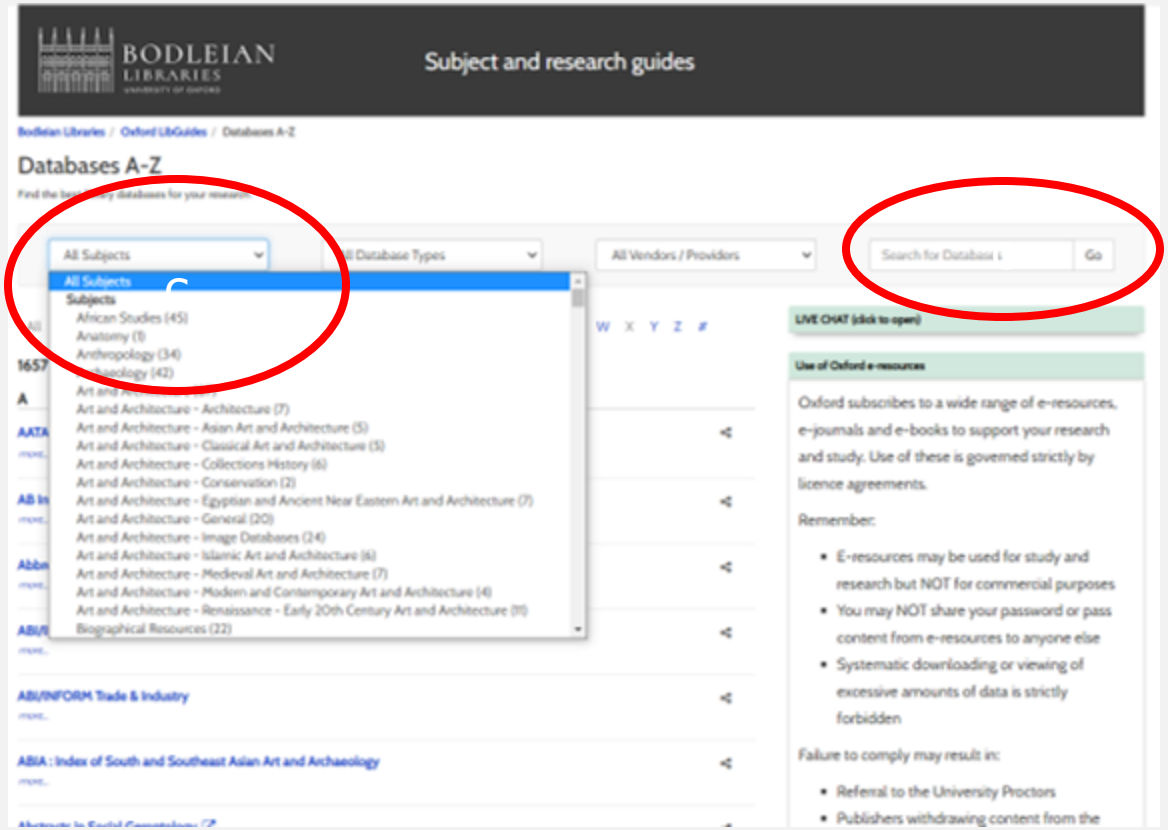
- Subject and Research Guides

  https://libguides.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/oxford

Databases A-Z

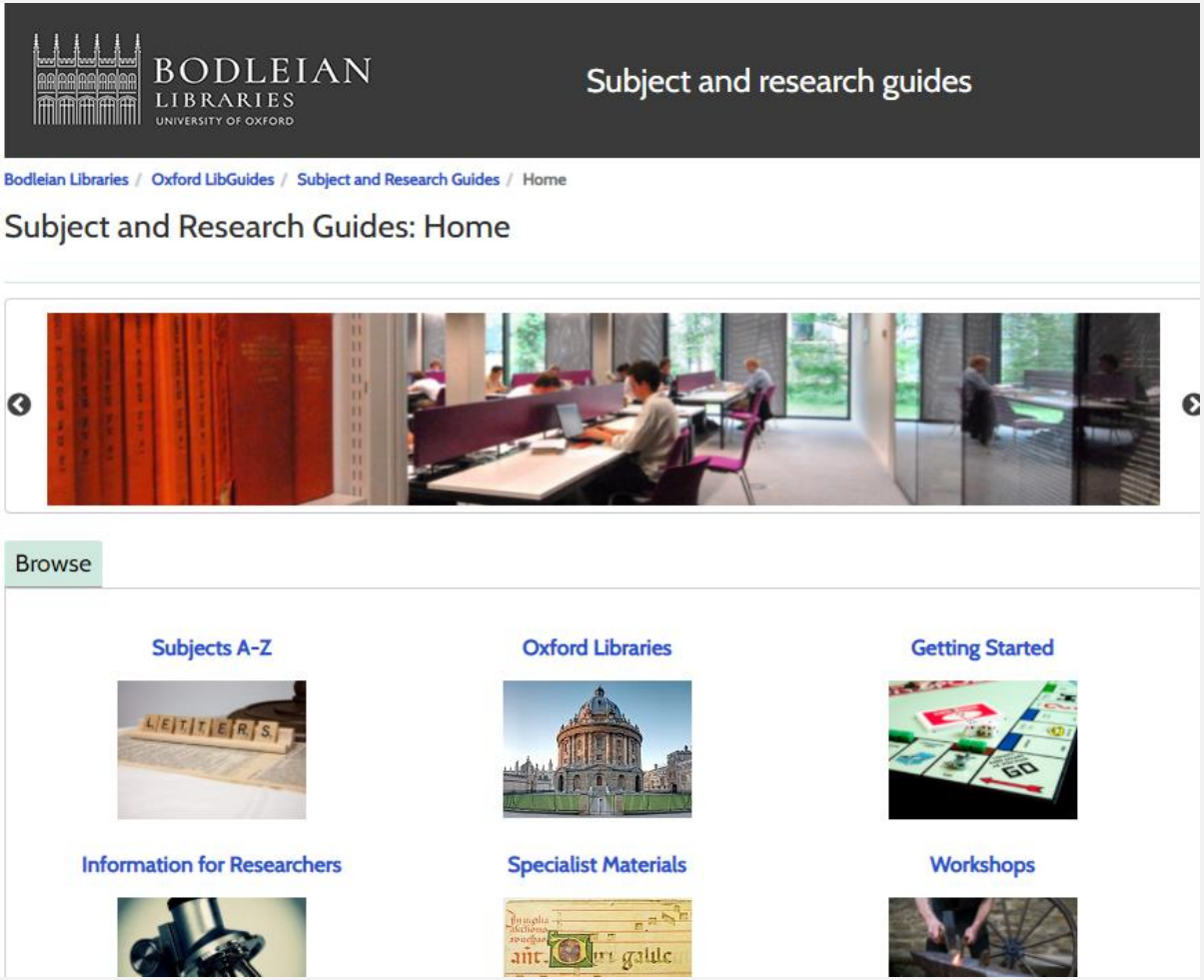
https://libguides.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/az.php

Use the dropdown menus or search bar to explore databases for your subject area



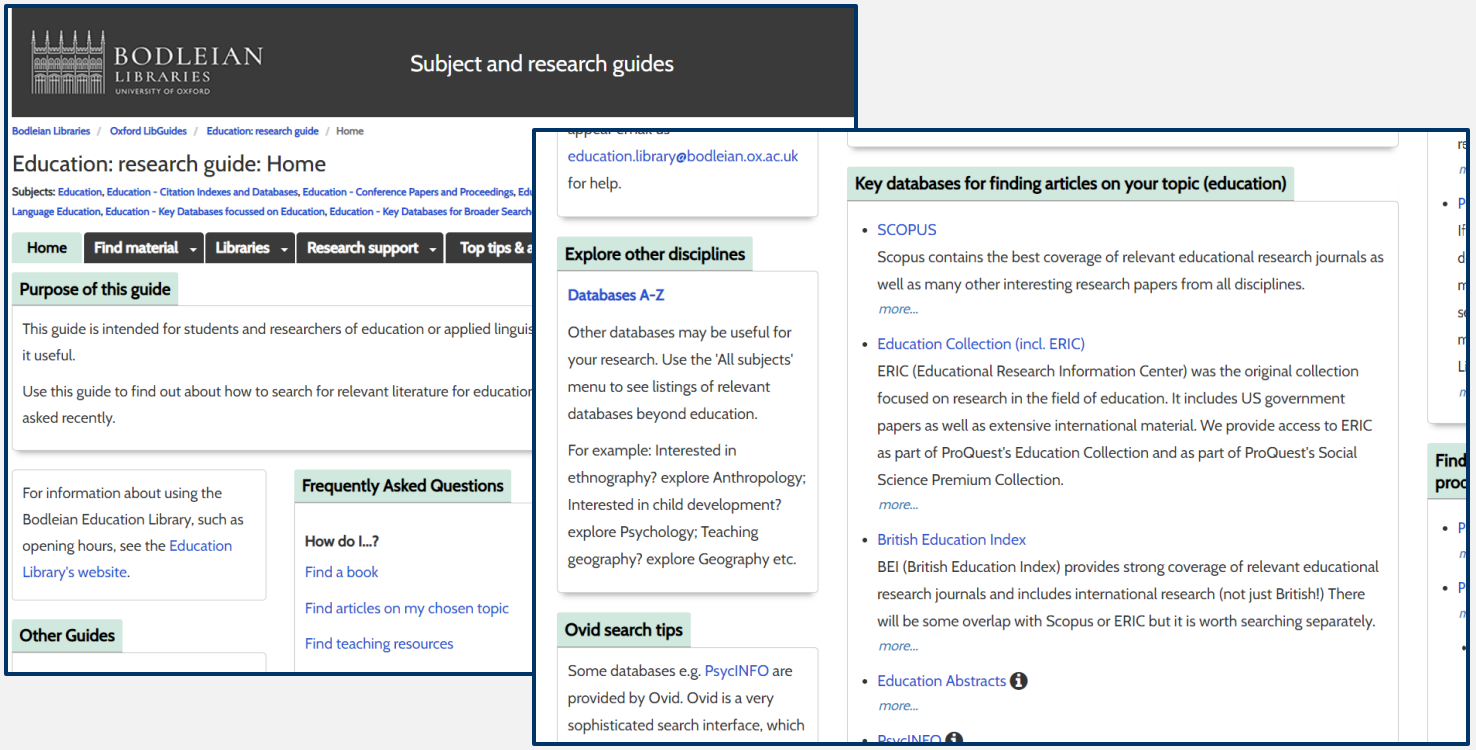
Subject and Research Guides (1/2)

https://libguides.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/oxford



Subject and Research Guides (2/2)

- Explore subject guides relevant to your research written by subject librarians
- Look for database recommendations
- Learn about other useful sources of information – data, theses, grey literature



Recording your methodology

"We searched six databases (Medline, Embase, PsychINFO, CINAHL, IBSS and SSCI) systematically, along with a manual search, including key journals and subject experts. Peer-reviewed studies were included if they qualitatively explored experiences of or socio-structural contexts for injection drug use initiation. A thematic synthesis approach was used to identify descriptive and analytical themes throughout studies."

Guise, A., Horyniak, D., Melo, J., McNeil, R., & Werb, D. (2017). The experience of initiating injection drug use and its social context: A qualitative systematic review and thematic synthesis. *Addiction, 112*(12), 2098-2111.

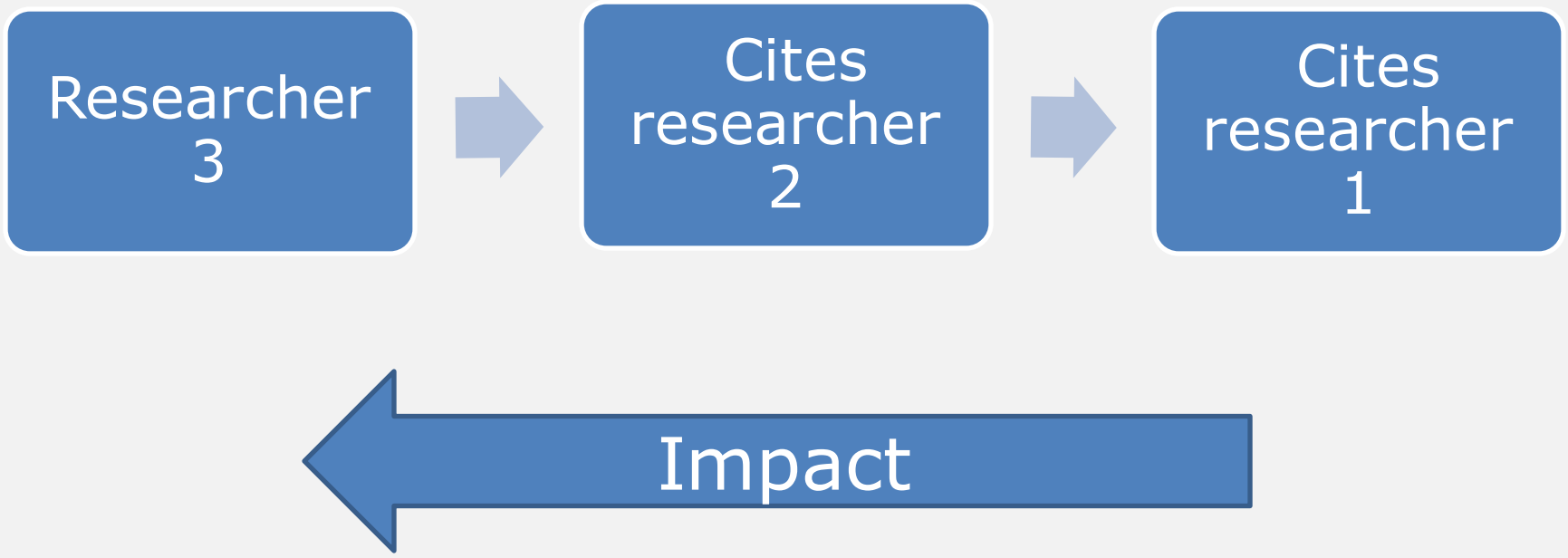
https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/add.13957

Have a go later:
Select databases

1. Ask yourself two questions:
   - Which subjects are relevant to my topic? (sociology, health, public policy, education...)
   - Which formats might contain useful research?

     (journal articles, working papers, books, datasets)
2. Explore the subject menu on Databases A-Z https://libguides.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/az.php

Part 4: Citations



Use citations to:

- Locate current research based on earlier research
- Find out how many times, and where, a publication is being cited
- Identify who is referencing a particular paper
- Explore how a particular research topic is being used to support other research
- Analyse the impact of a publication on other research in the field
- Track the history of a research idea
- Keep track of your own research

Where can you get citation information?

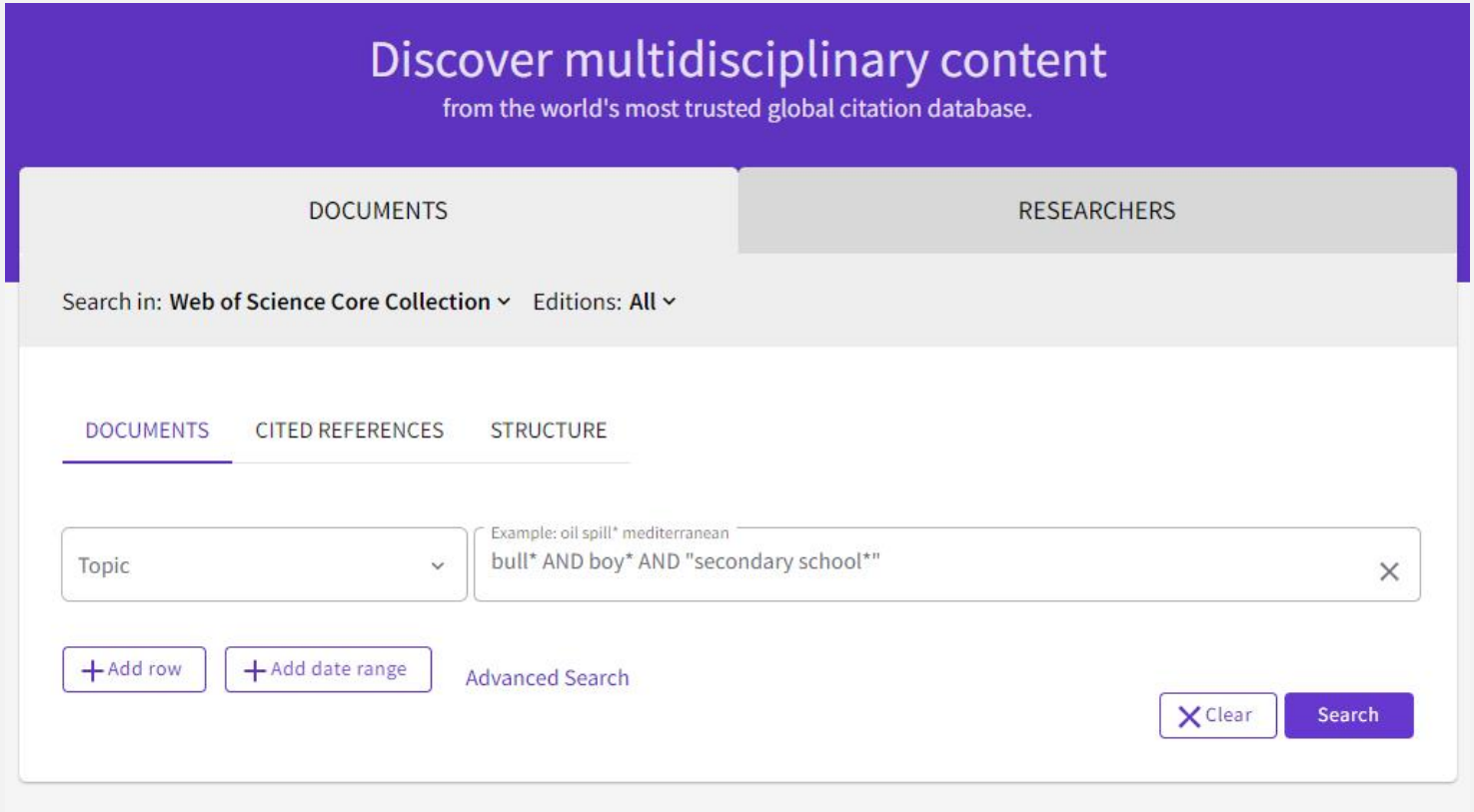
- **Web of Science:** https://libguides.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/wos
  - Social Sciences Citation Index (SSCI) https://ox.libguides.com/ssci
  - Over 21,000 titles; 1.8 billion citations
  - Citations from 1900-present

- **Scopus:** https://ezproxy-prd.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/login?url=https://www.scopus.com/
  - Social Sciences & Humanities subject collection
  - Over 22,000 titles; 1.7 billion citations
    Cited references going back to 1970

- **Google Scholar:** https://scholar.google.com/
  - "While we try to be comprehensive, it isn't possible to guarantee uninterrupted coverage of any particular source" https://scholar.google.com/intl/en/scholar/help.html#coverage

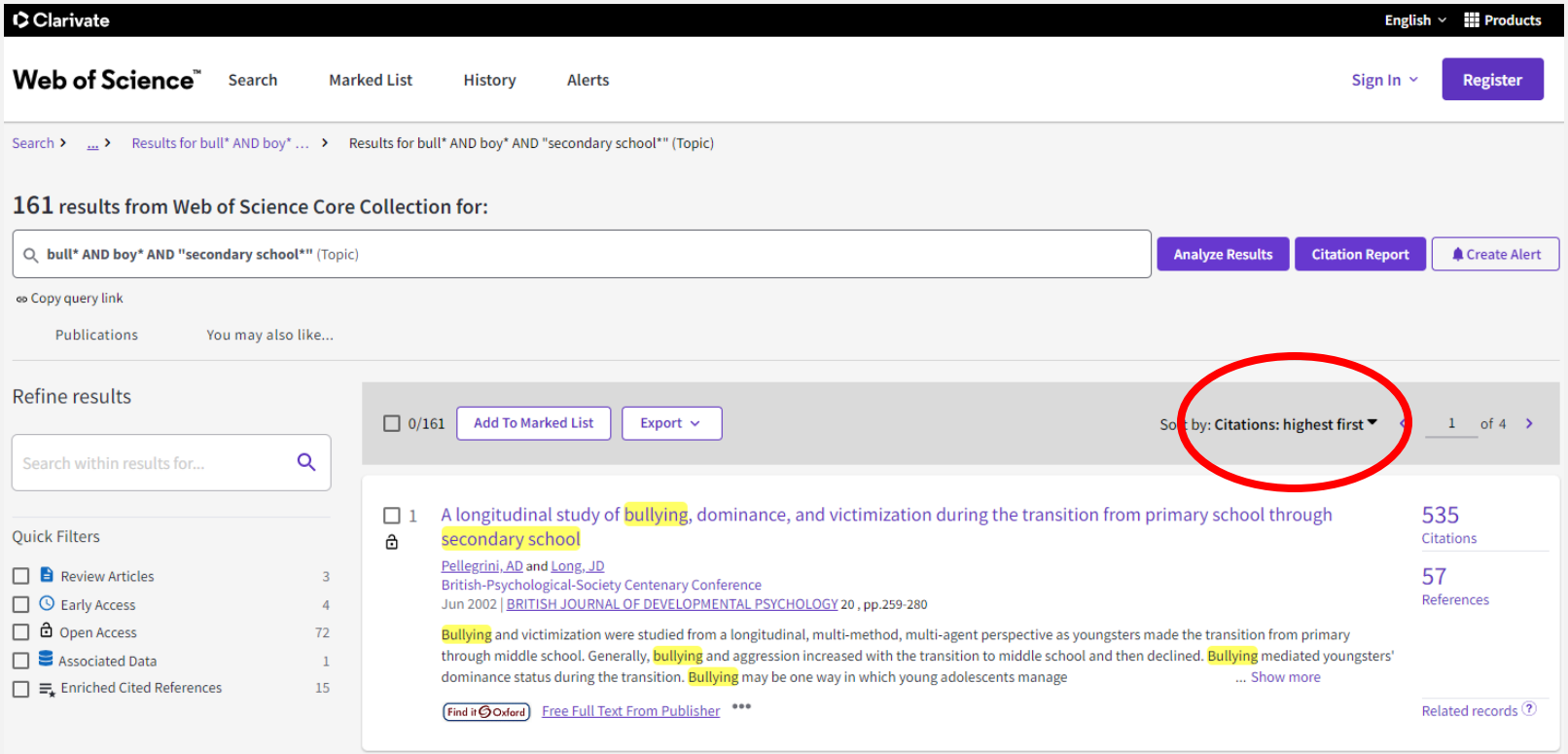
Identify current research based on earlier research (1/3)

- Web of Science citation counts
- Search for articles



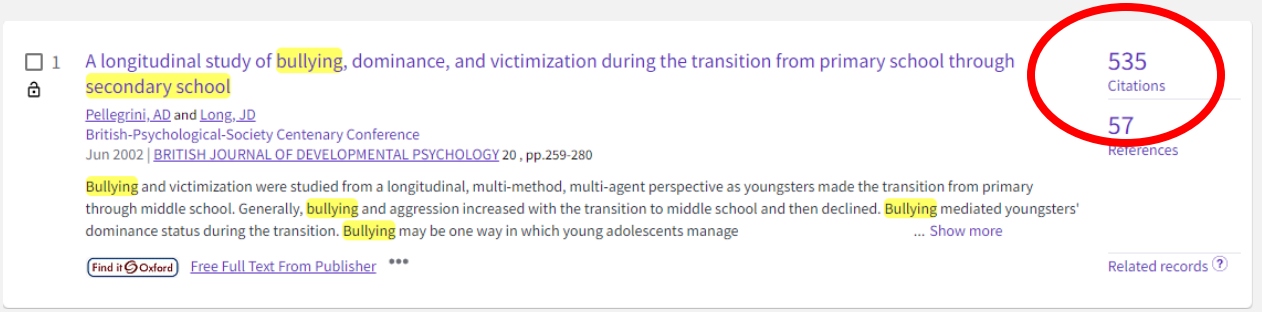
Identify current research based on earlier research (2/3)

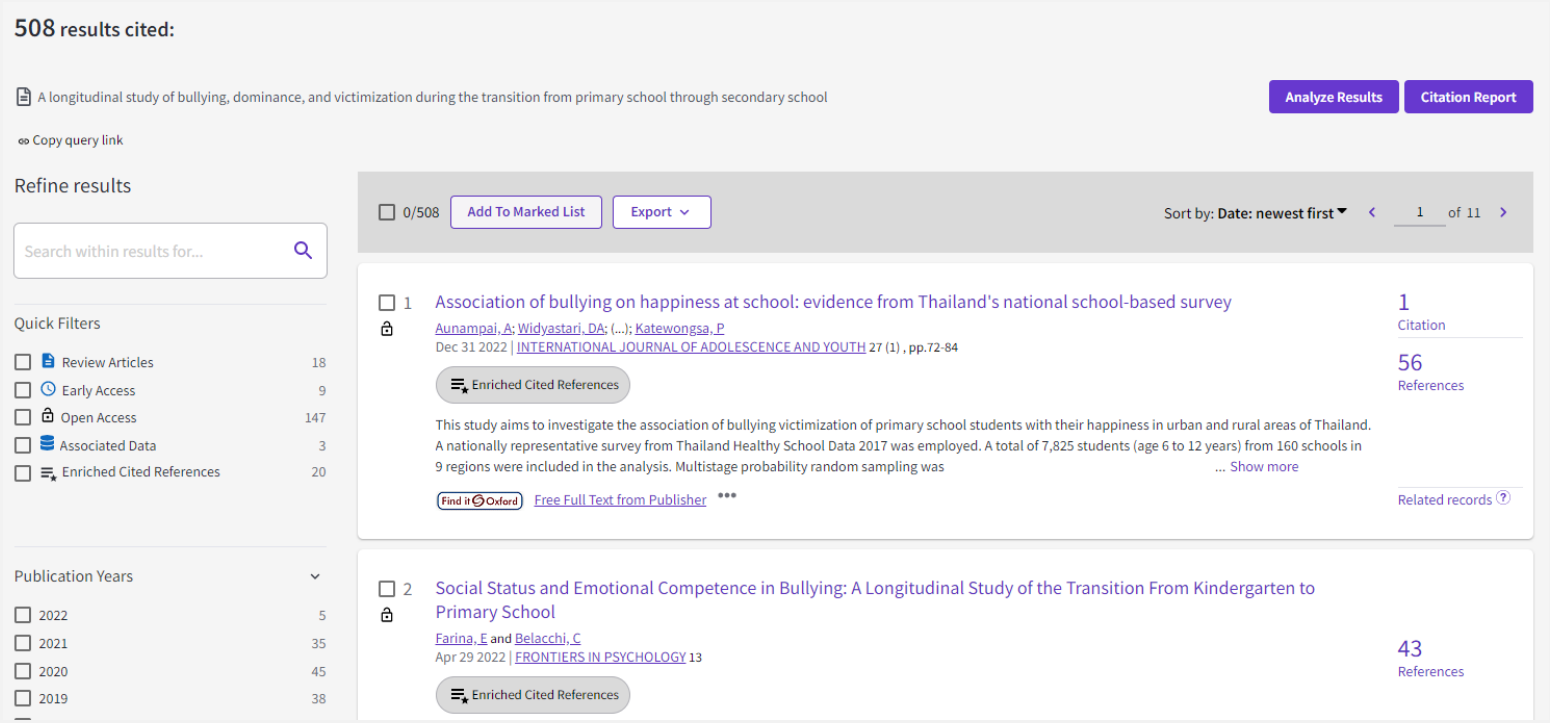
- Results will be sorted by relevance initially – very new publications won't have many citations yet!
- Sort by Citations: highest first to see most cited publications



Identify current research based on earlier research (3/3)

- Click the Citations number next to an article to see the list of articles that have cited it





Be careful with numbers!

- Web of Science, Scopus and Google Scholar will all give different numbers of citations for the same article
- They can only count citations from articles/publications within their databases, and there will be duplication
- Different fields also have different rates of publication so if your research is interdisciplinary you may see very different citation rates

What if it’s not available in Oxford?

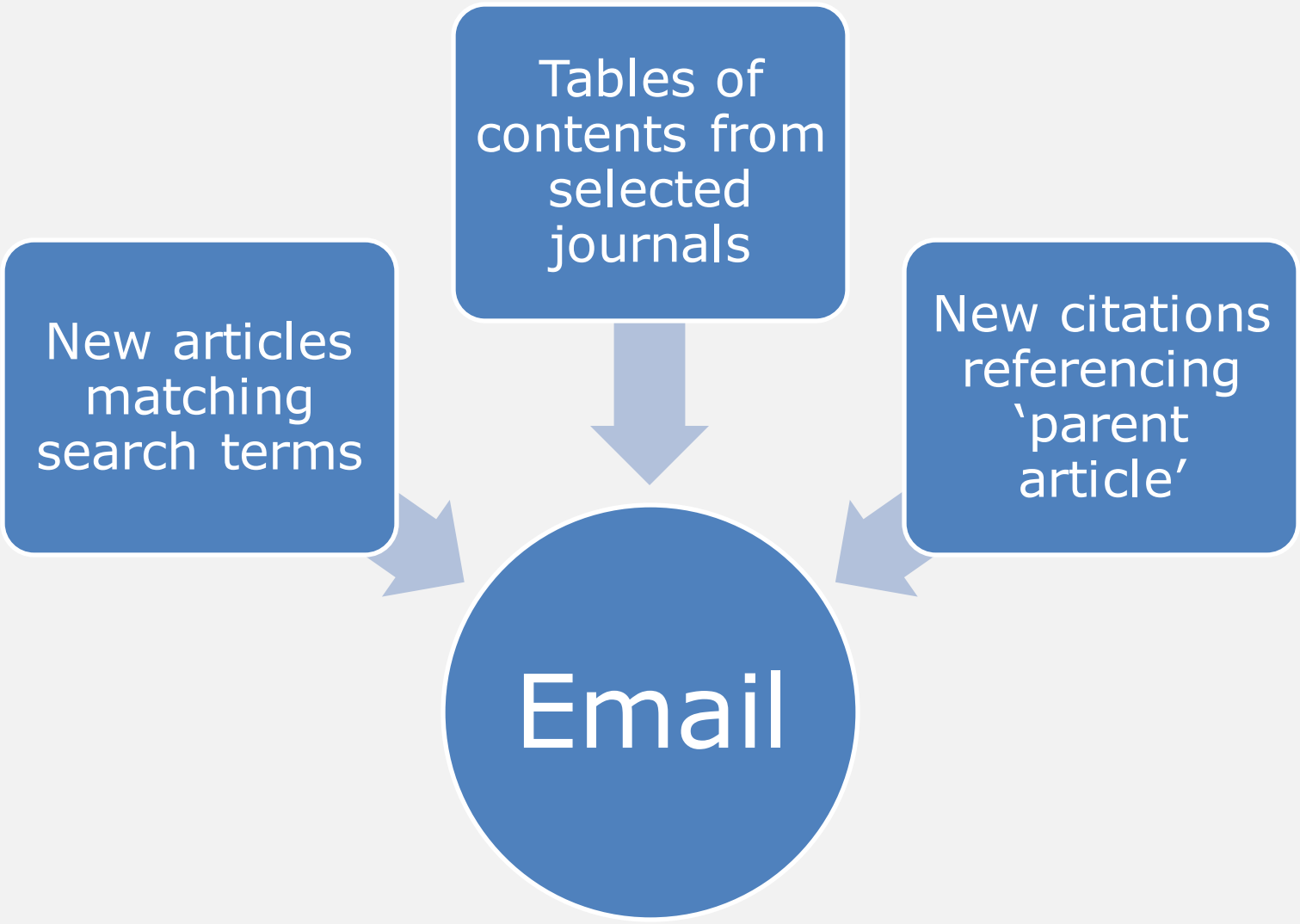
- Are you sure?
  - May be only in print, search SOLO for journal titles or ask for help from library staff
- Google to see if an Open Access version is available
- Recommend that one of the Bodleian Libraries buy a copy/ subscription https://www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/collections-and-resources/recommend-a-purchase
- Try to obtain it on interlibrary loan
  - PDF/scanned copy of article or book chapter
  - Borrow the whole book from another library in the UK or internationally (not always available)
  - Place a request on SOLO under the tab 'Need More' : https://solo.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/
- Buy the individual article from the publisher (last resort)

Have a go later: Citation searching

See Exercise 3 in your workbook (page 15-16).

1. Use your structured search in Web of Science
2. Look at your results sorted by Relevance – note some titles which have been highly cited
3. Sort your results by Citations: Highest First– note some titles which look relevant

Part 5: Alerts

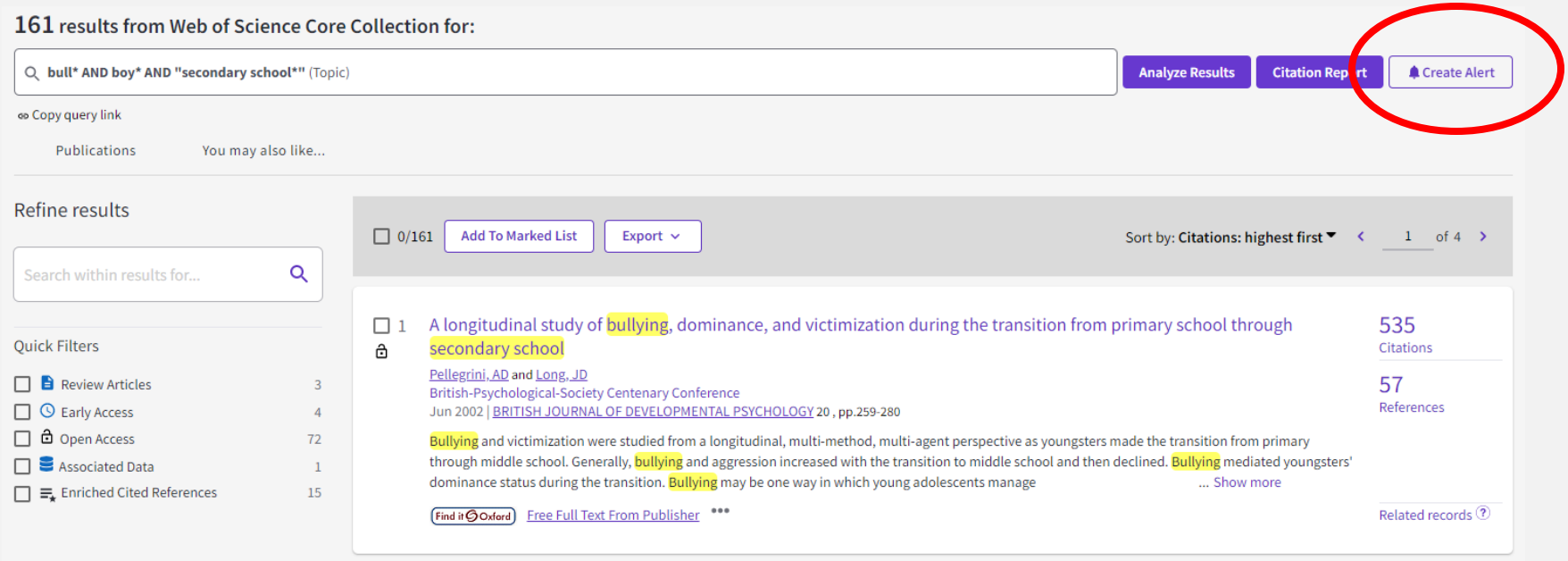


Search Alerts (1/3)

- Create and save complex searches
- Receive alerts when new publications match your search
  - Newly published material
  - Material newly added to the database
- Saves you having to re-visit databases and running your searches again manually
- Receive alerts via email

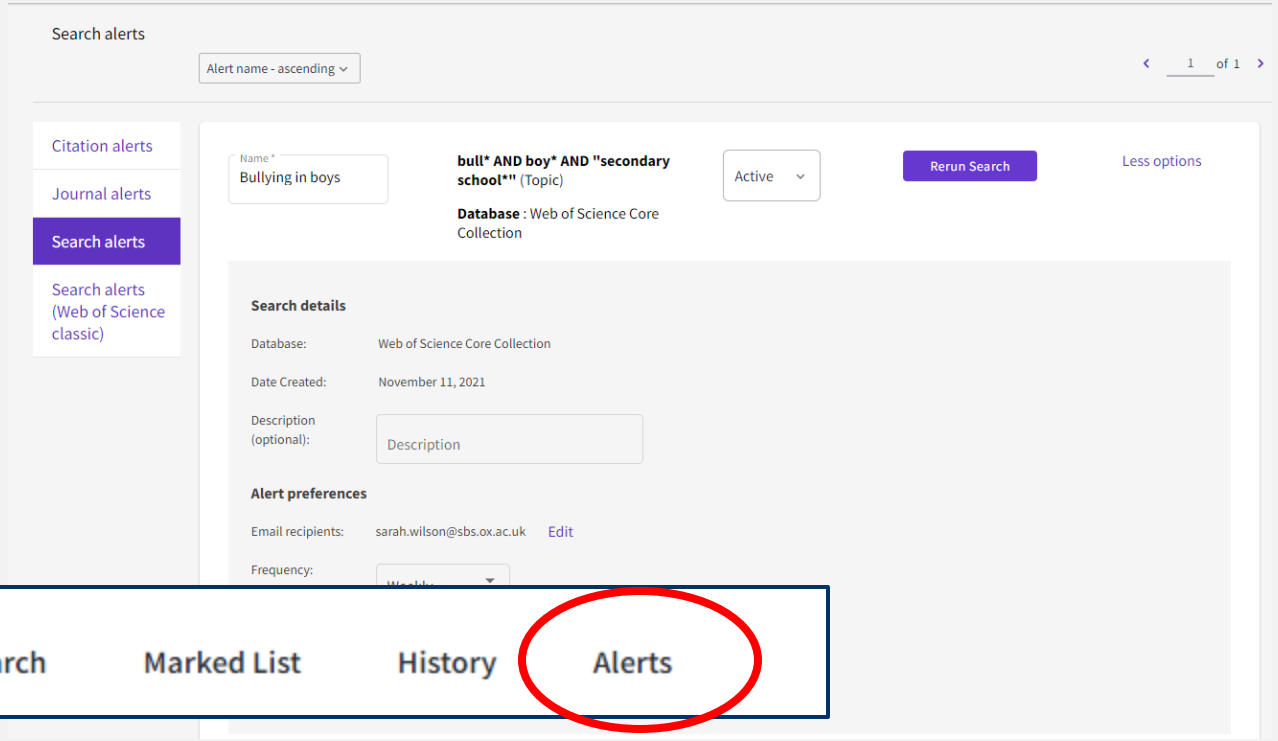
Search Alerts (2/3)

- Most databases have these options – look for “alert” or “save”
- Some, like Web of Science, will need you to sign up for a free account first



Search Alerts (3/3)

- Go to Alerts to change the frequency, email address or turn off the alert
- Don’t set up alerts until you’re happy with your search, and don’t set up too many or you will ignore the emails!

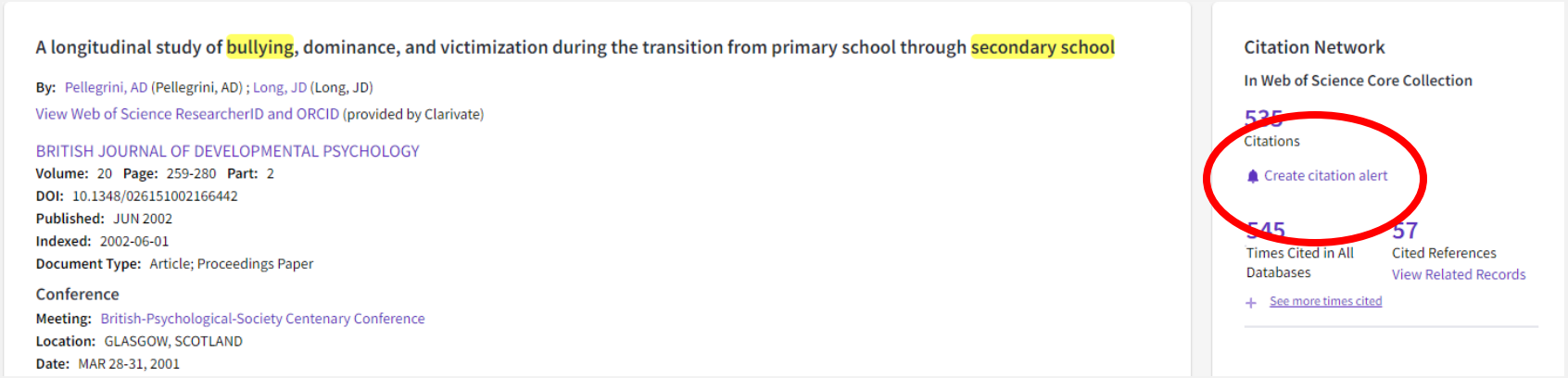


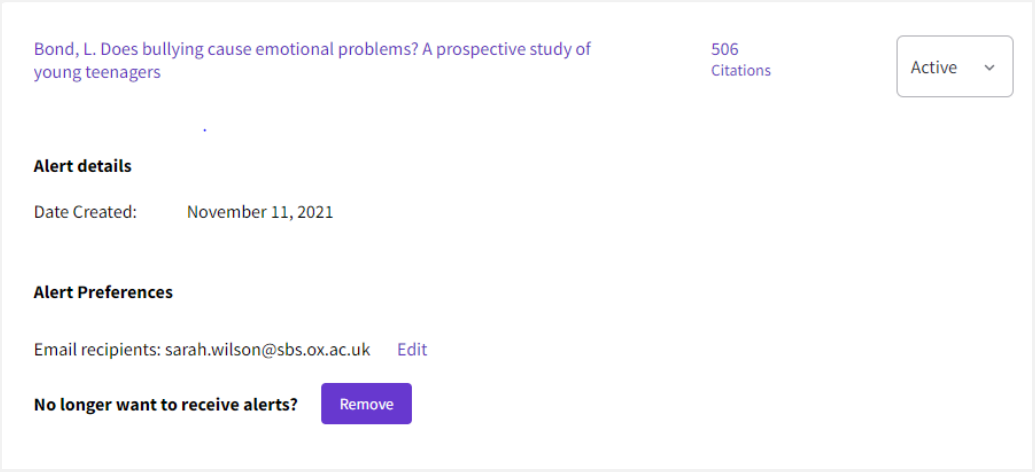
Citation Alerts (1/2)

- Available in Web of Science and Scopus
- Create an alert for specific articles
- Receive alerts when new publications cites your chosen articles
  - Newly published material
  - Material newly added to the database
- Saves you having to re-visit databases and running your searches again manually
- Receive alerts via email

Citation Alerts (2/2)

- On the article page, click Create Citation Alert





- Go to Alerts> Citation alerts to modify/cancel an alert

Journal Table of Contents Alerts (1/4)

- JournalTocs: www.journaltocs.ac.uk
- Subscribe to journal titles relevant to you
- Receive alerts with a table of contents when a new issue is published
- Saves you having to check when new issues of relevant journal titles are released
- Receive alerts via email

Journal Table of Contents Alerts (2/4)

- You will need to register for a free account
- Search for a journal

Journal Table of Contents Alerts (3/4)

- Search results show up on the left
- Tick the box next to a title to start following

Journal Table of Contents Alerts (4/4)

- Go to Account Settings to change the frequency of emails
- Go to Followed Journals to turn off an alert

Have a go later: Set up an alert

See Exercises 4 & 5 in your workbook (pages 17-20).

- Try setting up a search alert in a database, e.g. Web of Science https://libguides.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/wos

- Try setting up a journal alert in JournalTOCs www.journaltocs.ac.uk

Thank you!

- This presentation will be available at
  - https://www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/ask/workshops#/
- For more help, contact your subject librarian:
  - https://www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/ask/subject-librarians