

Planning the Search: creating a framework and identifying searchable terms

**To be able to ask a question clearly is
two-thirds of the way to getting it
answered.**

-John Ruskin

Step 1: Formulate an answerable question

- **More likely to inform a decision based on the answer**

- A poorly constructed question may result in a search that is not clear in its objective

- **Enables efficient retrieval**

- A poorly constructed question may lead to lost time and frustration during the search process
- By developing a detailed search strategy based on the question formulation, only very relevant results will likely be retrieved

Background vs. Foreground questions

Background questions

- **Fact-finding**
- **Inexperienced or lacking strong knowledge in a subject area**
- **Encountering a situation for the first time**

Foreground questions

- **At a point of decision-making**
- **Higher level of prior knowledge in subject area**
- **Uncertainty or alternatives in course of action exist**

Initial literature review or scoping search

→ knowledge gap?

→ conflicting outcomes?

Question Formulation Frameworks

PICO

PESICO

ECLIPSE

SPICE

Frameworks help:

- Clarify the search topic
- Formulate a clear question from the topic
- Identify the main **concepts** in each question
- Add in missing or unstated concepts
- Develop a range of possible search terms for each concept
- Build a search strategy based on the possible search terms

Patient / Problem

Intervention

Comparison

Outcome

(Richardson et al., 1995)

Person / Problem

Environments

Stakeholders

Intervention

Comparison

Outcomes

(Schlosser, Koul & Costello , 2007)

Expectation

Client group

Location

Impact

Professionals

Service

(Wildridge & Bell, 2002)

Setting

Perspective

Intervention

Comparison

Evaluation

(Booth, 2006)

Let's try one!

Booster seat legislation in BC has been in effect since July 2008. Has the use of booster seats for children aged 4-9 increased since the legislation was enacted?

Would distribution of a free or discounted-cost booster seat at childcare centres to lower income families with children aged 4-9 increase the use of booster seats in that population and therefore reduce motor vehicle-related injuries?

Your turn to try!

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