

Formulating the Answerable Question / Planning the Search Strategy – SPICE

Question: State the question you are trying to answer	
S	Setting – where? in what context?
P	Population / Perspective – for whom? stakeholder?
I	Intervention – what? exposure, service, interest?
C	Comparison – compared with what? <i>Your question does not always need a comparison</i>
E	Evaluation – with what result? measure to determine success?
Well-built answerable question: (In S among P does I opposed to C bring about E ?)	

Major concepts to build search strategy

- Name the major concepts in your question (generally, the setting, perspective, intervention and comparison).
- Note any synonyms, spelling variations and abbreviations.
- Identify text words or phrases found in relevant citations, if applicable.
- Identify subject headings or controlled vocabulary used in the databases selected to search. Different databases may have different subject headings for the same concept.
- Combine terms *within* a concept group with **OR**. Combine different concepts with **AND**.

Concept 1 Setting		Concept 2 Perspective		Concept 3 Intervention		Concept 4 Comparison
OR		OR		OR		OR
	A N D		A N D		A N D	
OR		OR		OR		OR

- Keep in mind that building a search strategy is an *iterative* process. As searching progresses, revise as needed.