JMU Libraries, Information Literacy Exercise for Social Work Research Methods (SOWK 305), Learning Outcome 12: Journal Impact Factors

INB: This exercise was created for use in the University of Arizona’s, Guide on the Side tutorial platform hosted here as of August 2018: https://ualibraries.github.io/Guide-on-the-Side/about.html. This tool renders tutorial content with digital objects in the same browser window. Most of the below text was rendered in a panel on the left side of the browser screen, while the asset being reviewed or analyzed (e.g. a video, website, or journal article) was rendered in a panel on the right side of the browser. I used multiple-choice, true/false, and short answer questions in these tutorials. In cases where I used multiple choice questions, I took advantage of the tool’s feature that displays text responses when each multiple-choice statement is selected. Because I made most of these statements formative, I included each within multiple-choice option lists. Links to assets the questions referred to are also included in the text below. Note that Guide on the Side can be used as a quiz tool, in which case, the responses/prompts to the multiple-choice questions are hidden. The exercises/outcomes numbered from 10 to 15 are designed to be administered to different student groups in the same class period, followed by group reports on their assigned exercises. If there are mistakes in this material, they are mine alone, not those of my colleagues in the JMU Social Work Department or JMU Libraries. David Vess [vessds@jmu.edu]

Open JMU Libraries website.

Contents:

- Can you see a website to the right?
- What’s the learning outcome?
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Before we get started, look to the right. Is there a blank white space or do you see a website? If you see white space, look for a notification about blocking or loading scripts. The below are examples of what you may see in different browsers.
Once you locate this feature, remove the block and load all scripts so you can see the webpages in the right-hand frame. Now, by clicking on the right arrow below, you will advance in this tutorial. Go ahead and click on the arrow now. If you have any problems, contact me at vessds@jmu.edu.
What's the learning outcome?

Recall when I mentioned learning outcomes before? Each exercise I've given you has an outcome. It's a kind of contract I have with you stating, "This is what you will get out of this experience."

The outcome for this exercise is:

After this exercise, students will be able to describe what impact factors are and describe the benefits and limitations of impact factors.

What are impact factors?

Watch this video and then answer the below questions. (If the page won't open, try right clicking the link and opening it in another tab.)

[Panel in Guide on the Side would display this video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0RPsvgf0RY]

1. The impact factor measures the impact of a journal, not a particular article inside the journal.

   True or False

   Correct answer is True

   Feedback for choosing True: Correct. Correct, the impact factor uses citation data of articles to a journal to measure how frequently the journal is cited in a particular category of literature.

   Feedback for choosing False: Incorrect.

2. An impact factor is calculated by adding up all the times citations (from a single reporting year) refer to articles in a journal from the previous two years -- divided by -- the number of items published in that journal during the same time two-year time span.
True or False

Correct answer is True

Feedback for choosing True: Correct.

Feedback for choosing False: Incorrect.

3. Why does this tool only calculate citation data from the previous two years?

- Because it is difficult to count all the citations of a journal that has been in operation since 1970.
  o Feedback for choosing this answer: Incorrect.
- To privilege newer, more current journals.
  o Feedback for choosing this answer: Incorrect.
- Because some journals have been publishing for a long time.
  o Feedback for choosing this answer: Correct. They limit their calculations to citations from the previous two years because older journals would have more citations and would thus inflate the impact factor number.
- To focus on the most important research – newer research.
  o Feedback for choosing this answer: Incorrect. Research can age quickly and become irrelevant or be timeless. Older articles that might be considered timeless in any discipline are called seminal, which means, very influential. Research you need for your social work practice should be current, but there are seminal articles in your field.

4. What does Thompson-Reuters recommend regarding the use of data from their Journal Citation Reports? (hint: this info is all the way at the end of the video.)

- Do not depend solely on citation data in journal evaluations.
  o Feedback for choosing: True, but there is a better answer.
- These data are carefully gathered and processed to measure the impact of journals.
  o Feedback for choosing: True, but there is a better answer.
- Citation data are not meant to replace informed peer review.
  o Feedback for choosing: True, but there is a better answer.
- All the above
• Feedback for choosing: Correct. These data are carefully gathered and processed, but they acknowledge that these data are not the only information you should use to evaluate a journal.

**Journal Citation Reports**

Go to this webpage, click on "Select Categories" choose "Social Work" from the pop-up, then scroll down and click on the "Submit" button at the bottom of the side bar. (If the page won't open, try right clicking the link and opening it in another tab.)


**5. Which journal is considered to have the most impact by Journal Citation Reports.**

- Health & Social Work
  - Feedback for choosing: Incorrect
- Child Abuse & Neglect
  - Feedback for choosing: Incorrect
- Trauma Violence & Abuse
  - Feedback for choosing: Correct. This journal’s articles were cited 3.1 times in 2015, the highest in this category of 41 titles.
- Child & Family Social Work
  - Feedback for choosing: Incorrect

**Google Scholar Metrics**

Now head to this page (you should see social work titles already in the list) and answer the below questions. (If the page won't open, try right clicking the link and opening it in another tab.)

[Panel in Guide on the Side would display this website: https://scholar.google.com/citations?view_op=top_venues&hl=en&vq=soc_socialwork]

**6. Which journal is considered to have the most impact by Google Scholar?**

- Child Abuse & Neglect
  - Feedback for choosing: Incorrect. This title is number 2 on Journal Citations Reports but 3 in Google Scholar.
• Child Maltreatment
  o Feedback for choosing: Incorrect. This title is number 3 on Journal Citations Reports but 14 in Google Scholar.

• Journal of Child and Family Studies
  o Feedback for choosing: Incorrect. This title isn't counted in Journal Citations Reports in the Social Work Category.

• Children and Youth Services Review
  o Feedback for choosing: Correct.

7. Why do you think the Journal of Child and Family Studies appear in the Google Scholar list and not in the list we have in Journal Citation Reports?

• It is not covered by Journal Citation Reports
  o Feedback for choosing: Incorrect. This title is in Journal Citation Reports.

• The title is not good enough to be in Journal Citation Reports.
  o Feedback for choosing: Incorrect. Journals of varying quality are in Journal Citation Reports.

• The journal is not in the social work category we picked.
  o Feedback for choosing: Correct. This journal is in the Family Studies category. We only choose the Social Work category.

• The journal is not a social work title.
  o Feedback for choosing: Incorrect. Many journals could be considered useful to social workers, including this one.

A Quick Argument Against Impact Factors

8. Head to this website and look over the abstract for this article.

Mention what you think of this approach when it’s time to report your take-aways to the class. (If the page won't open, try right clicking the link and opening it in another tab.)

[Panel in Guide on the Side would display this website: https://www.niso.org/niso-io/2013/06/consuming-article-level-metrics-observations-and-lessons ]
Submit your Answers

Please enter your name and email address to retrieve a copy of your completed quiz.

Your name:

Email address:

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