

# **Academic Librarians and Systematic Reviews: an emerging role in the social sciences**

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**UNIVERSITY OF  
WATERLOO**

# Agenda

- Brief overview of the systematic review
- Our role and experiences with research teams
- Challenges and opportunities for the Social Sciences Librarian

# Systematic Review v. Literature Review

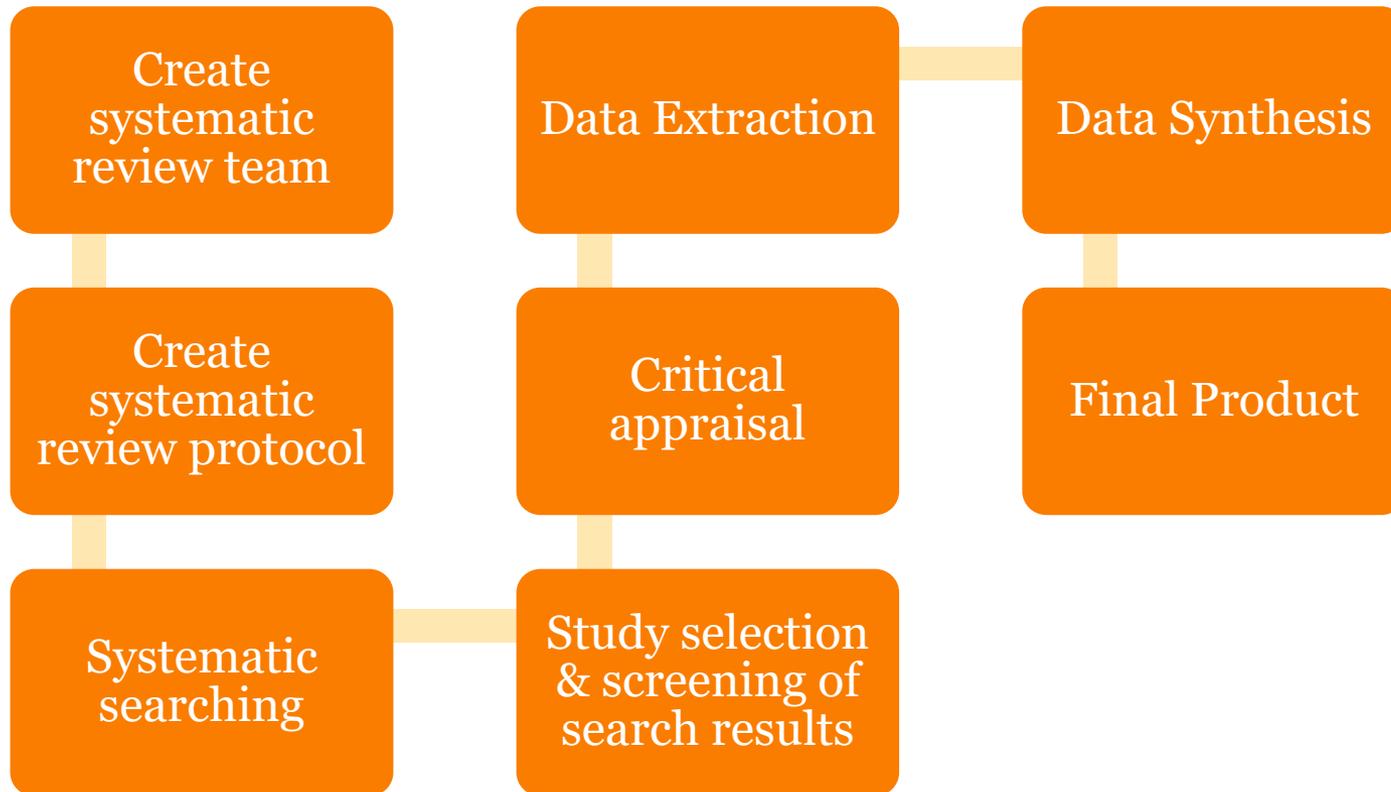
## Systematic Review

- Rigorous, documented and reproducible approach
- Specific criteria for what studies are included
- Includes all published research in the field
- Assess quality of each study and synthesize findings
- Clear and specific methodology
- Interpretations are balanced and impartial
- Purpose: to determine the efficacy of an intervention or impact of exposure

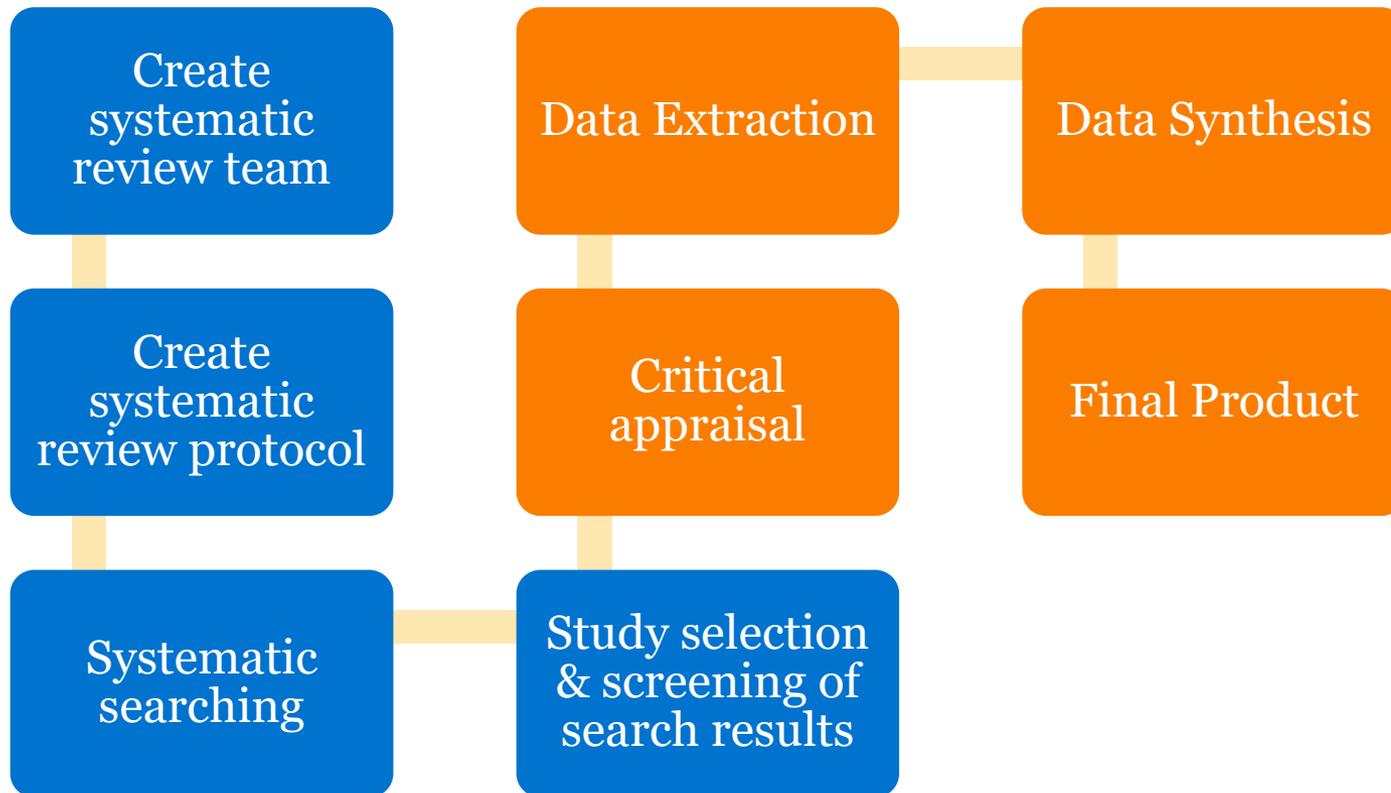
## Literature Review

- Flexible approach
- Can include diverse studies
- Not required to include all studies in the area
- Narrative summary of studies
- No strict methodology
- Interpretations can be informal and subjective
- Purpose: to educate audience about a topic

# Systematic review methodology



# Systematic review methodology



# Systematic search techniques

## Expectations of a systematic search method include:

1. Multiple journal databases (typically 3-7)
2. A single, well developed search strategy for each database consisting of author keywords and database subject heading (often undertaken by an information specialist)
3. Search must be reproducible
4. May include:
  - a) Grey literature
  - b) Hand searching
  - c) Cited references from accepted papers
5. Results may include hundreds/thousands of references

# Role of the librarian



Co-researcher



Consultant



Educator



# Challenges

- Preconceptions of librarians role
- Workload
- Library admin support  
*(Gore & Jones article)*
- Lack of awareness of the complexity of systematic review search methods



# Benefits of collaboration

- Expansion of your skills
- Increase in research output
- Demonstrate value of library and librarians to the research mission of the institution
- Build strong faculty relationships

# Developing opportunities for yourself

- Take advantage of liaison role and other relationships
  
- Build relationships with research groups, centers and Office of Research

# Continuing Education

## Systematic review workshops for librarians:

- Systematic Review Workshop: The Nuts and Bolts for Librarians, University of Pittsburgh
- Supporting Clinical Care: An Institute in Evidence-based Practice for Medical Librarians: Home, University of Colorado
- CHLA (Canadian Health Library Association) continuing education workshops

## Online courses:

- ePPI-Centre online courses
- Introduction to Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis, Johns Hopkins University , *Coursera MOOC*

## Readings

- Literature searching for social science systematic reviews: Consideration of a range of search techniques.
- Systematic reviews in the social sciences: A practical guide.
- Information retrieval and the role of the information specialist in producing high-quality systematic reviews in the social, behavioural and education sciences.

# Readings/References

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