How to Build a Concept Table

What you see	What you hear
Library logo animation of typing in a search box millions of results and scrolling no results	Have you ever been frustrated searching for information on your research topic? Do you either get way too many search results, most of them irrelevant, or have a hard time finding anything at all? Taking a minute to think about your research question and strategically craft a search strategy before diving in to the literature can help solve these problems. A key step in this process is creating a concept table. Let's get started!
objectives text	By the end of this video, you will be able to: • Convert your well-built research question into a concept table • Strategically search the scientific literature
show a blank concept table (concept A, B, C) show a paper with corresponding ideas blank table again add concept A, B, C label rows picture of sandwich, names pop up around it	Concept tables are just what they sound like – a table breaking down the key components of your research question. Think of it this way, for me to want to read an article, what two or three ideas **must** it include? Each column of the table is for a key concept. For the rows, you'll be brainstorming synonyms for each concept. Since the English language is so complicated and regionally variable, it's important to think about all of the different ways your concepts could be talked about before jumping into the literature. For example, what some people call a sandwich, others may call a sub, hoagie, or filled roll. You don't want to miss great articles because you didn't spell out an acronym or missed the lay person term for a scientific phenomenon.

back to table, add labels	It's common to have a row for subject headings and a row for keywords so that your search is comprehensive, but we're going to keep it simple in this video and just do keywords.
add in-video link to PICO tutorial show table column A is Parkinson disease column B is dance therapy column C is balance table fills in with synonyms	For this exercise to work, you need to have a well-built research question. Feel free to pause and review our PICO tutorial for help with that. For example, if my research question is "In patients with Parkinson disease, does dance therapy improve balance?" then you might build out the concept table like so: For me to want to read an article, I want it to mention Parkinson disease, dance therapy and balance Now I can brainstorm some synonyms. For Parkinson disease, I think about how it's commonly called "Parkinson's disease" and make sure to add that; As for dance therapy, I don't want to miss any articles that talk about specific types of dance but might not call it dance therapy, so I brainstorm and add 'dancing', 'ballet', 'ballroom', 'tango' and can go on and on.
connect terms	After you're done brainstorming, you're ready to put together your search strategy! In our example, I would be happy with an article that mentioned Parkinson and ballet and balance, or Parkinson's and tango and balance… so when I go to the database, I'm going to end up combining every item in each

add in ORs and ANDs show complete strategy	column with “OR” and then the columns together with “AND”. What this does is ensure your results will include every conceivable combination of your terms – the results will be relevant and thorough!
quick animation of concept table again	So to recap: • Concept tables break down your research question into its key components • Each component is a column, rows contain synonyms and related terms • Search strategies combine the terms in columns with OR and the columns together with AND
	And that’s it! Still have questions? Contact your personal or departmental librarian today!