

Stepping into a systematic review research team as a liaison librarian:
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CORE Information Retrieval Forum 2025

Community | Opportunities | Research | Experience

Stepping into a systematic review research team as a liaison librarian: bridging the gap between theory and practice.

Cheryl Francis, Academic Liaison Librarian (Medicine)

University of Sunderland

#COREIRF25

NIHR | Innovation
Observatory



STUDENT
JOURNEY



Subject Librarians: Faculty of Health Sciences & Wellbeing



Elaine Andrew



Harriet Davidson



Leah Emery



What if?

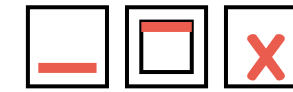


Image 1



Health Literacy Research Team



Dr Anastasia
Trebacz



Dr Floor Christie-
de Jong
@floorchristie



Jack Holkham

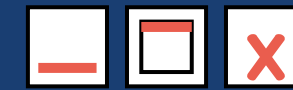


Dr Jo Dunnet
@_jodunnett



University of
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How did I become part of the research team?



I asked!



Building relationships



School of Medicine, February 2020



How did I become part of the research team?



A narrative systematic review of effectiveness and acceptability of interventions to improve readability of patient healthcare materials

Dr Jo Dunnett, Principal Lecturer in Health Psychology, School of Medicine, University of Sunderland

Jack Holkham, Research Assistant, School of Medicine, University of Sunderland

Dr Anastasia Trebacz, Lecturer in Psychology for Medicine, School of Medicine, University of Sunderland

Cheryl Francis, Academic Liaison Librarian (Medicine), School of Medicine, University of Sunderland

Dr Floor Christie-de Jong, Associate Professor in Public Health for Medicine, School of Medicine, University of Sunderland



Challenges



Image 2

Time



Image 3

Responsibility

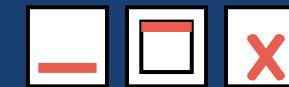


Image 4

The Search



Challenges: The search



Framework:

Problem

Intervention

Outcome

Intervention

“making things
easier to read”
“simplifying text”

Outcome

“increased
understanding, or
readability”
“something being
easier to read”



Bridging the gap



Bridging the gap - reading



Ovid Help - Advanced Search Techniques - School - Microsoft Edge
https://site-ovid-com.sunderland.idm.oclc.org/site/help/documentation/osp/en/index.htm#syntax.htm?TocPath=Searching%25

Wolters Kluwer

Contents

- Getting Started
- Searching
 - Selecting Ovid Resources
 - Selecting a Search Mode
 - Basic Search
 - Find Citation
 - Search Tools
 - Search Fields
 - Advanced Search
 - Advanced Search Techniques**
 - Term Finder
 - Mapping
 - Multi-Field Search
 - Refining Search Strategy
 - Managing Search Results
 - Using Ovid Synthesis
 - Using Multimedia Players
 - Accessing Full Text
 - Outputting Search Results
 - Saving Searches and Alerts
 - Browsing Books and Journals

Advanced Search Techniques

[Return to Advanced Search](#)

Ovid's advanced searching techniques lets you enter special commands instead of statements each time you conduct a search. These searching shortcuts let you search. Experiment with the following techniques and learn to facilitate the ease and enhance the focus of your results.

- Command line syntax and dot-dot commands
- Truncation and wild cards
- Query and set operators
- Postqualification of search sets

Use the advanced searching techniques from the *Advanced Search* mode.

Several databases use check tags, which are frequently searched terms that help mapping screen to help you see your results faster. To see if the database you are using in the [database guide](#) for "check tags".

Command Line Syntax

Cochrane Training
Trusted evidence. Informed decisions. Better health.

Online learning | Learning events | Guides and handbooks | Trainers' Hub

Chapter 4: Searching for and selecting studies

Search Handbook

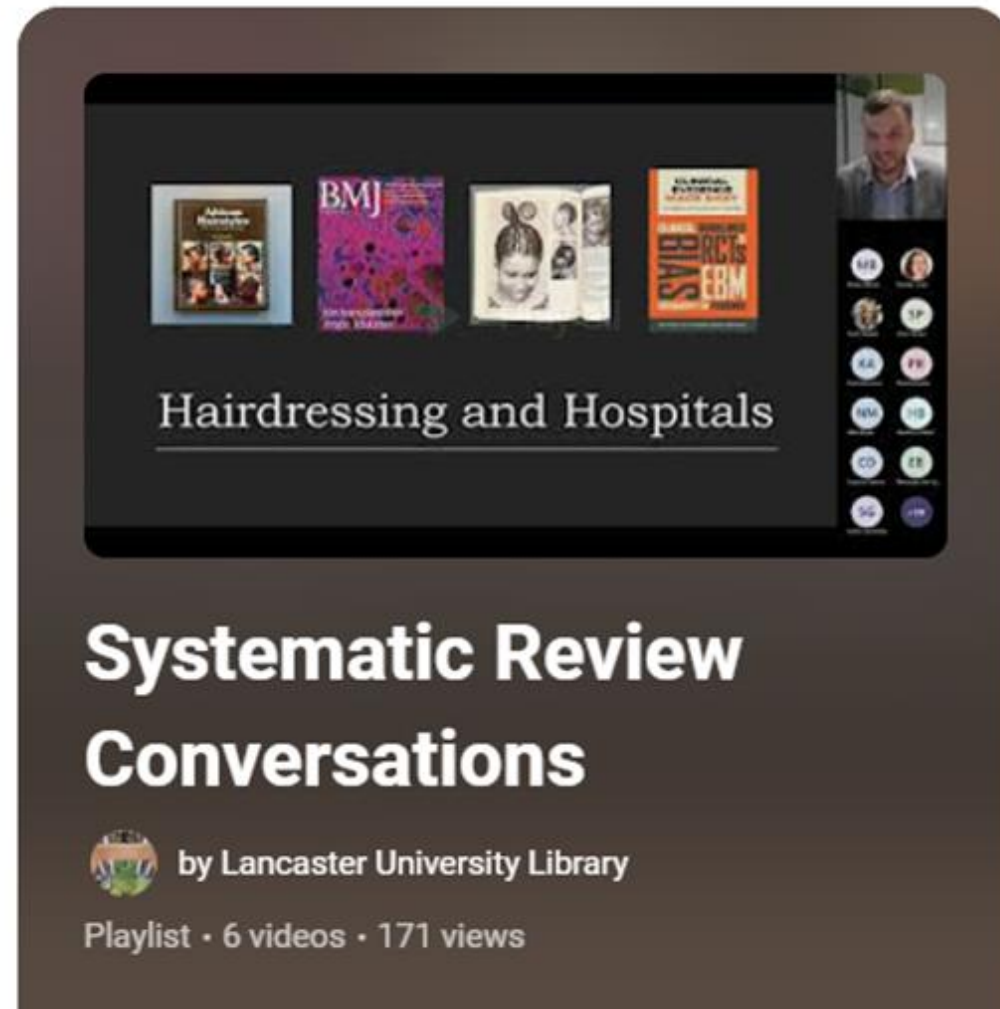
Carol Lefebvre, Julie Glanville, Simon Briscoe, Robin Featherstone, Anne Little, Noel-Storr, Robin Paynter, Tamara Rader, James Thomas, L. Susan Wieland; Cochrane Information Retrieval Methods Group

Key Points:

- Review authors should work closely, from the start of the protocol, with a librarian or information specialist.
- Studies (not reports of studies) are included in Cochrane Reviews but identifying them is currently the most convenient approach to identifying the majority of studies about them and their results.
- The Cochrane Central Register of Controlled Trials (CENTRAL) and MEDLINE to Embase is available to the review team), should be searched for all Cochrane Reviews.
- Where available, the Specialized Register(s) of the relevant Cochrane Group should be searched.




Systematic Review Conversations, Lancaster University




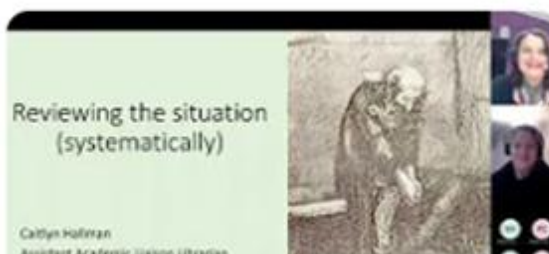
Systematic Review Conversations

by Lancaster University Library

Playlist • 6 videos • 171 views

- 

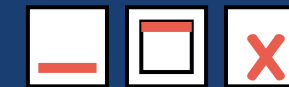
1 **Systematic Review Conversations Series: D John Barbrook**
Lancaster University Library • 590 views • 1 year ago
- 

2 **Systematic Review Conversations: Transpa searching with Kate Misso**
Lancaster University Library • 390 views • 1 year ago
- 

3 **Systematic Review Conversations: Reviewir Caitlyn Hallman**
Lancaster University Library • 101 views • 1 year ago



Discord “Self taught SRs Community” and “medlibs-land”



Self-Taught SRs Commu... # search-strategy-design May 27, 2024

Events

TEXT CHANNELS

- # welcome-and-housekee...
- # introduce-yourself
- # database-questions
- # search-strategy-design
- # links-to-useful-resources
- # software-and-sr-manag...
- # beyond-health-sr-topics
- # news-and-developments

VOICE CHANNELS

- General

5/29/24, 2:26 PM

I think it has more to do with the coherence of the block, in the sense "does that word make sense in that concept block?". If it makes some sense without a farfetched justification, it probably does. Otherwise not that much

And for that reason, I'm not sure you can have the same word in 2 blocks unless it can be related to both :/

5/29/24, 4:02 PM

@Julien I think it has more to do with the coherence of the block, in the sense "does that word make sense in that concept block?". If it makes some sense without a farfetched j

@Cheryl I think it comes down to your blocks, and you might need to instead revisit them and the question framework. For example, if you are using PICO but it's not strictly an intervention then maybe something like PEO or SPIDER might be better suited

May 30, 2024

Cheryl 5/30/24, 9:59 AM

@... it's a health literacy intervention of editing (rather than creating) patient information leaflets (and other written formats) to make them easier to read. The intervention in some papers is making something "easier to read", and no other of our current intervention words (which are soooo broad already) are used. The outcome is increased understanding (or comprehension) which in some papers the only outcome term is readability. Has anyone else done any searching around this topic, the vagueness of the terms we're needing to use are making my brain hurt!

@Cheryl 5/30/24, 4:21 PM

Does dropping your outcome hedge explode your search recall? Searching on outcomes can be a minefield as they are often not mentioned in abstracts/indexing, but sometimes you have to try it to have a manageable set. If it's not a big impact to drop it, consider doing that.



Medsyntax.org



medsyntax:

```
('information specialist':ti, ab OR 'informationspecialist':ti, ab OR 'librarian*':ti OR 'medical librarian*':ti, ab OR 'librarian'/exp OR 'informatician'/exp)
```

AND

```
(  
(  
(('literature*' OR 'database*' OR 'data-base*') NEAR/2 ('search*' OR 'query' OR 'queries' OR 'strateg*'))  
:ti, ab)  
OR 'search quer*':ti, ab OR 'search strateg*':ti, ab OR 'information retrieval*':ti, ab OR  
'literature retrieval*':ti, ab OR 'information retrieval'/exp)
```

OR

```
(  
(('information specialist':ti, ab OR 'informationspecialist':ti, ab OR 'librarian*':ti OR 'medical librarian*':ti, ab OR 'librarian'/exp OR 'informatician'/exp)  
AND ('search engine'/exp OR 'data base'/exp OR 'controlled vocabulary'/exp))  
)
```



Bridging the gap - self reflection

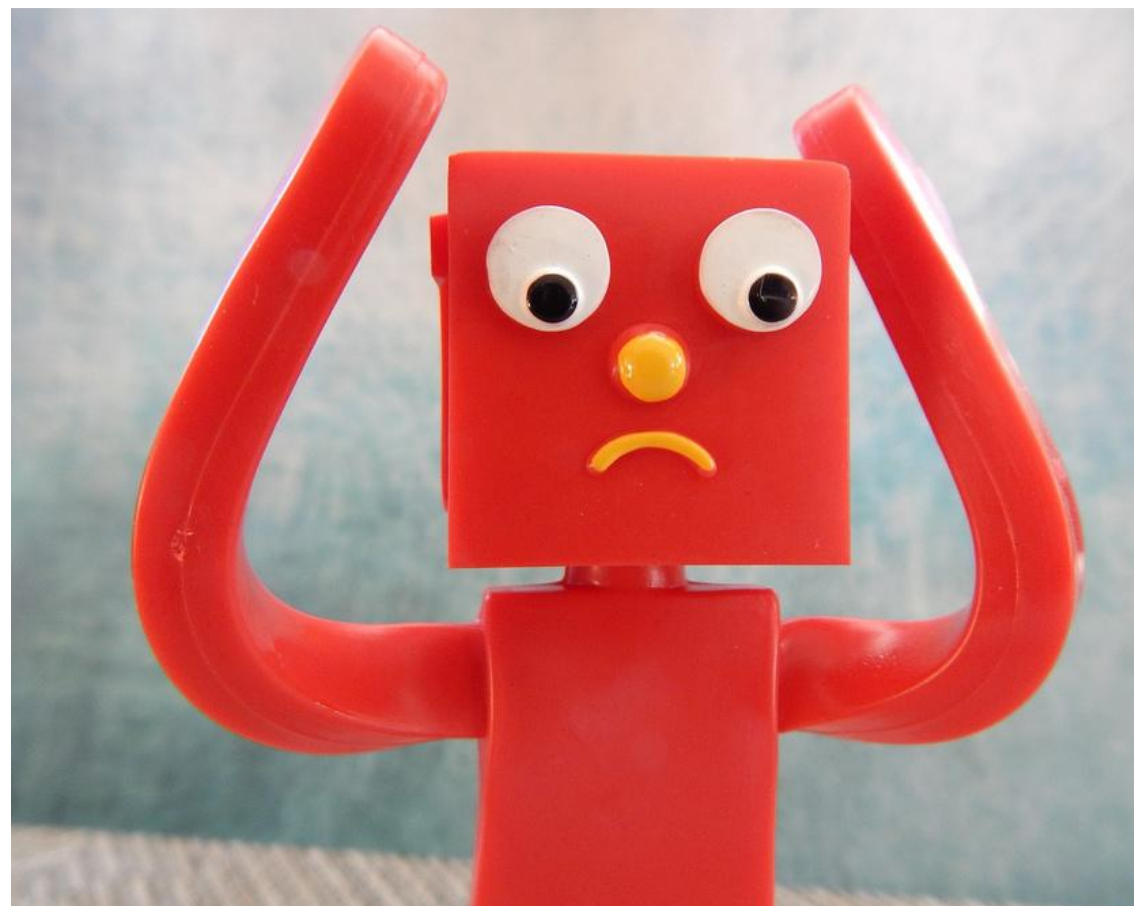


Image 5



Image 6

Benefits

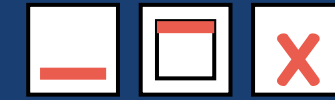
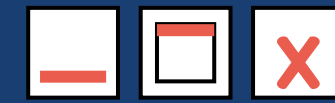


Image 7

- **Developing confidence & resilience**
- **Teaching**
- Job satisfaction
- Taking more responsibility
- Fully immersed in a search
- Finally doing that reading...
- **Connecting differently**



Feedback from the Research team



“... it has been a lovely way to get to know you better and learn more about what you do ... so that is an added win 😊”



Opportunities lead to more opportunities

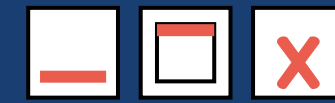
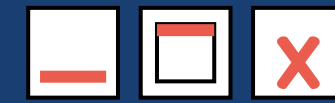


Image 8

- INSPIRE and NIHR student research projects
- Profile / reputation



Feedback from the Research team



“...whatever level of experience they have already, I would recommend collaborating with a librarian... any literature reviews going forward, I will recommend that a librarian is consulted as early as possible.”



If you love searching and want to get more involved:

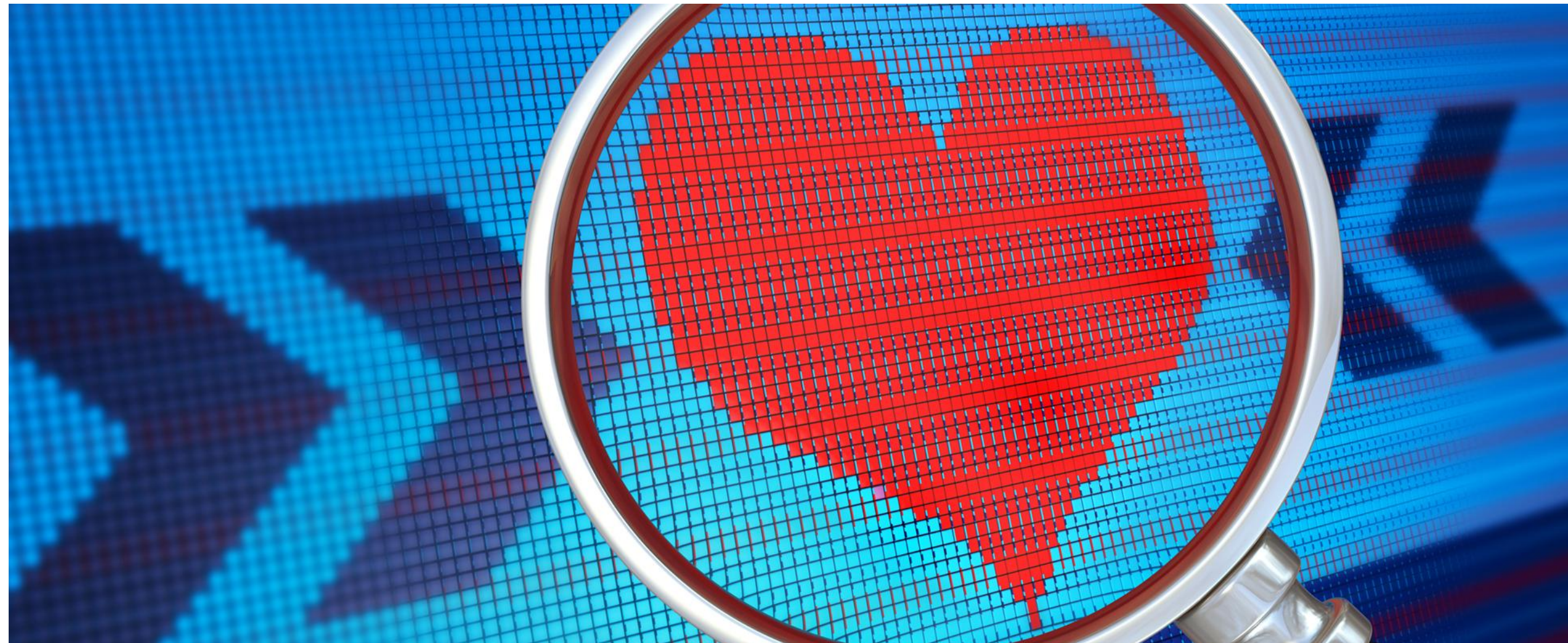


Image 9



What's next?

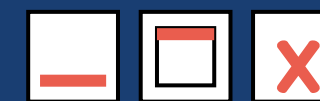


Image 10





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Questions?

cheryl.francis@sunderland.ac.uk

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 Methodology Incubator
Careers | Connections | Knowledge

 Newcastle
University

STUDENT
JOURNEY



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