Scholarly Research for Education Graduate Students: An Information Literacy Workshop

May 2009

Presented by

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Columbia College
Edens Library
Columbia, South Carolina
May 2009
Divergent Learning: Education
Research Skills for Graduate Students

The purpose of this workshop is to learn and practice the skills of action research. These skills will be instrumental when conducting your literature review.

Upon completing today’s workshop, you will know how to:

- Conceptualize a research topic and formulate useful keywords for that topic
- Differentiate between scholarly journal articles and other kinds of information
- Access full-text scholarly journal articles from your home or office computer using databases such as Academic Search Premier, Expanded Academic ASAP, and ERIC
- Set up a user profile in EBSCO and create a research Folder
- Use a bibliography to find more information
- Find useful and pertinent websites
Conceptualizing a Research Topic

In order to find information on a topic, you must translate your topic, thesis, or question into keywords that you can then use when searching the library's catalog, journal article databases, or a search engine on the World Wide Web.

Ex: Do learning styles make a difference in how girls learn math?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concept 1 (keywords)</th>
<th>AND</th>
<th>Concept 2</th>
<th>AND</th>
<th>Concept 3</th>
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Ex: How does participating in the arts affect how well a student does in school?

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<th>Concept 1 (keywords)</th>
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<th>AND</th>
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Now, try your own topic.

Your Topic: ____________________________________________

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<tr>
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</table>

Results (a high number)

Concept 1

Results (less)

Concept 1 and Concept 2

Results (even less, but more focused)

Concept 1 and Concept 2 and Concept 3
In order to find information on a topic, you must translate your topic, thesis, or question into **keywords** that you can then use when searching the library’s catalog, journal article databases, or a search engine on the World Wide Web.

Ex: **Do learning styles make a difference in how girls learn math?**

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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>learning styles</td>
<td>girls</td>
<td>math</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cognitive style</td>
<td>females</td>
<td>mathematics</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>teaching style</td>
<td>single-sex education</td>
<td>math comprehension</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
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Ex: **How does participating in the arts affect how well a student does in school?**

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<th>AND</th>
<th>Concept 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>the arts</td>
<td>academic achievement</td>
<td>student</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>music (e.g. band or orchestra)</td>
<td>academic performance</td>
<td>high school</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>drama (or dance)</td>
<td>student attitudes</td>
<td>elementary school</td>
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<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Now, try your own topic.

**Your Topic:**

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**Results**

- Concept 1: (a high number)
- Concept 1 and Concept 2: (less)
- Concept 1 and Concept 2 and Concept 3: (even less, but more focused)
Smart Search Strategies

These strategies can be applied no matter what you’re searching — whether it’s the college's online databases or a search engine on the World Wide Web. When getting ready to search, ask yourself a few critical questions:

Is there any way this search engine/database will let me narrow my results?

- Combine search terms in the Search/Find field by using the word "and"

- Try limiting your date range

You might have to use an Advanced Search Features or a More Search Options tool, but most databases and Internet search engines will have something like this. You should see an area where you can specify your desired date range. Like this:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>By publication date:</th>
<th>All Times</th>
<th>Before</th>
<th>On</th>
<th>After</th>
<th>Between</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>01 Jan</td>
<td>January</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td></td>
<td>2009</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22 May</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Is there a way to make the most up-to-date stuff come up first?

Usually there is. Again, you might have to use an Advanced Search Features or a More Search Options tool, but most databases and Internet search engines will let you sort your results (e.g. 'newest-to-oldest' or 'most-recent-first'), sometimes by using a drop-down menu.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sort results by</th>
<th>relevance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>dates newest to oldest date oldest to newest length: longest to shortest etc.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Is there a way to make only professional quality articles come up?

Usually, yes. For 'professional quality' articles, sometimes there's a check-mark box, sometimes not. If there is, look for the words "scholarly" or "peer-reviewed" (or refereed") and check-mark that.

Limit the results:

☐ to peer-reviewed publications

When searching for articles on the Web, though, it's a bit trickier. Look for an Advanced Search feature/tool.

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8/23/08

OVER ->
I Can’t Find A Particular Article Full-Text! What Do I Do?

There are a few things you can try…

1. Click on the [Check for full-text availability](#) link.

   A box will open containing links to 3 or 4 different databases. Click on each link to check if the article is available full-text in any of them.

2. Try looking for the journal in the Catalog of a college or university library to which you physically have access.

   It’s possible a college or university library near you might actually carry the journal you’re looking for. Or, they might have it on microfilm. Access their Catalog and do a “Title” search. Enter the title of the journal - not the article title - to see if they carry it. If they do (and they have the volume and issue you need), you can go there and make photocopies or microfilm print-outs.

   *Note: Public libraries usually do not carry the kinds of journals you’ll be looking for.

3. Get the article through an Interlibrary Loan Request (ILL).

   We can almost always get an article for you through ILL. Such requests are made electronically through the library’s website. Simply go to the homepage at [http://www.colacoll.edu/edenslibrary/index.html](http://www.colacoll.edu/edenslibrary/index.html) and click on "INTERLIBRARY LOAN" in the left-hand margin to access the online Request form. (Please note: ILL’s are delivered to Edens Library for pick-up. This may or may not be convenient for you.)

   Most other college or university libraries’ ILL’s work the same way; however, you will likely need to have borrowing privileges with that institution’s library in order for them to complete your ILL.
Making the Most of References/Bibliographies

Coming across the perfect article can make your day! When finding that article, you should ask yourself, "What did this author read? What materials did this author use in his/her research?" The list of References (AKA "Bibliography" or "Works Cited") can prove to be a treasure trove of information. So by all means, use it! 😊

Below are selected bibliographic references from an article retrieved from the Expanded Academic ASAP database.


Which of the references below are journal articles? Which are books? If you wanted to obtain these materials, could you use the Edens Library Catalog or one of the databases to find and get them?

References


Citation, Citation, Sigh-tation!

🔍 APA giving you fits? Try Diana Hacker’s website! [http://www.dianahacker.com/resdoc/p04_c09_s2.html](http://www.dianahacker.com/resdoc/p04_c09_s2.html)

An easy-to-understand guide to APA, as well as other citation formats!
**Tips: Finding Useful Books**

- **Library of Congress Subject Headings**

Like finding the perfect article, finding a great book can make your day! So when you come across an interesting book in a library's Catalog, what's the best way to find more "just like that one"? By using the **Library of Congress Subject Headings**!

After starting with your Keyword search, once you've identified a book that you find useful, click on the book's title to go into its record. Scroll down until you see **Subject**. This is the Subject Heading which the Library of congress has assigned to books dealing with that particular topic. (Oftentimes, there may be several Subject Headings listed.)

By clicking on the Subject Heading listed (in this case, "Individualized Instruction"), the Catalog will retrieve other books with that same Subject Heading.

Using this tactic, along with a good Keyword search, can go a long way towards connecting YOU with some GREAT BOOKS!

- **PASCAL Delivers**

Wish you had access to books from college and university libraries all over S.C.? Well, **YOU DO!** And you can get these books in 3 days with PASCAL Delivers!

It's simple! Follow these easy steps:

1. From whatever Library Catalog you're searching in (Edens Library, USC, etc.), click on the green-and-blue PASCAL Delivers icon. This will take you to PASCAL's Catalog, **PASCALCAT**.
2. From here, you can search by Keyword, Title, etc., just the same way you would search our Library Catalog, or USC's.
3. When you identify a book you'd like to request, go into its record. Immediately below the record information (you may have to scroll down a little), you should see the links **Display Holdings of PASCAL Libraries** and beneath that **Request this item**. Click on **Request this item**.
4. From the drop-down menu, select your affiliated institution (Columbia College) and click on "Submit above information."
5. Fill in your Name and your Columbia College Unique ID Number. (**This is usually the number you log into Koala Connection with. But if you don't know your Columbia College Unique ID Number, contact IT: 803-788-3007**). Click "Submit."

Ah, but here's the rub: **Books you request are only delivered HERE to Edens Library for pick-up. This may or may not be convenient for you.**
Put some **POWER** in your **SEARCH**!

Why should those librarians have all the fun?! You can have fun with the library’s research databases, too! Here’s how…

→ **Search multiple databases at once**

Feel the power! Mine multiple databases with *one search!* Here’s how:

**EBSCO Databases**  (Academic Search Premier, ERIC, etc.)

1. From the Basic Search screen, click on “**Choose Databases**”
2. Place a checkmark in the box next to each database you’d like to search.
3. Click “OK.” This will return you to the Basic Search screen.
4. Set your search limiters (peer-reviewed, date range, etc.) and begin your search!

**DISCUS Databases**  (Expanded Academic ASAP, Educator’s Reference Complete, etc.)

1. From the Search screen, in the upper right-hand corner, select “**Change Databases**”
2. This vendor automatically checkmarks *everything* they’ve got, which is probably overkill, but that’s OK.
3. Click “Continue” (at top of screen). This will return you to the Search screen.
4. Set your search limiters (peer-reviewed, date range, etc.) and begin your search!

No more backing out of one database only to have to enter another and reproduce your search. Too time-consuming!

→ **Create your own personal Research Folder**

**EBSCO Databases**

The first thing you need to do is **set up your profile by creating an account** (don’t worry, it’s free and easy!)

- Click on “Sign Into My EBSCOhost” (top of screen)
- Select “I’m a new user”
- Fill out the information and click “Submit”

**Your profile is now set!**

* Please note: In the future, each time you enter an EBSCO database and you want to access your Folder, you’ll need to Sign-In (Sign-In located at top of Basic Search screen.)

Now you’re ready to create a Folder! To create your Folder, simply…

1. Go into any EBSCO database(s) and Sign In
2. Perform your search
3. When you ID any articles you want to add to your Folder, simply click **Add to folder**.
4. But, just as with a pet, you’ve got to give your folder a **name! 😊**
   a. Click on the Folder tab (top of the screen)
   b. You’ll see your selected article(s) appear in a list. Click **New**. (left-hand margin)
   c. Name your (pet) folder. Include Notes if you like. Click “Save”
5. Notice that your selected articles do not automatically get moved to your newly created folder. You must move them there. Do this by selecting them (click the check-mark box),
click on the **Move To** drop-down menu and click on your new folder’s name! You’ll see the folder’s name appear over in the left-hand margin. To see what’s in it, click the + sign next to it.

Notice in the upper-left-hand margin that you can put other things you find in the database into your folders.

→ *Keep the fun coming - Create a Search Alert!*

Do you ever lie awake at night pondering the exciting possibility of being alerted every time a new article on your chosen research topic is made available?!

……No? (Hmm…guess it’s just us librarians.) Well, anyway…there IS a way to do this! It’s easy.

1. Sign-In to an EBSCO database and conduct your search. (Don’t forget – you can search multiple databases to potentially increase your results!)
2. Once you’ve tweaked your search and are happy with the wording of it, select **Search History/Alerts** (top of screen just below the Search box)
3. You’ll see all the different searches you’ve conducted during your session. Select the one(s) for which you’d like to create an Alert by check-marking the box next to it
4. Click ‘Save Search/Alert’
5. Fill in the requested information - Search Name and Description. (I usually just name it whatever the search phrase is.)
6. Click ’Save’

Now, whenever you Sign-In and access your Folder information, you can click on **Search Alerts** and see if anything new has become available since your last Sign-In. How exciting is **THAT**!?
Good Places to go on the WWW

Professional Organizations
How to Identify/Find Them

- To what organization(s) do you belong? In your profession, are you required to belong to one or more? If so, check out their websites for electronic scholarly publications, or a section featuring facts and statistics regarding issues pertinent to the profession.
- Ask your colleagues and professors!
- Still at a loss? Google!
  - Try a Google search for: professional organizations for __________

  The ‘blank’ could be...... teachers, educators, elementary teachers, high school teachers, etc. etc.

  In fact, before you even finish typing, Google will give suggestions based on past users’ searches. How cool is THAT?!

U.S. Government (State and Federal)
A great place to go for national and state statistics, public policy information and more!
Here are a few suggestions!

  South Carolina Department of Education  http://ed.sc.gov/  
  National Center for Education Statistics  http://nces.ed.gov/  
  FedStats (plethora of governments statistics!)  http://www.fedstats.gov/  
  South Carolina Statistical Abstract  http://www.ors2.state.sc.us/abstract/index.asp  
  Statistical Abstract of the United States  http://www.census.gov/compendia/statab/  

Edens Library Divergent Learning Resource Guide!
Still looking for more Web goodies? Try our Divergent Learning Resource Guide!
http://www.colacoll.edu/edenslibrary/divergentguide.htm#divsites
Research Guide:

Evaluating Information from the World Wide Web

Characteristics that make the Internet different from other familiar sources of information, such as books, newspapers, and television:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Complexity</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
<th>Lack of Editorial Authority</th>
<th>Variety and Ownership</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Changeability</td>
<td>Lack of Organization</td>
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</table>

Criteria for evaluating Web sites:

1) **Purpose and Audience** – Who is the information designed to reach? Why is it on the Web?

2) **Authority** – Who is responsible? What are their credentials? Do they provide biographies or references? Do they credit other information sources? Is there contact information for the author or producer?

3) **Scope** – What is the time period covered? Is the coverage general or detailed? Are there relevant and helpful links to other Web sites?

4) **Accuracy** – Are the facts reliable given what you already know about the subject? Is the information objective or does it have a clearly stated bias? How does it compare to other sources (print and non-print)?

5) **Currency** – Is there a date of creation on the Web site? How frequently is it updated? Is there obviously out-of-date information? Do the links still work?

6) **Design** – Is it easy and quick (less than three clicks) to navigate? Is it easy to locate pertinent information? Is it cluttered? Does it have distracting backgrounds or too many graphics that slow it down? Can you search it? Does it require plug-ins or players?

7) **Commercialism** – Is it trying to sell something? Are there hidden costs? Do you have to supply personal information? Is the site secure?

8) **Evaluation by Others** – Do reputable Web sites link to it?
J. Drake Edens Library Web Site **CHEAT SHEET**

J. Drake Edens Library Web Site (Library’s Home Page):
http://www.colacoll.edu/edenslibrary/index.html

*Note: All of these instructions are from the Library’s Home Page*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TO GET TO…</th>
<th>CLICK ON… (from the Library’s Home Page)</th>
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| • Academic Search Premier  
  • Educator’s Reference Complete  
  • Expanded Academic ASAP  
  • ERIC (journal articles) | Find Articles -> Journals & Magazines  
(Select from the list of databases. If you’re off-campus,  
Resource Guide for Divergent Learning  
(This has a TON of useful info on it!) | Library Resource Guides -> then select  
“Divergent Learning” from the Subject Guides Drop-Down Menu  
(instructions are the same for ON or OFF campus) |
| The library’s catalog  
(books, journals, etc. that the library actually has and owns) | Find Books and more…  
(instructions are the same for ON or OFF campus) |
| Web Sites of Interest  
(Good web sites for Divergent Learning,  
Education, and Special Education). And don’t forget about your Professional Organizations! | Find WWW Resources -> Sites by Subject ->  
Divergent Learning (or Education or Special Education)  
* These web sites can also be found on the Resource Guide |

Columbia College Web Site:  http://www.columbiacollegesc.edu/