Stepping Up Your Scholarly Research Skills: Searching Databases
Graduate Online Success Series

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Spring 2024

1. **Research process**
   a. Takes time and effort. Planning at the start will keep you on track.
   b. An iterative process, repeating or adjusting the topic and search is common.
   c. Keeping organized at the start will save you time and effort. Keep a document of your search terms and strategy.
   d. Suggested reading: Writing up Your University Assignments and Research Process, by Neil Murray and Geraldine Hughes

2. **Preparing to Search**
   a. Gather background information from news sources, encyclopedia, books, textbooks and internet searching like Googling.
      i. Can use to look up professional associations, organizations, and government pages
   b. From your background searching, start to brainstorm your keywords

3. **Using keywords and subject heading searches**
   a. Keywords – plain language searching
   b. Controlled vocabulary or database thesauri – Can be different database to database
      i. Think of these as the hashtags for a database
   c. Try to incorporate synonyms for keyword searching to get best results

4. **Applying database limiters**
   a. Common limiters include - Material type, peer reviewed, creation date, language
   b. The more limiters applied, the narrower the results will become

5. **Using Boolean operators, truncation and phrase searching**
   a. Boolean operators – AND (less results), OR (more results), NOT (excludes a term)
   b. Truncation – using the root word to get variations on how it presented – ethic* yields ethics, ethic, ethically.
   c. Phrase searching – getting words next to each other – "bipolar disorder".

6. **Dragon Search** – broad results, multi-disciplinary
   a. A discovery search tool for articles, books, library databases and guides
   b. Video Tutorial on Dragon Search and search techniques

7. **Databases searching** on **ProQuest One Academic**
   a. A database is an online collection of articles that you can search by topic or keyword.
   b. ProQuest One Academic is a general-purpose database
   c. Subject and discipline specific can be found on Databases A to Z or on the Subject Guides page

8. **Cited Reference searching using Web of Science**
   a. Similar to Google's "Cited by" results