Wellehan Library
Saint Joseph's College
Using *ERIC* and *Academic Search Complete* Databases

The purpose of this document is to provide various approaches for using *ERIC* and *Academic Search Complete* databases and to offer sample searches that can be adapted for other search queries.

***ERIC*,** the Educational Resource Information Center, provides access to education literature and resources.

Academic Search Complete (*ASC*) provides coverage of multidisciplinary, full-text academic journals.

Because *ERIC* and *ASC* are both provided by EBSCO, the searching tips that follow are appropriate for either database.

Basic Search
A basic keyword search is a good way to begin using these databases; however, in most instances, this type of search will yield too many results if limiters are not used. Try this approach with any basic search.
- In the search field, enter your search term.
- Under the heading, "Limit your results," select full text, peer reviewed, and if currency is important, use the publication date option to impose date restrictions.

Advanced Search
The "Advanced Search" option provides an expanded list of limiters found in "Limit your results." Also, it allows for joining words and phrases using and or or not, which are referred to as Boolean operators. The drop-down options available from "Select a Field (optional)" allow for searching within specific fields.

Advanced Search looking for article by a particular author:
- Enter the author's name in the first search field.
- Select "AU Author" from the "Select a Field" menu.
- Click "Search."

Advanced Search using Boolean Operators:
My tentative research question focuses on how teaching methods and class activities affect active learning.
- Enter each of the search terms in separate search fields joined by and.
- Select appropriate limiters, such as "Full Text" and "Scholarly (Peer Reviewed) Journals."
- Click "Search."
View this tutorial for suggestions for building an advanced search in *Academic Search Complete*.

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Publications Search in *Academic Search Complete*
Many EBSCO databases will allow you to search within a specific journal. ERIC, however, does not offer this feature. In *Academic Search Complete*, use the "Publications" tab at the top left of the screen when you know the title of a journal in which you wish to search.
For example:
- Click on the "Publications" link.
- Enter Educational Leadership in the Browse field and click "Browse."
- Click on the title from the results list.
- Record includes complete journal information and a date listing.
- Click a date link.
- Click on a vol. and issue link.
- Articles found in that volume and issue of the journal will be listed.

Thesaurus Search in *ERIC*
Many databases rely on controlled vocabulary to ensure consistency of subject terms. ERIC provides a Thesaurus option in order to search subject terms. This is one of the most effective ways to use ERIC because it allows you to use exact ERIC subject headings.
For example:
- Click on the "Thesaurus" tab.
- In the browsing field, enter school consolidation and Click "Browse."
- Results list identifies "Consolidated Schools" as the subject heading used by ERIC to identify "school consolidation."
- Click on the "Consolidated Schools" link.
- Click on the link again to see the broader and related terms along with other terms that "Consolidated Schools" is used for.
- From this page, you can actually build a search by clicking in the box beside any hyperlinked term. Use the Add button to move a term into the search field at the top of the page. Select the appropriate Boolean operator if more terms are added and click "Search."

Understanding the Results List
Once you have results from a search, you can click on any listed title to see a full citation page. On this page you will see publication information, author information, and an abstract for the article when an abstract is available. The abstract is a great starting place because the abstract/summary will help you determine if the article actually addresses your research topic.

Once you know that you would like to read the article in its entirety, you can click on the PDF link at the top left of the page. Now, you are ready to read the entire article.

When you find really pertinent articles, remember to look at the subject terms (ERIC calls these descriptors.) that have been assigned to the article. These terms will appear as hyperlinks above the abstract. Use these hyperlinked terms to find other articles related to the selected term.