Keyword Searching Strategies

Developing Your Search

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rule #1:</th>
<th>Choose the most important words that describe your topic. These become your search terms, or <strong>keywords</strong>.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Example:</strong></td>
<td>Topic: What effects does the use of social media have on the lives of students? contains these keywords: <strong>social media; students; effects</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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<th>Rule #2:</th>
<th>Put quotation marks around common phrases to ensure that the entire phrase appears in any results.</th>
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<td><strong>Examples:</strong></td>
<td>• “social media” • “online privacy” • “No Child Left Behind”</td>
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<th>Rule #3:</th>
<th>Link multiple words/phrases with <strong>AND</strong> to include them all in your search.</th>
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<td><strong>Examples:</strong></td>
<td>• “social media” and students and effects • “constructivist theory” and training • language and dialects and “social class”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Revising Your Search

**Narrowing**

*Make your search terms or topic more specific to get more focused results.*

- **“social media” students effects**
- **“social media” college students effects**
- **“social media” college students benefits**

**Too many results** → **Fewer results**

| **Broadening** | Use fewer words or less specific search terms to get a larger pool of results. |

- **facebook**
- **“college students” retention**
- **“Oakland University”**

**Too few results** → **More results**

**Try Synonyms**

*“social media” “college students” effects*

- effects → impact, consequences, outcomes

**Mining a Record**

*In the record for relevant item, browse for additional search terms to try. Be sure to check the title, abstract, and subject terms!*

- **Relevant Item Record**
- title term
- abstract term
- subject term

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