SEARCHINGERIC (EBSCO) WITH THE
THESAURUS AND SEARCH HISTORY

The following steps will guide you through the process of searching ERIC (EBSCO) using the Thesaurus and Search History tools. Using these tools in the way described below make the process of finding information in ERIC much easier.

**STEP 1:** Look at your research question or thesis and identify all the DIFFERENT concepts, ideas, or issues it encompasses.

EXAMPLE: How can teachers use peers to assist students with Autism to develop positive social skills? The concepts in this question are: Teachers; Peers; Autism or Students with Autism; and positive social skills.

**STEP 2:** Determine what concepts, ideas, or issues should be included in your search.

EXAMPLE: Teachers are the audience of my paper so I decide not to include this as part of my search, but I do want to include peers, autism, and social skills.

**STEP 3:** Go to the Education Subject Guide (http://guides.lib.byu.edu/education) and log into ERIC (EBSCO) by clicking on the link in the center top box of the Home tab.

**STEP 4:** In ERIC (EBSCO) click on the Thesaurus (upper left hand corner of the screen)
**STEP 5:** Using the Browsing: ERIC – Thesaurus search box under the large blue bar to search your terms to find the correct terms that ERIC uses to represent your concepts

**EXAMPLE:** Type in Autism

**STEP 6:** If your search retrieves the exact word you want and it is blue and underlined, click on the term to find other forms of the term.
**STEP 7:** Select all the terms that represent the concept you are trying to find by clicking on the box on the left. These are the terms you want to have included in your search. There is no right or wrong answer here, just select the terms you think best represent the concept you are trying to search.

**STEP 8:** Click on the “Add” button (note the word “Or” should always appear at the box to the left of the add button).

**STEP 9:** The terms you selected plus other tools (i.e. the Boolean operator “Or”, quotes to find phrases, and location designators “DE”) will now be in the search box at the top. Click on Search.

**STEP 10:** You have now searched one concept of your question. Go back to step four and complete for all the concepts of your question.

**HINT 1:** If your search retrieves the exact word you typed in but it is not blue and underlined and has next to it USE, the blue underlined word is the correct word used to represent this concept and this is the word you should use. Click on the correct blue underlined word then go to step 6 and proceed from there.
**HINT 2:** If your search does not retrieve your word then try searching other forms of the word.

EXAMPLE: Searching “Peers” brings up nothing, but searching the singular form “Peer” brings up a lot of aspects of this term.

**HINT 3:** If your search retrieves other words that represent a variety of aspects of your word then pick the most specific one that represents your concept. Click on the correct blue underlined word then go to step 6 and proceed from there.

EXAMPLE: Searching “peer” I find a lot of words that represent aspects of peer interactions, so I would select a term like “Peer Influence” or “Peer Relationship” to capture the concept I am trying to research.

- Peer Acceptance
- Peer Coaching  **Use**  Coaching (Performance)
- Peer Counseling
- Peer Evaluation
- Peer Groups
- Peer Harassment  **Use**  Bullying
- **Peer Influence**
- Peer Institutions (2004)  **Use**  Institutions
- Peer Mediation
- Peer Pressure  **Use**  Peer Influence
- **Peer Relationship**
- Peer Review  **Use**  Peer Evaluation
- Peer Teaching
- Peer Tutoring  **Use**  Peer Teaching; Tutoring; Peer Teaching; Tutoring
- Pendulums (2004)  **Use**  Laboratory Equipment
- Pensions  **Use**  Retirement Benefits
**HINT 4:** If you can’t find the word you are looking for in the thesaurus, go through the back door. Type in the term representing your concept into the main search box at the top, then click on search. Look below at the search box and find an article that looks like it is talking about that concept. Look at the SUBJECTS listed below the citation. These are the thesaurus words, find the word in this list that represents your topic then return to step 5 and search using this word.

**EXAMPLE:** The term “e-books” is not in the thesaurus, but searching it and finding the subjects we find that “Electronic publishing” is the right word to use.

**STEP 11:** You now should have done ONE individual search for each of the concepts in your question or thesis. (Remember with steps 5-10 you should be searching ONE concept at a time although you will be using numerous words to represent that concept). Now it is time to combine all the concepts using the Search History. Open the Search History by clicking on the words to the left of the Search button on the main search box.

**STEP 12:** Make sure your main search box is clear by clicking on the “Clear” button next to the “Search” button at the top, or by highlighting anything in the box and deleting it.

**STEP 13:** Select all the searches you have done by clicking on the squares on the right. Click the “Search with AND” button.

*Remember when using the search history to combine searches you will always use the “AND” button.*
**STEP 14:** Your search results will appear below the search history box (Scroll down if you don’t see them because sometimes the search history pushes the results below the visible screen)

**HINT 5:** Did you not get any or not enough information? First try combining the words in another way.

**EXAMPLE:** If all three of my concepts did not bring up anything then I would try searching in combinations of two. So I would select S1 (Peer Relationship…) and S3 (Autism …) starting at step 13. Then I would try S2 (Interpersonal Competence …) and S3 (Autism …).

Still not finding anything? Try other words. Maybe other aspects of Peers would be better or maybe I should try words that relate to “teachers” instead of peers.

Still not finding anything? Maybe I’m looking for the wrong things. Remember you are looking for the pieces of the puzzle, you won’t find many articles that will talk about all the elements, but you will find ones that talk about them in different combinations, try looking for things that talk about the concepts that you can then combine to make your case for your paper. In addition you may be connecting ideas or issues in a way that is not supported by research, in this rare case you will have to reexamine your question or thesis by doing more background research.

**STEP 15:** After following these steps you should have found the information you need. Add items you want to look at to your folder by clicking on the “Add to Folder” button. Go to the folder at the top right or in orange at the top right to e-mail or download your citations to a bibliography generator program like Refworks.

**STEP 16:** Download the full text by clicking on the links if the full text is in ERIC (EBSCO), if it’s not then click on the “GET IT AT BYU” button to find out what other full text (both digital and print) access we have or to get it from another library though interlibrary loan.

**HINT 6:** Still can’t find anything or are having problems? Contact your subject librarian Rachel Wadham by e-mail at Rachel_Wadham@byu.edu