



INSTRUCT TEACHING GUIDE

9. INTRODUCTION TO SEARCHING

If your students are just becoming familiar with searching for sources, particularly when using an academic database or catalog, use the following items that focus on database choice and keyword searches:

- Videos: Searching as Exploration
- Videos: Beginning Research with Wikipedia/Google
- Video: Choosing a Database
- Tutorial: Choosing and Using Keywords
- Tutorial: Search Techniques Part 1

DISCUSSION TOPICS

Search Strategies

Have students discuss or brainstorm search strategies they use now. Focus on non-academic searching, like Google searches or how they search for fun. Have they seen patterns, discovered shortcuts, etc.?

Have students discuss how they find peer-reviewed or scholarly items outside of the library. What are hindrances to this process (for example, paywalls)? Why might the library resources be better to use in these cases?

Date Published

When searching for sources, why is the date feature important? What does it do? Are there subjects or instances when students need to limit to recent material? Older material? Specific decade?

ACTIVITIES

Databases

Have students identify two or more databases or related tools. Students should write out their thesis, keywords, and synonyms. Direct students to search in a library database, catalog, or discovery tool and share observations. Compare this to search engines like Google. Have students explore similarities and differences in these tools.

Ask students to search for the same topic/subject in two databases. How did searching in each database work? Differences? Similarities? Search results? Numbers? Relevance? Was one a subject-specific database? Does that make a difference in search results? Have students present or write up a short report on their findings.

This teaching guide can be used by Instruct customers who have selected the Information Literacy content package.

Thesis Statements and Keywords

Create a set of imaginary thesis statements. Have students pick out keywords, develop a list of synonyms and related terms, and select a few databases appropriate for the topic. They should provide reasoning behind their selections.

Tell students to search various keywords and synonyms in a library database and in Google. What did they discover about the importance of synonyms and multiple keywords in the databases? How about spelling in databases vs. Google?

Have students work in pairs that swap thesis statements. Students should create a list of keywords and synonyms for their partners, select a few appropriate databases or other resources, and locate at least one source for their partner's project. Have the student utilize the Send/Share function in a search tool to send their partner a link or copy of the source.

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