

**Workshop Title:** Basic Research Skills

**Summary:** Students will brainstorm keywords regarding a research topic, exploring synonyms and Boolean terms using a Venn diagram. Pairs of students will conduct their own searches - identifying relevant databases, using search limiters, and exporting results while learning about citations.

**Locations:** Can be conducted in classroom or library conference room.

**Term:** Fall

**Specific Knowledge Outcomes:**

- Students will understand how to utilize synonyms and Boolean terms to explore their research topics.
- Students will be able to identify key databases and isolate scholarly articles and become familiar with the idea of peer-reviewed journals.
- Students will be able to export their results and create citations for managing their research and preparing their papers.

**Activity:** A librarian or faculty member will begin a discussion with students on how they currently do research, creating a list of steps. The instructor will have picked a relevant topic prior to the class, which will then be introduced to the students. The class will begin to brainstorm keywords, listing on a whiteboard. The instructor will display a Venn diagram to work through Boolean searching, and explore the use of synonyms, via the Subject Terms thesaurus in Ebsco. Lastly, students will be shown briefly how to use the citation tools, and an explanation provided about the difference between displayed URLs and permalinks.

Students will then break off and be given one of three research topics. Students will have five minutes to research their topic, using the limiter to explore only scholarly articles, and cite three results using the citation tool. At the end of the discussion, the students all come back together and the instructor will lead a conversation exploring database choices, synonyms used, challenges encountered, and any unexpected results.

To finish the class, the instructor will run one of the given searches and locate a resource not available in full-text. Using the citation tool, they will provide a more in-depth explanation of the various pieces of a citation and its overall usefulness. Then, using that citation, the instructor will show how students can sign up for an ILL account and request a resource through interlibrary loan.

**Questions for group discussion:**

- 1) What databases did you choose to use for your searches? Did you choose multi-purpose or subject-specific databases?

- 2) Did you think of your own keywords? Did you use the thesaurus, subjects, or keywords provided by the database?
- 3) What search limiters did you utilize?
- 4) Did you find too many or too few resources for your topic?
- 5) What challenges did you face and how did you overcome them?
- 6) Were there resources you expected to find but did not? Any surprising results?