**TITLE**

Beyond the Basics: Advanced Literature Searches in an Education Database

**AUDIENCE**

Target: Postgraduate research Education students (Masters by Research/PhD).

Prerequisites: As this is an advanced searching course, it is assumed that students will have *basic* familiarity with the name, subject coverage and scope of one of the core Education databases, *ERIC*,as well as possess *basic* skills in using and searching this database.

Justification: In my job, my main focus is the Education faculty at university with respect to the delivery of information services and training, and liaison support. Research students appeal to me as they possess information needs at a greater level of depth, which poses more of a challenge to teach them. This is a group that I have never worked with before. Studying at a high level and having used Education databases before, it is expected that this cohort has basic knowledge of the databases.

**TYPE OF TRAINING**

Training type: Advanced literature searching

Justification: Research students, compared to undergraduates or postgraduates by coursework, are required to undertake complex research projects, in which sophisticated research and highly developed literature reviews form a significant component of the course of study.

**AIMS**

To provide an advanced overview of one of the core Education database, *ERIC*, and how to turn a complex research question into an effective literature search strategy with which to search for and find education-related research in this database.

**OBJECTIVES**

By the end of this training course, participants will be familiar with:

1. The process of analysing a complex research topic through the identification of: 1) key concepts, 2) keywords (synonyms), 3) qualifiers (limiting words), and 4) instruction (direction) words

2. Various advanced searching techniques with which to conduct advanced database searches, including Boolean operators & nested searching, truncation & wildcards, phrase searching, controlled subject terms, proximity operators

3. Building an effective literature search strategy with key concepts using keywords and a mix of the above searching techniques

4. Saving searches and articles, and setting up RSS alerts

5. The advanced capabilities of ERIC database

**LEARNING OUTCOMES**

On successful completion of this training course, students will be able to:

1. Analyse a complex research topic to identify: 1) key concepts, 2) keywords (synonyms), 3) qualifiers (limiting words), and 4) instruction (direction) words
2. Define, compare and use various advanced searching techniques, including Boolean operators & nested searching, truncation & wildcards, phrase searching, controlled subject terms, proximity operators
3. Develop an effective literature search strategy with key concepts using keywords and a mix of the above searching techniques
4. Create folders to save searches and articles, and set up RSS alerts
5. Use ERIC database in an advanced manner

**INDIVIDUAL COURSE COMPONENTS**

Course components:

* **Verbal instruction & Demonstrations**
	+ The training is one-to-one, so lectures or presentations inappropriate. Concepts to be verbally explained to student and via demonstrations (informal)
	+ Since practical exercises are based on trainer explanations & demonstrations, it makes sense for the client to be shown how to do things prior to putting what they have learnt into practice
* **Practical sessions & Exercises**
	+ Retains student’s interest in subject matter by enabling them to apply learnt concepts into ‘real’ practical situations; diversion from trainer ‘driving’ the session
	+ Allows student to determine gaps in knowledge or skills, and trainer to assess level of understanding of content

**COURSE DELIVERY METHOD**

Delivery method: One-to-one, through appointment

Justification: Each research student has a different topic to work on, thus unique information needs. As such needs are very complex, this course should be highly customised to the student. Conducting this training for a group, therefore, would not have met each participant’s individual research needs.

**COURSE DURATION**

2.5 hours (2pm – 4.30pm) – approximate only. Could be less, depending on student’s skills and comprehension.

Research students booking into the class will be keen to sit through the content, given the complexity of their research topic; this will be especially the case if they haven’t done much advanced searching.

**REQUIRED RESOURCES**

* Computer with Internet access
* Handouts containing summaries on:
	+ analysing research topic (identification of different types of words)
	+ advanced searching techniques
	+ creating folders to save searches & articles, setting up RSS alerts
* Practical exercise sheets
* Post-training course evaluation form

**COURSE SCHEDULE** Note: Competence in advanced searching and use of ERIC will be checked via a pre-training evaluation form BEFORE the class.

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