1. Always Use the Advanced Search Box and Limiters

Most databases default to an advanced search, but if you ever get a database with a single search box, look for an advance option.

Brainstorm a list of search terms before you begin searching and try different combinations.

Search broadly at first to cast the widest net for articles. Even if the articles aren’t quantitative or qualitative you can still use them (see sections on using reference pages and cited by sources). Then, you can also add in the terms: Study. Quantitative Study, Qualitative Study after your initial searches.

DON’T limit your results to Full Text. Full Text means only PDFs in this specific database. If you DON’T select Full Text, our system will also show you articles in other databases. We label this option FindIt@WOU in the article results.

Use Peer Reviewed Limiter to only get academic articles and limit by date to get the most current research (a 5-10 year span is generally a good range). You can use the date limiter to conduct historic research on a topic as well.

Example of FindIt@WOU – you select the icon to get a variety of options for retrieving the article.
2. Look at the Titles and Abstracts of Articles

Sometimes it is easy and you can identify the type of research from the article title.

**A quantitative study** of classroom teachers’ knowledge, training, and attitude toward inclusion. Moffitt - 2015 - search.proquest.com

But most times, you need to read the abstracts and look for clues that will inform you about the research.

**Rural Secondary Educators' Perceptions of Their Efficacy in the Inclusive Classroom.**

Authors: Shoulders, Tori L.¹, tsilouders@usi.edu
Scott Krei, Melinda²

Source: Rural Special Education Quarterly; Spring 2016, Vol. 35 Issue 1, p23-30, 8p

Document Type: Article

Subjects: Tennessee; High schools; Mainstreaming in special education; Research -- Evaluation; Special education; College teacher attitude; Regression analysis; Rural conditions; Sampling (Statistics); Self-efficacy; T-test (Statistics); Judgment sampling; Data analysis software; Descriptive statistics

Author Supplied Keywords: inclusion
rural education
teacher efficacy
teacher perceptions

Abstract: The purpose of this study was to compare the differences in rural secondary special and general education teachers' perceptions of their efficacy in teaching students in an inclusive classroom. The sample consisted of 148 rural secondary general education and 32 special education teachers. The researchers used an independent-samples t test to determine if there was a difference in the efficacy of student engagement for general and special education teachers. Results indicated there was a significant difference in the efficacy of student engagement for general and special education teachers. The researchers completed further examination using stepwise multiple regression analysis to determine the extent to which teacher characteristics predict efficacy in student engagement. Implications of the findings for policy and practice in rural schools are also discussed. [ABSTRACT FROM AUTHOR]

Even if you find Literature Reviews, Meta-Analysis, or Informative Research Articles—save them. You can mine them quantitative and qualitative resources.
3. Don’t Get Stuck on Your Search Terms

As you find articles, add those subject terms to your list and searches.

Initial search terms

Teacher Attitudes
Inclusion Classrooms

Subject terms from article:

Tennessee; High schools; Mainstreaming in special education; Research -- Evaluation; Special education; College teacher attitude; Regression analysis; Rural conditions; Sampling (Statistics); Self-efficacy; T-test (Statistics); Judgment sampling; Data analysis software; Descriptive statistics

Rural Secondary Educators' Perceptions of Their Efficacy in the Inclusive Classroom.

Authors: Shoulders, Tori L.¹, tsiloulders@usi.edu
Scott Krei, Melinda²

Source: Rural Special Education Quarterly, Spring2016, Vol. 35 Issue 1, p23-30, 8p

New search
4. DON’T Just Use One Database

Don’t get stuck searching one database over and over. Exhaust the database with your searches and varying subject terms and try another. We use EBSCO as the interface for many of our databases, but each database has unique content (as well as shared) so it is worth searching multiple databases on your topic.

Here is a list of library databases useful in researching Special Education

**Education Full Text (including ERIC)** provides has articles relating to teaching and education published since 1995. Also includes citations and full text from the ERIC database (which include curricula, reports, standards, and other unpublished materials addressing topics in education).

**SAGE Complete A-Z List**
Peer-reviewed journals in Communication & Media Studies, Education, Nursing & Public Health, Psychology, Sociology published by SAGE and participating societies.

**Google Scholar**
Google Scholar enables you to search specifically for academic research including journal articles, books, technical reports, conference proceedings, and other scholarly material.

**JSTOR Arts & Sciences**
Provides online full-text access to the archives of more than 1300 scholarly journals, some of which date from the 19th century. JSTOR does not include recently published articles. Due to publisher restrictions, there is a gap, typically from 1 to 5 years, between the most recently published journal issue and the issues available in JSTOR.

**Teacher Reference Center**

**Educator’s Reference Complete**
This comprehensive database covers multiple levels of education from preschool to college and includes virtually every educational specialty, such as bilingual studies, health, technology and testing. The database also includes resources on issues related to administration, funding and policy in education.

**Professional Development Collection**
This is a specialized collection of journal articles and pamphlets especially for professional educators covering the most current topics in the field of education.
5. Go Where the Research Takes You

Start with an idea not a conclusion. If you are trying to research a predetermined conclusion, you will get frustrated or you will not find enough research.

Instead – start with a topic you are interested in.

Read a few articles and see what the researchers are saying. What did you find interesting? Research those concepts.

Based on your initial research – brainstorm some more ideas for a topic.

Research those ideas – What are you finding? Where should you go from here?

At some point you will want to settle and refine and focus your attention on a specific topic/result you are seeing in the research – but remember that is the end goal and not the start.

Always let the research guide you. You rarely end up where you think you will when you start, but it usually is an interesting place inspired by your initial interest in the topic.