

Research Skills

Information Competence

Graduate students are expected to acquire research skills during the first year of master's degree programs.

INTERMEDIATE SKILLS

GOAL: Apply standards to determine authority, timeliness and reliability of information

Students will:

- Evaluate an author's expertise, educational background or affiliations with educational institutions or organizations when determining the author's credibility.
- Assess the date of publication when identifying the timeliness of the information.
- Recognize that information resources that are "peer reviewed" are determined to be credible within the research community.

GOAL: Prepare a search strategy for individual paper topics

Students will:

- Prepare a statement of purpose.
- Identify types of information they will need to complete their research assignment (e.g., background, statistics)
- Plan the sequence in which they will locate information (e.g., 1st - background information, 2nd - books, 3rd - periodical articles, 4th - statistics)

GOAL: Identify keywords, synonyms and related terms

Students will:

- Identify keywords within their thesis statement that will represent the topic.
- Identify synonyms and related terms, possibly using a background resource to locate appropriate terms.

GOAL: Utilize simple search techniques using Boolean logic including combining concepts/terms, nesting, proximity and truncation

Students will:

- Use Boolean operators to control the relationships between words in a search and, consequently have better control of the outcome of their search.
- Understand the differences between the various operators.
- Develop search statements utilizing Boolean operators.

GOAL: Determine appropriate databases for the research assignment

Students will:

- Select databases that most closely cover the subject area of their topic.
- Consider dates of coverage when selecting an appropriate database.

GOAL: Execute a search in an appropriate online index

Students will:

- Perform searches on suitable databases using appropriate Boolean operators and syntax.
- Identify articles available at CSUN and those they will need to order through interlibrary loan.

GOAL: Use the Internet as a research tool

Students will:

- Understand the evolution of the Internet.
- Recognize the benefits and limitations of using non-traditional resources.

GOAL: Understand the Internet in contrast to traditional electronic databases

Students will:

- Access index/abstract databases through the library web-page differently than searching or "surfing" for information on the World Wide Web.
- Understand that anyone can put information on the Internet.
- Experience different functions of a web browser, a search engine, and a directory or web guide.

GOAL: Execute a search using appropriate Boolean operators on World Wide Web search engines

Students will:

- Use Boolean operators when searching for information on the web.
- Understand that each search engine or directory uses different searching parameters.
- Utilize "help" screens supplied by the search engine or directory to identify proper Boolean operators and correct syntax.

GOAL: Apply standards for authority, timeliness, and reliability for World Wide Web sites

Students will:

- Apply criteria to establish the authority of the site (e.g., is an author is given, author's qualifications, is .edu part of the URL, if .org is part of the URL – is the organization reliable?)
- Evaluate the relevance of the information for their need.
- Identify the date of the web-page to establish timeliness.
- Evaluate whether the information is fact or opinion.
- Compare the consistency of the information with other sources.

Students will:

- Identify and locate preliminary information at the start of the research process.
- Use specific reference sources that provide basic data and statistics specific to their field of study.

GOAL: Identify types of information resources, their scope and application for EPC research

Students will:

- Compare the difference between general and specialized encyclopedias in print or electronic formats.
- Use an education/psychology encyclopedia to locate background information.
- Compare the difference between general and specialized dictionaries.
- Use an education/psychology dictionary to define terminology from that field.
- Use almanacs to find facts and data
- Use handbooks written for the practitioner that provide the primary information one may need to practice in that field.
- Find statistical information in statistical reference sources.
- Use directories for EPC (e.g., directory of educational and/or accrediting agencies, directory of graduate programs).
- Use the literature of educational psychology and counseling (range and type of publications and databases)

Students will:

- Describe the specific methods of professional scholarly communication for educational psychology and counseling.
- Be able to learn core resources for educational psychology and counseling.
- Be able to learn the differences between primary and secondary sources and identify when to use each.
- Recognize that scientific research is the foundation of this discipline and scientific journals will provide a majority of information or their research needs.
- Select and use index/abstract (print and online) resources from related fields including education, psychology and sociology.

GOAL: Ability to use sophisticated searching techniques within

databases and using different search interfaces, focusing on relevant databases for the discipline (e.g., combining previous sets, using controlled vocabulary)

Students will:

- Identify and select several appropriate index/abstract databases they can use for EPC research including ERIC, PsychINFO, etc.
- Develop advanced search strategies using sophisticated searching techniques that will provide greater control of their research using online databases.
- Develop controlled vocabulary (often listed in a separate thesaurus) that will enable them to use more precise terminology for searching in that database.
- Identify controlled vocabulary within a record.
- Search on a variety of fields in order to have more specificity when searching.
- Use previous search statements combined with new terminology to create new search statements.
- Apply sophisticated search techniques in a wide variety of search engines and databases.
- Use help screens for advanced searching to identify correct syntax and functions in each system.
- Use specialized search functions such as citation searching.
- Identify and use databases for specialized sources of information such as technical reports, pre-publications, legal and government information.

GOAL: Learn appropriate forms of citations

Students will:

- Recognize that each discipline develops a form of citation that is acceptable for publication in that discipline.
- Use APA style to quote and paraphrase information.
- Use APA style correctly for citation in educational psychology and counseling.

GOAL: Learn ethical and legal standards for use of data and information.

Students will:

- Understand the principles of intellectual property, privacy, copyright, information security and plagiarism and use information in an ethical manner.
- Understand & follow ethical standards regarding human subject & confidentiality.

ADVANCED SKILLS

GOAL: Learn advanced strategies for WWW searching

Students will:

- Develop advanced search strategies using advanced search techniques that may be available on web search engines, such as .edu sites in HotBot, and know its limitations.
- Select the search engine, directory or meta-index most appropriate for their need.

GOAL: Learn Internet sources for educational psychology and counseling.

Students will:

- Identify and use web directories for specific subject areas.
- Search for collections of Internet sites from universities with large programs in educational psychology and counseling (valuable sources for locating information and additional links).
- Identify and use Internet sites from governmental agencies, as well as independent organizations covering educational and psychological concerns.

GOAL: Use the WWW to access specialized digital library collections

Students will:

- Access e-reserves, courseware and other CSUN specific digital library collections.

Competencies were duplicated from the Florida International University (FIU) web-site. Some were rewritten to reflect CSUN Library procedures and EPC discipline. Competencies from the University of Texas were edited, re-formatted, and added to the competencies listed above.

Florida International University (c.1998). Information literacy at FIU: A proposal for Faculty Senate from Undergraduate Council. <http://www.fiu.edu/%7Elibrary/ili/iliprop.html>

University of Texas at Austin. (1997). Digital Information Literacy Office (DILO) Library Advisory Committee. <http://tilt.lib.utsystem.edu/into/proficiencyis.htm>