General Tips for Searching Education Research Complete Effectively

Using the Thesaurus
- Check and find vocabulary. When you browse the Thesaurus, select Term Contains.
- Begin with broad subjects or single concepts, e.g., bullying, social skills, achievement, retention. The vocabulary used is more similar to PsycINFO than to ERIC, e.g., experimental design and methodology are used instead of research design and research methodology.
- Click on a term to display possible broader, narrower, or related terms.

Constructing a Search
- Use an * to retrieve all forms of a word, e.g., achieve* will result in achieve, achieves, achieved, achievement, achievements.
- Enclose phrases in quotation marks to keep the words together, e.g. "social skills".
- Select Scholarly (Peer-Reviewed) Journals to restrict your results to scholarly articles.
- If there are a lot of results, consider changing the search type to Abstract.

Limiting Results
- To limit to research articles, add terms such as study, research, methodology, empirical, quantitative to your search.
- After you get a sense of how many results will be returned, you will probably want to start limiting on the Search page, e.g., choose 'peer reviewed,' set a date range; select 'article.'

Examining Results
- Look at the complete record for the item - notice the Subject Terms, keywords, other vocabulary. Notice the fields and their content. You may get ideas of how to refine your search.
- Use Search History to view and possibly to join previous searches.

Get it @ VCU (Connect to the article)
Get it @ VCU will get you as close to the article in one click as the publisher allows. Many times you will land at the article. Other times you will land at the Table of Contents of the issue, or at a listing of available issues. In these cases, you will have to drill to the article.

If VCU Libraries does not have the article at all, there will be prompts for you to enter an interlibrary loan request.
NOTES:
1. If there is a "Full Text" link, use that; do NOT select the Get It @ VCU button.

2. My EBSCO allows you to save searches.

3. Do NOT use Get It @ VCU for books, book chapters or dissertations. Search for books using VCU Libraries Advanced Search. Search for dissertations by title in Dissertations & Theses Full Text.

4. The folder icon is the same as "Mark Record" in other databases. "Folder has Items" functions the same as "Marked List".