UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA

Dept of Library Services
Education Library

Basic search strategies
Aim:
To be able to construct a search string

Content:
- Search foundations: e.g. Boolean Logic
- Convert your topic in keywords and create a keyword string
- Example databases
Boolean Logic

**NOT**

Find all pages that have the word cats but don't have the word dogs.

Cats NOT Dogs

**AND**

Find all pages that have both the word cats and the word dogs.

Cats AND Dogs

**OR**

Find all pages that have the word cats and all pages that have the word dogs.

Cats OR Dogs
Quotations
Placing quotations around a specific phrase will help you narrow results in order to find information containing that exact wording.

“….. …….. ….. ……”

eg. “language teaching”

OR use the exact phrase option where available
Truncation allows you to include all the inflected forms of the search term in the search. (* / ? / # )

Teach* = teach
  = teacher
  = teachers
  = teaching
Converting a topic into keywords

Example topic:
The perceptions of educators about professional development in secondary schools

Possible search string:
(perception* OR experience* OR expectation* OR attitude*)
AND
(educator* OR teacher*)
AND
“professional development”
AND
“secondary school*”
Library web page

http://www.library.up.ac.za

For help with your searches,
• visit the Subject Guide: Post Graduate Subject Guide for Students at the Faculty of Education
• contact the library for help
### Platform / Database

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Platform</th>
<th>Database</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Databases grouped together</td>
<td>A specific database</td>
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What to expect:
- Search different types of sources, e.g. journal articles, books, theses and dissertations, etc.
- Will search in all possible fields or specified field, e.g. title of an article
- Result list and/or full text can be emailed, printed, exported or saved.
- Searches can be refined, narrowed down or searched within.
- Database content can be topic-/region specific
Possible databases

South African published sources
   SAePublications
   SACAT

International published sources
   ERIC
   PsycInfo
   Science Direct
   Business Source Complete
   Academic Search Complete
   SAGE Research Methods
   Africa-Wide Information
   MLA (language)
   Taylor and Francis
   JSTOR
Possible platforms

South African published sources
  SABINET

International published sources
  Ebscohost
  Proquest