



## PSYC 300: RESEARCH METHODS in PSYCHOLOGY

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## How to Get Articles

- Use a subject specific database to find relevant periodical literature
- Go to the Psychology subject page and use the Articles tab
  - **PsycINFO** – generally citations and abstracts only, but some very limited full-text
- Use ArticleLinker to see article availability



## PsycINFO

- Indexes and abstracts over 2,400 journals, nearly all of which are peer-reviewed.
- Also has abstracts of books, book chapters, dissertations, and other scholarly documents.
- Citations and abstracts only except for 72 APA journals in full-text
- Some as far back as the early 1800s, but most from the 1900s on.



## Important to Know...

- You can connect to any library database from off campus but you must:
  - Go through the link on the library web site to go through the proxy server in order to....
  - Verify that you are a SUNY Potsdam student by entering your student username and password.
- ILLIAD, our ILL service, will help you obtain any useful material you identify which we do not own or have electronic access to

## TIPS & TRICKS FOR PsycINFO

Brief hands-on exercise

## Database Review

- Database/Records/Fields/Data
- Descriptor or "Subject" Field –**CRITICAL!**
- Vocabulary
  - Natural language (how you would speak it)
  - Search terms (words you type in the boxes)
  - Author's words (some data fields - anything goes)
  - Controlled (some data fields - distinct & limited list)
- Thesaurus

## The Whole Point

You want a list of GOOD, RELEVANT articles.

- What is GOOD?
- What is RELEVANT?

How do you do this?

- DISCOVER and USE good DESCRIPTORS
- Let the database limiters and features work for you

## CONTROLLED VOCABULARY

PsycINFO THESAURUS (DESCRIPTORS)

- Controlled vocabulary is a standardized list of terms used to organize information.
- Terms are often defined by a **scope note** and include relationships to **broader** (BT), **related** (RT) and **narrower** terms (NT)
- Synonyms are linked to the preferred term – e.g. "sensation" use instead "perception"
- Access thesaurus through the "Search Tools" tab in PsycINFO



## USE LIMITERS TO CONTROL RESULTS

- "DATE RANGE" – for latest research use a range such as 1999-2009
- "LIMIT TO" – check boxes for English and Journal Articles
- Methodology – browse possibilities
  - Check box for "Journal Articles Only"
- Other areas as appropriate (population, age, audience...)



## Too many?

- Add more unique descriptors, connecting them with "and"
- Go back to the thesaurus to identify more specific terms (NT)
- Use more specific limiters



## Too few?

- Reduce the number of search terms
- Go back to the thesaurus and find terms to broaden your search (BT) or add more synonyms (RT) **nested with the Boolean operator "or"** example: (self perception or self concept)



## Not quite what you want?

- Check out the note defining your search terms – compatible with your meaning?
- Use keywords to search abstracts – can you find at least one good article? Then use the descriptors from that article to search



## HELP!!!!

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- Crumb library home page – Get Help, “Ask-a-librarian”
  - Meebo Chat
  - In person/phone/e-mail
  - Library one-on-one consultations
  - Ask-Us 27x7