

ERIC Tutorial

What Is the ERIC Database?

The ERIC database is the world's largest source of education information. The database contains more than 1 million abstracts of education-related documents and journal articles which have been collected and indexed by the Educational Resources Information Center since 1966. You can access the ERIC database on the Internet or through commercial vendors such as EBSCOhost and public networks. ERIC updates the database monthly, ensuring that the information you receive is timely and accurate.

Is this the same thing as the ERIC database on the U.S. Department of Education website?

Although all of the references in the database can be accessed from the U.S. Department of Education website, using the EBSCOhost version can provide you with the features and functionality that is available in EBSCO's Academic Search Premier as well as increased access to full text journal articles and information about NNU's holdings. The Department of Education website cannot include full text journal articles in its database because it does not have copyright agreements with the publishers as EBSCO does.

However, on October 1, 2004, ERIC introduced, for the first time, free-of-charge full-text non-journal ERIC resources (ED's or ERIC documents). These materials include more than 105,000 full-text documents authorized for electronic ERIC distribution. These are being made available because the documents are reports on projects that were funded by the federal government and therefore they are public domain information.

What Types of Information Does an ERIC Search Provide?

You will retrieve citations and abstracts for education-related literature relevant to your search topic. These citations and abstracts are called "records." There are two types of records in the ERIC database: ERIC journal articles (EJ) and ERIC documents (ED).

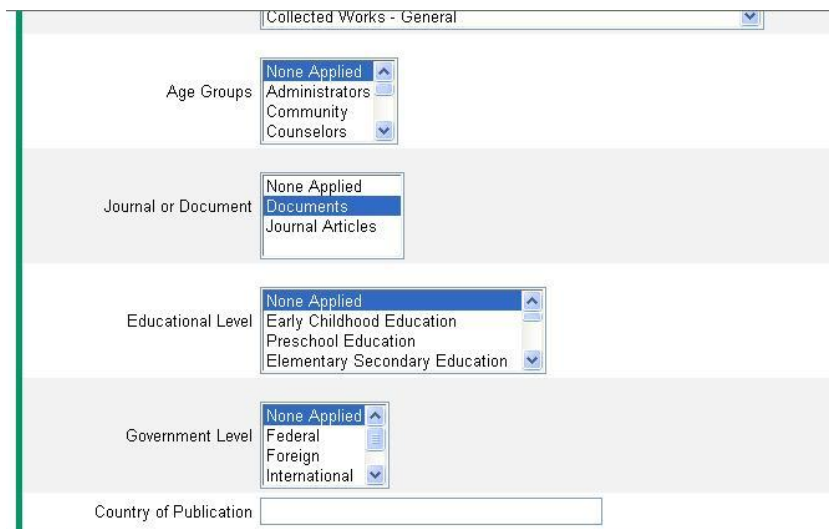
ERIC journal articles are just that – they are references to articles that have been published in research journals. To find an ERIC reference with an EJ you need to refer to the **journal title** information which appears in the citation and then check with the NNU library or another library to see if they carry that publication.



ERIC documents include reports resulting from research projects, curriculum guides, teaching aids, and bibliographies of research as well as many other kinds of materials.

To find this information you'll use the six digit number following the ED. **Most ERIC documents are on microfiche** and they are not included in library catalogs so it is not usually possible to determine whether they are available at a particular library by searching that library's catalog.

If you need an ERIC document, simply use the link to **Request this article via interlibrary loan** and place your request with the NNU library. We will secure a copy of the report for you, free of charge, either from our collection or from another library, and send it to you. Most large university libraries have an ERIC documents collection. If you live near a university library, pay them a visit and ask at the reference desk. They will assist you in finding documents in their ERIC collection.



Unique Limiters

The ERIC database offers many unique ways to limit your search. Be sure you scroll down to the bottom half of the screen and view these options.

The screenshot shows the EBSCO Research Databases interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with buttons for 'Basic Search', 'Advanced Search', and 'Choose Databases' (circled in red). Below this, there are tabs for 'Keyword', 'Publications', 'Thesaurus', and 'Indexes'. The 'Database: ERIC' section includes a search box and 'Search' and 'Clear' buttons. The 'Thesaurus' section features a 'Browse for:' field, a 'Browse' button, and radio buttons for 'Alphabetical' (selected) and 'Relevancy Ranked'. Below this, there is a table with columns for 'Select term, then add to search using:', 'Explode', and 'Major Concept'. The table lists terms like 'Ability' and 'Ability Grouping' with checkboxes and 'Explode'/'Major Concept' columns.

Thesaurus searching

If you are having difficulty getting results from your search, you may want to use the online Thesaurus of ERIC Descriptors.

Both the ERIC and the PsycINFO databases have this feature. A thesaurus can help you identify official terminology that is being used by the profession,

related terms and narrower terms. Searches can be conducted directly from the thesaurus by clicking on the blue hyperlinked words or you can check mark the boxes beside multiple terms and click the **ADD** button to add them to your search strategy.