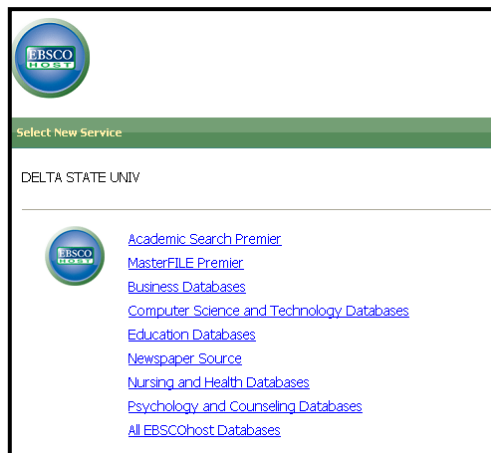


## Guide to Using ERIC

**What is ERIC?** Education Resources Information Center (ERIC), is a large electronic database sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education that provides indexing and abstracting for education-related documents. This database is the online version of the familiar print indexes *Resources in Education (RIE)*, which contains research findings, curriculum and teaching guides, conference and technical reports, theses/dissertations, and unpublished reports and the *Current Index to Journals in Education (CIJE)* which indexes and abstracts periodical literature.

**Accessing ERIC:** Roberts-LaForge Library provides access to ERIC through EBSCOhost. To access ERIC, go to <http://www.deltastate.edu/pages/676.asp> and select ERIC from the drop down menu. Click on “Education Databases” and then ERIC.

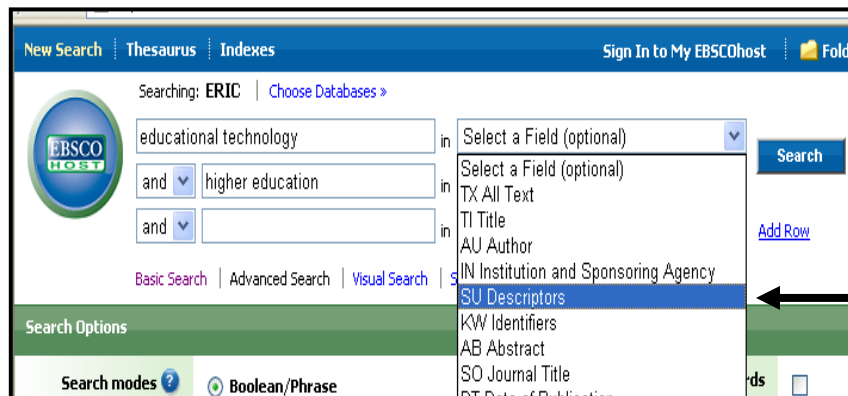
You can get to ERIC from the “Education Databases” link or the “All EBSCOhost Databases” link which is an alphabetical listing of all EBSCO databases. If you are logging in at home or anywhere off-campus, you will need to pick up the *Guide to Accessing Databases Off-Campus* available in the Reference area of Roberts-LaForge Library.



**Choosing the ERIC database:** The initial screen in EBSCOhost prompts the user to select a database. To search in ERIC only, click on “All EBSCOhost Databases” and then the title (highlighted in blue) of the database. If you want to search in more than one database, click in the box next to the name of the databases and then click on the **Continue** button located at either the top or bottom left of the screen. Once you have selected your database(s), you are now ready to search.

Figure 1 - Login Screen of EBSCOhost.

**Searching in ERIC:** There are two primary ways to search in EBSCOhost: the *Basic*, and *Advanced*. By default, the *Advanced Search* is the initial search screen. To switch to the *Basic Search*, click on the appropriate blue tab at the top of the screen.



*Advanced* searching allows the user the most flexibility in performing searches. It provides three keyword search boxes to separate unique terms or phrases as well as capabilities to search within specific parts of each record. If you only want to search for words or phrases in the title, author, or subject fields, the drop-down box provides that capability. (Each record typically consists of the citation, abstract, subject headings/descriptors and possible full-text.)

Figure 2 – Example of an Advanced

Search Screen.

An added benefit of the *Advanced Search* screen is the presence of very specific limiters. For instance, if a researcher knew he needed to find a testing instrument, the limiter “Publication Type” will allow him to focus the search on only records that have this type of publication. *Figure 3* illustrates this example and shows other limiters available in ERIC.

*Figure 3* – In this example, the user has limited the search and will only retrieve results of the chosen publication type. In the “Journal or Document” limiter, the user can specify whether or not he/she wants an ERIC document or a journal article. Additionally, if you know the ERIC number, you can search for the individual document using the “ERIC Number” limiter.

The *Advanced Search* is the preferred search method since it contains all the functionality of the *Basic Search* in addition to the extra features mentioned above.

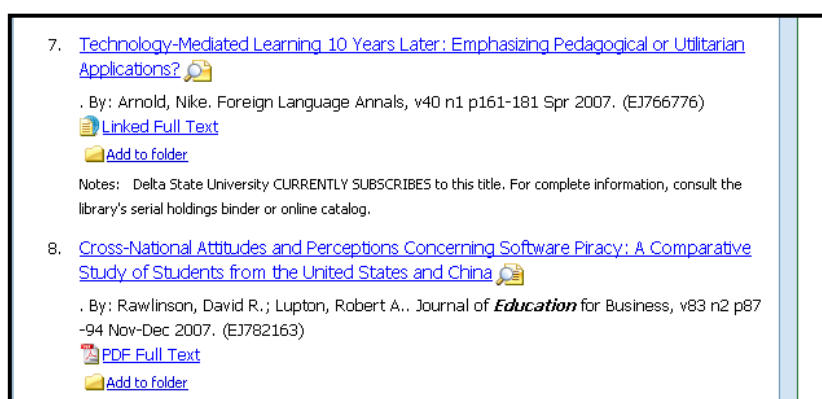
**Basic Search:** The *Basic Search* is the simplest and broadest type of search available in ERIC. Enter in appropriate search terms or keywords and separate them using Boolean operators (AND, OR, NOT). Boolean operators allow the user to create an exact search. To find out more about the uses of Boolean operators, click on the Online Help Button at the top of the screen.

**Understanding the Search Results:** Unless a limiter is used, the results will include both ERIC documents *and* journal articles. At the end of the citation information of each record, an ERIC number is given. If the number begins with “**ED**,” the record is for an ERIC document. If the number starts with “**EJ**,” the record is for a journal article. *Figure 4* shows a result screen with both types listed.

*Figure 4* – Record 37 is an example of an ERIC document. Record 38 is for a journal article.

**Accessing Full-Text:** Full-text of articles and ERIC documents are available in several ways.

- ERIC Documents (ED + number) are available through EBSCOhost.
  - Over 100,000 ERIC Documents are available through EBSCOhost. Simply click on the link, “Full Text from ERIC,” located under the document’s title. (see *Figure 4*, #3 as an example)
  - If you are viewing the individual record, the full text link will be towards the bottom of the record under “Availability.”
  - These documents are in .pdf format, so you will need Adobe Acrobat to open these files.
- Education-related journal articles (EJ + number) are available through HTML, PDF, “Linked Full-text,” or through LinkSource.
  - “Linked Full Text” provides access to an article available usually from a source *outside* of EBSCOhost. See #7 in *Figure 5*.
  - LinkSource links to full-text articles available in Roberts-LaForge databases other than EBSCOhost. LinkSource does not ensure the full-text will be available. You must click on the link to check for availability. If the full text is not available, LinkSource provides an interlibrary loan request.



*Figure 5* – An example of articles available through ERIC.

- The library owns several ERIC documents not available through the electronic database. These documents are in microfiche format and are located in the Microforms Room on the Second Floor adjacent to the Serials Department.

**Searching Tips:** On occasion, you may not get the desired results, which can both be a frustrating and overwhelming experience. The following tips will allow you to expand or narrow your search as desired.

- **Too many Results?**
  - Try adding more search terms. It is crucial when searching any database (especially one as large as ERIC) to be as specific as possible. If you enter only one word, search results will abound, and more than likely the results will not have anything to do with what you are researching. Remember to use the Boolean operators and provide terms that completely reflect your search interest.
  - Search within a specific field. A keyword search using default fields will search several fields at once. If you want results that reflect the essence of your topic, limit your search to one of the fields provided in the Advanced Search module.
  - Use the ERIC limiters in the Advanced Search module. These limiters are designed to exclude any undesirable results.
- **Not Enough Results?**
  - Use different variations of the same term.
  - Truncate your term using the “\*” which will search for the stem of your word and any ending it may have. For example, by typing educat\*, you will get results that include educate, educates, educational, educating, etc. This is particularly helpful for those terms that do have multiple variations.
  - Think of other ways to describe your topic. Before you even sit down, it is important to come prepared with several different ways to phrase your search in the event you do not find what you need immediately.

- **No Results?**
  - Check for any misspellings or typos.
  - Do not enter long phrases in a keyword or advanced search. Stop words such as *for, as, to, the, of,* etc. are hardly ever indexed and therefore are inconsequential when doing keyword searching. If these words are entered, the results will be skewed.
  
- **Additional Tips**
  - If you find an article or document you like, you can find related articles by clicking on the appropriate descriptor(s).
  - Use the “Thesaurus” button at the very top of the screen to find related, narrower, or broader terms. This is known as the *Thesaurus of ERIC Descriptors*.
    - The thesaurus can be used to identify appropriate subject terms or other possible keywords.
    - Once you have searched for a term in the thesaurus, you will see an option named “Explode” next to certain search term.
      - Explode – By checking the Explode box and clicking on the “Add” button, you will search for the original word or phrase, plus any narrower terms.
  - Constructing an effective search is both a creative and scientific process. Search results are not random. They rely solely on the terms entered and the manner in which they were entered. Please be patient and explore all avenues.

## Printing/Emailing/Saving Records:

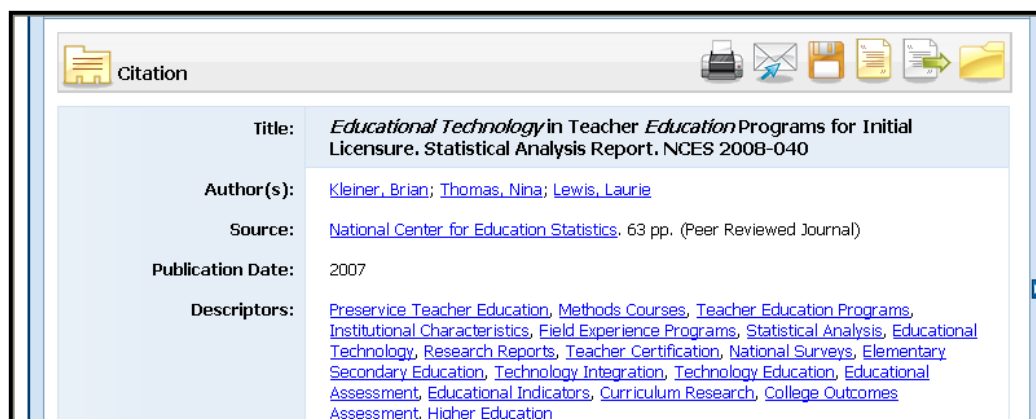


Figure 6 – Record with Print, Email, and Save Links at the Top : To print, email, or save an individual record, simply click on the appropriate link at the top of each record.

To print, email, or save several records, use the **Folder** button to the right of each citation as seen in Figure 6. You can also add an item to your folder while viewing the individual record rather than the search results page. Once you have added all the necessary records, click on your folder, which should now contain one or more items. Once you go to your folder, you will then be directed to a Print, Email, or Save Manager:

- **Print Manager** – Select either the Citation/Abstract or Full Text (when available) option, then click on the gray **Print** button.
- **Email Manager** – Enter in your email address and subject then choose whether you want the citation(s) and abstract(s) only or full text if available. Click on the **Send** button to email.
- **Save Manager** – Once you have clicked on the gray **Save** button, your items will appear on the screen. To save to a disk, click on **File** and then **Save as** from your browser’s toolbar. Be sure to save the document as a plain text file (.txt) or an HTML Only file (.html).

Have a Question? Ask a Librarian

5/2011 DS