Dissect Your Research Topic

Name:
Section:

Dissecting your research topic helps you identify concepts or keywords to use as you search for information. It helps you identify what you already know, provides you with an opportunity to think about your research topic in new ways, and identifies gaps in your knowledge.

This should be completed before you begin your initial database search in a library database.

Directions

1. Write your initial research topic in the space below and underline the keywords or keyword phrases.

2. Search your underlined keywords in MeSH and then write the keywords that had MeSH equivalents in separate boxes. If there are broader or narrower keywords in the tree, consider those as well. Then brainstorm some “layman’s” keywords for each box. You will use different combinations of these when you do your initial database searches for review/original research articles.

Original Keyword/Phrase:

Original Keyword/Phrase:

Original Keyword/Phrase:

AND __________________________ in my search

OR __________________________ in my search

Parenthesis keep like keywords __________________________ in my search

Quotation marks look for exact __________________________ in my search

An asterisk* searches for __________________________ of my keyword

Worksheet adapted from the Univ. of Illinois by Paige Dhyne, Science Librarian at Furman University; Last updated 09/19