Welcome to ODU Library’s tutorial, Developing your Search Strategy.
Let’s get you on the road to success!

Let’s start with a topic:
We want to look at the effects of doodling on students’ ability to learn.

What are our key concepts?
The 3 concepts we need to find addressed in books and/or articles:

- Doodling
- Students
- Ability to Learn

Let’s start with a simple search, using these 3 concepts as keywords.

Now the Question: What do we need to search for?
Answer: For this situation, let’s find scholarly articles that will give us the research on the effects of doodling on students’ ability to learn.

Now the 2nd Question: What search tool(s) do we need to search in to find scholarly articles?

Answer: Best Bet = Library Databases

Why Databases?

- You can limit your search to just scholarly articles.
- You won’t get a million results to sift through.
- You can get access to many full-text articles through the library’s subscription that you would otherwise have to pay for.

Where are the databases?
Just type www.ohiodominican.edu/library/databases.

Or from the Library Home page, click on:
1. Find It
2. Research Databases

We have over 100 of them!

How do you choose the right one?

One Way:
Start with our most popular, Academic Search Complete.

It’s the first one in the list and it covers almost all topics to some degree.

Our “Swiss army knife of databases” – great for almost any need!

OR...

Select your general topic area from the first drop-down menu to Filter by Subject.

This will bring up just databases that focus on particular subject areas.

Our topic: The effects of doodling on students’ ability to learn

The general subjects we might choose from:

- Psychology (how we think or learn) OR
- Education (students’ learning)

Our Best Bets, or top picks, are at the top of the list.

For scholarly articles in the field of psychology, our best bet is: PsycINFO.

Let’s do some searching...

So, back to the beginning:

We want to look at the effects of doodling on students’ ability to learn.

Our 1st keyword search: students AND doodling AND “ability to learn”

Note:

- To find all 3 concepts in an article, use AND to join your words

To get an exact match of a 2- to 3-word phrase, use quotes

Our 1st keyword search in PsycINFO:

students AND doodling AND “ability to learn”

This will search for articles that each contain the word students, the word doodling, and the exact phrase, ability to learn, which is why we put quotes around it.

Note: If you’re off campus or using campus wifi, you’ll be asked for your last name & the last 7 digits of your ODU ID number.
So How Did Our Search Do?

Oh no!
No results were found. Now what do we do?

We use different keywords—synonyms & related terms that others might use. Let’s take a look...

Let’s try a few different terms for our concepts:

- Students
- AND doodling or doodle or drawing
- AND learning or memory or recall or cognition

The AND makes sure you will get articles with words from each of the 3 boxes—that is all 3 of our concepts.

The OR between the words in the boxes makes sure you get one of any of these words, which increases your chance for success! You’re more likely to find at least one of each of these words than you are if you try for just one at a time.

How many results this time?

4,005 results! The words & combinations you choose make all the difference!

How do you come up with these keywords?

Use a thesaurus!
Or brainstorm with a friend.
Or ask a librarian—the ultimate walking thesaurus!

You can look up synonyms and find related terms.

If you find at least 1 good result in the database, you can let the database help you. Look at:

- The Subjects listed
- Words in the abstract
- Words in the database’s list of Subject Major Headings or Subjects

Let’s Recap...

Our Topic: The Effects of doodling on students’ ability to learn.

Our 3 Concepts: Students, Doodling, Ability to Learn
Our Initial Search: students and doodling and “ability to learn”

Our Revised Search:

- Students
- AND doodling or doodle or drawing
- AND learning or memory or recall or cognition

Questions?

Visit Research 101, our interactive tutorial, for more info:

https://ohiodominican.libguides.com/research101

Or Ask a Librarian for help!

www.ohiodominican.edu/library/ask