

SEARCHING THE HIGHER EDUCATION LITERATURE:



This tip sheet provides strategies on how to search the higher education literature in order to help you find evidence for your own practice and research.

See the [CTSI-SoTL video](#) to learn more about the benefits of and strategies to engage in SoTL research.

Begin by Brainstorming Keywords

Example topic: I want to research how the flipped classroom might influence engagement in an undergraduate classroom

- List keyword and related terms to find sources relevant to your topic.

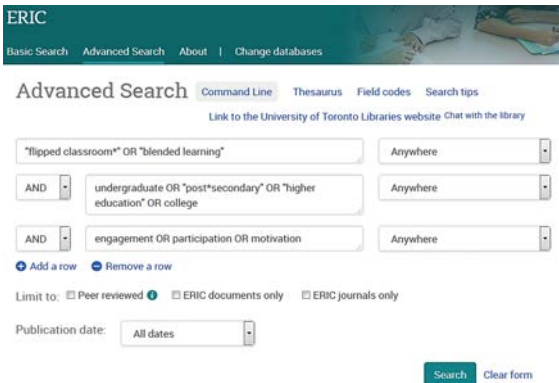
	Keywords	Related Terms
Concept 1	Flipped classroom	Blended learning
Concept 2	Undergraduate	Postsecondary, higher education, college
Concept 3	Engagement	Participation, motivation

Search Tips

Consider the following strategies to help you create an effective search:

1. Become familiar with using [Boolean operators](#) to optimize your search strategy
 - Use AND to focus your search: *Flipped classroom AND college*
 - Use OR to expand your search: *Participation OR motivation*
2. Use [truncation](#) to look for multiple endings of a root word:
 - Flip*= flipped, flipping, flip
 - post*secondary = post-secondary, post-secondary, postsecondary
 - "teaching strategy" = teaching strategy, teaching strategies
3. Further useful tips for searching keywords can be found [here](#) which includes a concept map to help you visualize the different aspects of your topic and to create keywords.

Write a Search Statement



ERIC
Basic Search Advanced Search About | Change databases

Advanced Search Command Line Thesaurus Field codes Search tips
Link to the University of Toronto Libraries website Chat with the library

"flipped classroom*" OR "blended learning" Anywhere

AND undergraduate OR "postsecondary" OR "higher education" OR college Anywhere

AND engagement OR participation OR motivation Anywhere

+ Add a row - Remove a row

Limit to: ☐ Peer reviewed ☒ ERIC documents only ☐ ERIC journals only

Publication date: All dates

Search Clear form

Use the search tips explained above to search for sources on your topic in a database. Here is an example of a keyword search conducted in ERIC's 'Advanced Search' that maps the above table into this database:

- Thesaurus searching: Use database specific thesauri to systematically expand your search: [Proquest thesaurus searching](#)
- Relevant databases and journals: To find relevant databases and journals, please visit the [SOTL Research Guide](#)

Manage Your Results

Maintain a research question and keyword inventory as you undertake your search. Some tips:

- E-mail search terms and results to yourself
- Sign up for a researcher account in databases you are searching to save previous searches
- Use [citation management software](#) and keep screenshots of results in Google Docs

Stay Current

Set up alerts in databases to be notified when new research is published in your area (e.g., [Browzine](#), [Google Alerts](#), author alerts, saved search alerts).

Additional Library Resources

- Meet with your [Liaison Librarian](#). These librarians can support your research and teaching.
- Consult the [SoTL Research Guide](#) to familiarize yourself with disciplinary and broader SoTL journals.
- Orient yourself with [Library Resources for University of Toronto Faculty](#)