Library Research Outline

A lot of information out there; the trick is to narrow your findings effectively. Don’t change your topic based on what you find- *change how you search* to find what you need.

**HOW INFORMATION IS ORGANIZED**

1- **Subject terms vs. keyword terms:**
   
   - Start broad, and then narrow down
   - Start with keyword searching, then find appropriate subject terms
   - Note that subject terms for books map over into most databases
   - Most databases also have their own controlled vocabulary

**HOW TO ACCESS INFORMATION EFFECTIVELY**

2- **Ways to refine (limit and/or expand) your search:**
   
   - Synonyms (‘or’ linking in a single concept search box)
   - Topic expansion using ‘and’
   - Finding valid subject terminology
   - Where in the record to look (i.e., abstract)
   - Limit by peer-reviewed, date, database, etc.

3- **Search tips:**
   
   - Understand the information cycle; use it to your advantage
   - When to search books or journals, and when to search online information
   - Different databases (and the EJC) facet differently; be flexible and aware
   - Truncation- using ‘*’
   - Understand and use interlibrary loan
   - Don’t be limited to just full-text articles
   - Use OhioLINK to find additional resources

**HOW TO USE THE INFORMATION YOU FIND**

4- **Using the information you find:**
   
   - Do you need to revise and refine your search?
   - Is the information you found appropriate for your topic?
   - Do you know what you want if you find it?
   - Understand plagiarism
   - Use RefWorks
   - Be able to find articles starting from a citation
     - Start with the journal; not title or author
   - Understand the concept of open access
   - Use the Writing Center services for citation and editing
   - Understand how to evaluate the validity of web resources