Pre-Assignment #1 for Library Research Clinic

Using Articles+ to discover new search terms and follow “research leads”

By doing this pre-assignment, you’ll develop a list of keywords describing your topic which will be helpful as you search article databases; you’ll also learn more about the scholarly conversation surrounding your topic by following another scholar’s “leads.” Both of these lists will be integral to your Library Research Clinic…so be sure to do this pre-assignment well ahead of time. In particular, if you know what disciplines interest you most, your librarian will be able to help you find some discipline-specific databases which will contain more articles of interest to you.

Step 1: Start by doing a keyword search on the “Articles+” tab of the Princeton University Library homepage: http://library.princeton.edu/. Choose keywords based on your previous forays into your topic – there are lots of good starting places!

If you haven’t used Articles+, watch the short library video found on the course Blackboard site under “Library Research.”

Step 2: Once you get some results, limit them a bit. In the Filter menu on the left-hand side of your results, under REFINE YOUR SEARCH, click “Scholarly & Peer-Review.” Then, under CONTENT TYPE, click “Journal Article” to limit your results. For now, you’ll be exploring only scholarly/peer-reviewed academic journal articles, since you’re looking for a scholarly conversation about your topic.

Step 3: Find several promising articles and look at their Previews, which are abstracts or summaries and usually include valuable “Subject” terms which can help you construct targeted searches.

From these, glean at least 3 Subject terms which pinpoint your topic:

1) _________________________________
2) _________________________________
3) _________________________________

Step 4: Now go to the Advanced Search window (click on the word “Advanced” next to the search box), and experiment with entering some of your newfound subject terms, possibly combined with your own keywords, to formulate a few new searches. Don’t forget to check the various LIMITS on that page. After clicking SEARCH, look at your results and record the article titles that are most interesting and keywords/subject terms that were most effective.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Article Title</th>
<th>Keywords</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Article Title</td>
<td>Keywords</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Article Title</td>
<td>Keywords</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Step 5:** Choose one of the articles you’re particularly interested in. Does it have an abstract on the first page? Skim the abstract (or the introductory paragraphs) of the article, to see if it uses other keywords that interest you. Record some of these below.

Keywords ______________________________________________________________

**Step 6:** Find one reference from that article’s bibliography/citation list that might be useful, and record its title:

____________________________________________________________________

**Step 7:** Print out or save this sheet, with all of your results recorded. This will form the starting-point of your conversation in the Research Clinic with your librarian and your professor. You’ll learn a few new techniques to explore your interests even further, and find a scholarly conversation about your topic.