

Critical Questions for Library Research

Focus Topic

1. What is my research topic?
Example: International students in U.S.
2. What are the main concepts? Identify major concepts or main ideas of your topic and generate a list of keywords, synonyms and related terms.
Examples: international students, foreign students, academics, adjustment, transition, counseling, culture shock, success, achievement, study habits, language barriers, orientations, college life.
3. What is my specific focus? Narrow topic by deciding on a particular aspect to address.
Example: Where can international students go for help to ease the transition to American college life?

Identify Sources

4. What types of information do I need for this assignment?
Books
Internet sources
Magazine articles
Newspaper articles
5. Which databases shall I use to find magazine and newspaper articles?
Student Resource Center (for current magazine and newspaper articles)
LexisNexis (for current newspaper articles)

Search and Evaluate

6. **For Books**—Go to the library's homepage (<http://www.wou.edu/library>) and click on Books, music & videos to use the library catalog. Search by keyword, subject, title, or author.
7. **For Internet Sources**-- Do an **Advanced Search** in **Google** using your keywords. Try limiting the domain to .edu or .gov or .org. Examine first few sites and evaluate for relevance.
8. **For Magazine Sources**—Select **Student Resource Center**: At the Library's home page go to Class Resource Guides and open WR 115—Click on WR 115-Troyer). Choose Student Resource Center. Enter keywords to begin your search. Select magazines in Sources (top tabs) to limit to magazines articles only.
9. **For Newspaper Sources**-- Go to **LexisNexis** database and select **News tab**. Select **U.S. Newspapers & Wires**. Try your keywords in the search boxes—Remember to choose the Headlines or Leading Paragraph field to focus your results if needed. Choose a **date range** appropriate for your topic. Do search and evaluate results. Revise as necessary.

Need Help—Ask at the Reference Desk

Or contact: Carol Monders mondersc@wou.edu