

Searching ERIC

ERIC is one of several databases the library subscribes to through EBSCOHost. Academic Search and PsycINFO are also databases within the EBSCO Host umbrella of databases. And because we subscribe to each of them through EBSCO they all have a very similar look. But don't let that fool you ... they are each unique unto themselves. Each indexes a totally different set of journals and documents. While there is some overlap, the overlap is minimal. You can tell which database you are in by looking at the bottom search box. The drop-down menu shows all the EBSCO databases to which we subscribe. Each one of these databases has its own thesaurus of unique subject headings. Terminology too is quite different between various databases. ERIC and PsycINFO both call their directory of subject headings a Thesaurus. But let's switch over to Academic Search for a minute and we'll see its directory is labeled simply Subject Headings. Additionally, some like Academic Search use the term subjects headings while other databases such as ERIC and PsycINFO call subject headings Descriptors.

Your students are having trouble with their reading comprehension and you've specifically pinpointed the problem is that they are not grasping the "main idea" of the selections they are reading. You want to find articles on how to teach 'main idea'.



Sample Search:

Find: "Main idea" Select a Field (optional)

AND "special education" Select a Field (optional)

17 results - sorted by date (may be resorted by relevance, author, or source)

Results may be narrowed by subject using links suggested on left side of screen. Selecting 'Reading Instruction' narrows list to 5 results. Narrowing it again by selecting 'Reading Strategies' narrows it to 3 results, including:

[Enhancing Main Idea Comprehension for Students with Learning Problems: The Role of a Summarization Strategy and Self-Monitoring Instruction.](#) . By: Jitendra, Asha K.; Hoppes, Mary Kay; Xin, Yan Ping. *Journal of Special Education*, v34 n3 p127-39 Fall 2000. (EJ614777)
 [HTML Full Text](#)  [PDF Full Text](#)

This article actually was at the top of our list before we narrowed it the last time ... but I wanted to demonstrate how the list could be narrowed multiple times if necessary.

You may want to browse the ERIC Thesaurus for correct subject headings. Click 'Thesaurus' (on green bar across top) to open. The Thesaurus opens and is located within the green border beneath the ERIC search box. Type 'Reading Comprehension' in the 'Browse for' box (select 'term contains') & click browse. The top result is Reading Comprehension & it is an active link. Click it to divide it into smaller sub-categories. See examples of Broader Terms and Related Terms. These, too, are active links and may be further divided OR you may select the subject heading as is and add it to your search. Select 'Directed Reading Activity' and add. Note: that this was input in your search box at the top with the initials DE in front (this stands for Descriptor which is ERIC's name for subject headings). Now click search and you should retrieve 392 results.

We're back to our advanced search screen and we may further modify our search by adding additional keywords and/or descriptors. Add AND: "special education" on second line. We're now down to 6 results, but no full-text or FIND-IT buttons. These 6 citations are all ERIC Documents however, as we can tell from the letters 'ED' that precede the numbers. Our library has a microfiche collection of ERIC documents located on the 2nd floor. They are filed by numerically the ED number: (ED257046) in the row of cabinets furthest toward the outside wall. Please ask for help in the Periodicals Reading room nearby if you need assistance with the microfiche equipment.