Guide to ERIC

What is ERIC?

ERIC, or the Educational Resources Information Center, is a database created by the US Department of Education. It contains citation records for journal articles as well as other materials including books, dissertations and theses, conference proceedings, and reports. Many of these other materials may not have been published before.

ERIC is the premier database of journal and non-journal education literature. There are over one million citation records in the database for items from 1966 to the present.

Item Types

Items in the ERIC database come in two types: journals and documents.

- **ERIC Journals** (or EJs) are citation records for magazine and journal articles.
- **ERIC Documents** (or EDs) are citation records for everything else including full-length books, book chapters, various types of reports, etc.

You can tell what type of item a record is for simply by looking at the ERIC number assigned to the citation record: records for articles have numbers that start with EJ and those for other materials start with ED. ERIC Documents are often submitted by authors for inclusion in the database and may not have gone through any type of review process.

Using the ERIC Thesaurus

Every resource listed in ERIC has been assigned descriptors, words that describe the journal article or ERIC document’s content (just like the subject headings in a catalog). These descriptors come from the fields of education, psychology, and other related disciplines. Descriptors help you find an article on a topic even if the words don’t appear in the title or abstract.

The descriptor terms come directly from the ERIC Thesaurus, which is a standardized list of terms used in ERIC to reflect the primary topics of articles. The thesaurus is available online or through the ERIC database.

Obtaining ERIC items

For ERIC journal articles, if there is a link to the full text, then click on that link (html or pdf). If you have a choice, the pdf format maintains the pagination of the original article, which makes it easier to refer to or cite.

If there is not a link to the full text, you will see a “Get Article” link. Clicking this link takes you to either the full text article through a different database or to the library’s Journals List and searches for that journal title. The Journals List may tell you that the library owns that journal in print (paper) format which means you will have to come into the library to get the article or request to have it scanned and emailed to you. If the Journals List says “Sorry, no holdings were found for this journal,” the library does not own the journal in any format, and you will need to request the item through interlibrary loan.
If the item is a book or a chapter from a book ERIC will NOT tell you if Concordia owns the book. You will need to check the library catalog to see if we own it. Make sure you use the book title and not the article/chapter title.

For ERIC documents, the designation "Full text from ERIC" means you can link directly to the full text of the document. You will need to have Adobe Acrobat in order to view the documents.