

Supporting Flexible Learning - Example

- Non-synchronous structured learning activity.
- Produced as a module suitable for embedding into Canvas course.

Topic: Planning an Information Search

Stage: 2/3

Duration: 70 minutes

Learning Outcomes

Students will be able to:

- describe the scope of their topic using relevant keywords
- begin to use synonyms for key search terms to expand search results
- apply Boolean searching (Combining keywords with AND/OR/NOT)
- perform advanced searching techniques in Library Search

Structure

Topic One – Your Search Question (30 minutes)

READ: What is literature searching (5 minutes)

- Introduces students to the concept of literature searching.
- Outlines the steps of a literature search.
- Highlights the skills needed to search effectively.

READ: Defining your search question (5 minutes)

- Explains the importance of a well-defined search question and the problems caused by a question that is too broad or too narrow.
- Models constructing a good search question.
- Provides advice on what to do if the student does not yet have a search question.
- Signpost to [Dissertation toolkit: Starting on the right track](#) from the Writing Development Centre.

CREATE: Producing a search question (15 minutes)

- Students use template provided to create their search question.
- Template prompts guide students to develop an effective search question, moving from a broad topic of interest to a narrowly focused topic of research.
- Example of a completed search question provided.

Topic Two – Your Search Strategy (40 minutes)

READ: Search Strategies (5 minutes)

- Explains what a search strategy is and why it is beneficial to develop a plan.
- Highlights the four key steps involved in creating a search strategy, emphasising the iterative process:
 - Refining your question
 - Identifying and combining keywords
 - Source type
 - Limits and scope
- Provides advice on developing a list of targeted keywords based on your search question.

PRACTICE: Keywords and synonyms (10 minutes)

- Students apply what they have read to develop a list of keywords and synonyms for their search using resources such as thesauri, subject databases and Library Search.

READ: Advanced Searching (5 minutes)

- Provides tips for using advanced search techniques and features in databases.
- Models how to combine keywords effectively using BOOLEAN, phrase searching, truncation and wildcards.

QUIZ: Advanced Search Skills (5 minutes)

- Students check their understanding of advanced search techniques.

WATCH: Advanced Search in Library Search (5 minutes)

- Video demonstrates how to use advanced search features effectively in Library Search.

CREATE: Search Strategy (10 minutes)

- Students use template provided to plan the first steps of their search strategy.
- Template prompts students to:
 - break down their search question into smaller topics
 - list keywords and synonyms for these topics
 - combine keywords into a search string using advanced techniques
 - try their search string in Library Search

Assessment opportunities

- Students can use their search strategy as a starting point for completing the Library's Search Planner tool, these can be submitted to the Liaison team for feedback.
- Students could share their search strategies in a group discussion for peer feedback.
- Search strategies could be added as an appendix to any submitted coursework.