# A USER'S GUIDE
### FROM THE

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# Finding Research on Retention and Access Using ERIC

**ERIC, the Educational Resource Information Center**, is a national information system supported by the U.S. Department of Education. The ERIC database contains more than 1 million abstracts of education-related documents and journal articles. The database can be accessed for free on the Internet or through commercial vendors and public networks. The database provides access to information from journals included in the Current Index of Journals in Education and Resources in Education Index. ERIC provides full text of more than 2,200 digests along with references for additional information and citations and abstracts from over 1000 educational and education-related journals.

The ERIC database can be searched using the basic search engine, advanced search, expert search and browsed by topic. The database also contains a thesaurus. Here is an overview of how you can use the internet-version of ERIC to locate articles and reports on college access and retention. Documents are available in electronic full text, on paper, and on microfiche. Journal articles cited in ERIC may be obtained at libraries, though interlibrary loan, from article reprint services, and from journal publishers.

### *Basic Search*

A simple search can be used if you know the name of an author or title, or wish to do a general subject search.

*Author*
1. Enter the author's name in the Keywords textbox.
2. Enclose the name or title in quotation marks. Enter all variations of the author's name and separate them with "OR". For example: "John W. Smith" OR "Smith, John W."
3. Select the Search button.
4. When search results are displayed, browse through records or select "Detail" to display the complete record.

*Title*
1. If you know the title of a publication, enter the title in the Keywords textbox.
2. Enclose the title in quotation marks. For Example: "Digest of Education Statistics"
3. Select the Search button.
4. When search results are displayed, browse through records or select "Detail" to display the complete record.

*Keyword*
1. For keyword searches, enter the word or phrase that describes your topic into the Keywords textbox. For example: financial aid
2. Select the Search button.

*Advanced Search*

A keyword search will yield the broadest results. To narrow your search results you can use the Advanced Search engine. The Advanced search form allows you to limit your search results by publication type, target audience, record type, EDRS electronic availability, and year added.

1. State your topic in the form of a question, ie. "What research studies have been done on how different types of financial aid affect college achievement and degree completion?".
2. Identify the main concepts of the question- "financial aid", "college achievement", and "degree completion". These will be your keywords.
3. To search for an exact phrase, enclose the words in quotation marks, ie. "financial aid" AND "college achievement" AND "degree completion". If quotes are not used, ERIC defaults to searching for records with all of the words but not necessarily adjacent to one another.
4. To combine terms together use Boolean operators (AND, OR, NOT). Operators must be entered in capital letters.

| AND | All terms must appear in the search results | College AND degree | College and degree |
|---|---|---|---|
| OR | Either term may appear in the search results | College OR degree | College, degree or college and degree |
| NOT | All terms following the operator will not appear in the search results | College NOT degree | College but not degree |

If Boolean operators are not used, ERIC automatically assumes the AND in between each word.

5. Narrow the search results by publication. For example, select "books" from the Publication Type menu.
6. Specify the audience for the publication, by selecting a group from the Target Audience menu.
7. Narrow the search results by year. For example, 2000 to 2004
8. Select the Search button.

*Expert Search*

The Expert Search engine allows you to combine your terms together and select which field you want the terms to appear in.

1. Enter your keyword in the Keyword textbox. For example, "financial aid". Specify which field you would like the term to appear in.
2. To add additional terms to your search, Optional Additional Search Criteria menu. Select the field in which you would like the term to (ie. author, descriptor, publication type, target audience, date) appear. Then enter the terms. You can "AND" or "OR" each additional term to create a complex search strategy. This field is case-sensitive.
3. Select the Search button.