Searching for journal article references with CINAHL

Being clear about what you’re searching for

What is your search topic?
Can you put it into a simple sentence? If you are searching a database you must make sure you are certain what you’re looking for and can put it into a simple descriptive sentence. If you can’t, then spend a bit more time thinking about it.

\textit{e.g. Caring for children with diabetes}

Accessing the CINAHL database

Go to the Database and log-in. Log-in using your usual student log-in details.

1. Go to the Library website. 2. Find \textit{Databases A-Z} 3. Click, and then find ‘C’. 4. Click ‘C’. Go down the list of till you find CINAHL
5. Click on \textit{CINAHL Complete}

Developing a search strategy

We need to be able to convert our topic sentence to a form that can be entered into the database. What are the subjects in our topic? What are the subjects which relate to each other in our topic?

Our example search has three subjects: \textbf{a. Care b. Children c. Diabetes.}

\textit{We can enter these into the database’s search boxes}

We can now click search. \textbf{Hints} Try adding other possible words or phrases into each box like this: e.g. \textit{children OR “paediatric patients”} (note the speech marks)

Entering \textit{diabet*} (the first few letters with a star on the end) rather than \textit{diabetes} will include articles which use other forms of the word and so increase your result. E.g. diabet\textit{ic}. The star is called a ‘truncation’ symbol.
Use ‘Limit To’ to exclude out of date material by sliding the slide across from the left to the date you wish to limit to. e.g. 2007. ‘Show More’ underneath the date slide will let you limit to English and Research studies.

Clicking ‘Search’ will give a list of references to journal articles about your topic like the one above. Each consists of a title (blue) and other details including the authors and which journal it was published in. The one above is in the journal ‘Nursing Clinics of North America’ issue 1 of volume 35 – pages 1 to 13.

Read through the references and save the ones you want by clicking on the blue folder. The Folder containing your saved references is at the top of the screen. You can e-mail them to yourself from there. Don’t forget to use the ‘E-Journal’ tab to access the full article by entering the name of the journal and following the link to the journal’s webpage. Enter the article title into the search box you find there.

Now do the search above and answer some questions

Complete the search shown above and answer the following questions:

1. Care AND children AND diabetes yielded how many references? __________

2. Adding: OR “paediatric patients” to the second search box yielded how many references? __________

3. If there’s a difference in the number of references found? Can you say why? ________________

4. What would happen if you added the truncation symbol (star): “ paediatric patient* ” __________