

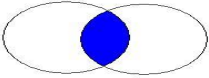
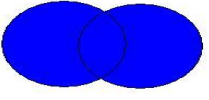
Basic Database Principles

There is a lot of information available via electronic databases. Although each database interface (the search screen you see) varies greatly, here are a few basic searching principles to help you

Basic Principle	Description	Example
Choosing Keywords	Consider all possible phrases; related terms; synonyms; variant terminology	Patient education or consumer education
Truncation	Searchable shortened form of a word using "*"	Adolescen* will retrieve: adolescence Adolescent Adolescents etc.
Quotations	By using quotation marks, the database searches for that exact phrase	Practice guidelines 57, 360 "Practice guidelines" 13, 180
Controlled vocabulary	Many databases utilize thesaurus terms (subject headings). This categorizes all articles on a similar topic producing more relevant results	For example, CINAHL subject headings recommend the term "Neoplasms" and "carcinoma" ~not "cancer."
Refining Results	Too many results?	Narrow your search by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adding keywords utilizing "AND" • Use more specific "keywords" • Try using thesaurus terms and subheadings • Limit your results to a particular year, publication, language
Refining Results	Not enough results	Broaden your search by: Use truncation (see above) Use all possible synonyms, alternative terminology, spelling combining with "OR"
Snowballing	One relevant article can lead to several related articles	Check the references cited in the articles Check the related terms

Boolean Operators

Boolean logic controls the relationship between search topics and sets

AND	AND - retrieves records that contain both search terms (e.g. scoliosis and spinal fusion).	
OR	OR – retrieves records that contain one or the other or both search terms (e.g. diet or nutrition).	
NOT	NOT – is the exclusion operator (e.g. Diabetes Mellitus not Hypertension)	