Power Searching Tools

Power Search Tools in Library Databases and Google Scholar

PHRASES
Using “quotes” to keep terms together as a phrase when searching

Example: “multicultural education”

Hint: Do not put quotes around sentences. Only use “ ” around groups of words or phrases that have a commonly understood when they are found together.

WILDCARD
Using * to accommodate different word endings

Example: comput*

Hint: This search will find the terms computer, computers, computing, computes. Add the asterisk * directly after the last common letter, no spaces. This does not work in Google Scholar—instead, Google Scholar searches for all possible word variations

( OR )
Use ( ) and OR to search multiple synonymous or conceptually related terms.

Example: (bilingual OR multicultural)

Hint: This search will find articles and other materials that contain the word bilingual, the word multicultural, or both words. You must enclose the keywords in parentheses, and you must capitalize the word OR.

NOT
Use NOT to eliminate a word from your search results. This always goes at the end of your search statement. (In Google Scholar, use the minus sign – instead of NOT)

Example: “multicultural education” AND achievement NOT disabled
Example (Google Scholar): “multicultural education” AND achievement -disabled

Hint: This search statement will find articles that include the phrase multicultural education and the word achievement, but will eliminate any articles from the search results that contain the word disabled.

Putting them all together
You can do very sophisticated searching using these tools. For example:

“dual language”
AND (“teaching methods” OR programs)
NOT (disab* OR impaired) [in Google Scholar, use -(disab* OR impaired)]
This search will find the phrase dual language along with the phrase teaching methods or the word programs, or both, and not the words disabled, disabilities or disability and not the word impaired.