

## *ERIC in UNB Libraries*

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ERIC is the Education Resource Information Center database that has been around for a long time and it is often considered the premier database for locating academic research in the field of education. It is not the only database that UNB Libraries provide access to, with such rich content, but it is the one that we most often go to first. We have access to ERIC on two different platforms: one is EBSCO and the other is ProQuest. This tutorial will deal with the EBSCO version of ERIC at UNB Libraries. I am your host, Marc Bragdon; you can reach me at [mbragdon@unb.ca](mailto:mbragdon@unb.ca). Here is a picture of me relaxing at the research help desk of the Harriet Irving Library on the Fredericton campus.

Today we are going to take a look at how to locate ERIC on the UNB Libraries' website, conduct a search on ERIC, leverage subjects in a search often called descriptors (a controlled vocabulary that can help you search more effectively), connect to external full text and internally, and search simultaneously across multiple EBSCO databases to which UNB subscribes.

We will begin as we usually do on the UNB Libraries' website: [lib.unb.ca](http://lib.unb.ca). You can find ERIC in a couple of different ways. One is to go to the "Article Databases" tab and browse for ERIC alphabetically by title. Your other option is to go to the Education subject guide under Research by Subject. We will see that under Top Article & Research Databases Eric on the EBSCO platform appears first.

This is the ERIC database on the EBSCO platform. Before accessing this page, if you were coming to ERIC from off campus, you would have been prompted to log in with your UNB or STU login and password; these are the same credentials that you would use to access e-services at your university.

To begin, we are going to perform a keyword search. You have options to search according to different fields that would have been indexed such as author, title, subject descriptors, etc. We are going to do a general keyword search to begin with for **differentiated instruction** at the **elementary** school level but, since **primary** is used in some jurisdictions around the world, I will add it to my search as well and separate elementary and primary with the search operator **OR**. After clicking the search button, ERIC returns 826 results. You can see to the left that you are able to limit to peer-reviewed material. However, I find that this implementation in ERIC is not perfect and by limiting to what the database has identified as peer-reviewed you can sometimes miss out on not just important and pertinent information but also information that has indeed been peer reviewed. So watch out for that.

We can see that in the first case (the first search result) the full text is not directly available. We have this check for full text link. The second search result does have direct full text access. We can click on that link and access the full text directly from ERIC. Otherwise we can try these "check for full text" links to see if we indeed, through UNB Libraries, have a subscription to the

electronic content. In this case, the publication is called *Gifted Child Today*. We are told that the full text is available for this item. When I click on “view full text” we obtain the journal article in question.

Let’s take a look at the first record for our first search result. There are some interesting features here including the “cite” option, which provides you with the citation in a number of different formats, and the permalink to the record that will authenticate you as a UNB user wherever this link exists.

Now, let’s take a look at some of these descriptors which are subjects that are applied to all the content in ERIC and group like items together according to this control vocabulary. Let’s say individualized instruction was a more interesting term for me so I copy that and replace differentiated instruction in my original search. Now we have a number of results. Let’s say I’m going to qualify or limit these results to individualized instruction **and** elementary or primary **and** boys. We have gone from several thousands of results to 54 results in this case. As I alluded to in the beginning, ERIC is only one of the databases that UNB Libraries subscribe to that would have content related to the field of education. We can search across a few of these databases on the EBSCO platform. Go to Choose Databases and add Academic Search Premier, EBSCO’s eBook collection (that has good academic content across a number of fields including education), and PsychINFO. Click OK and run the search again. We have added about 30 results to our original set.