

Encyclopedias and Handbooks online at UNB Libraries

Welcome back to another edition of YouTube'n with Marc at UNB Libraries.

We are going to talk about encyclopedias and research handbooks online: what they are, where to find (some of) them, how to search for them, and how to access electronic or e-book versions (particularly the research handbooks).

Let's start with what are academic encyclopedias? Academic encyclopedias are written by scholars and provide topical overviews that often suggest other readings and can be used in a paper and cited versus something like Wikipedia.

In this example, we have Credo Reference, one of our largest and most powerful super encyclopedias for academic research. If I were to search for "progressive education," across 634 reference books, we have 174 results that we can peruse. We have sources such as *The Crystal Reference Encyclopedia*, *The New Dictionary of Cultural Literacy*, *Philosophy of Education*, etc.

The research handbooks tend to be more focused on manageable topics. In this case, *The SAGE Handbooks of Educational Leadership* includes many entries that are written by scholars and what they do is elaborate on the state of research around topics they are interested in. They cover a lot of ground in one of these volumes and provide overviews at a higher level than you find typically in journal articles, which tend to be quite focused on specific conversations and well defined topics with tight parameters. You can come to a source, like this one, to get that topical overview and to mine the bibliographies of the entries, which provide a launching point for further inquiry into the topics.

We can see that the handbooks cover such areas as theories of leadership, the micropolitics of school leadership, and that they also have substantial subject indexes at the back for quick entry into particular topics of interest. How do you find them? There are a couple of possibilities. One is to start in the Desire2Learn shell and click on the "Subject/Course Guide" in the UNB Libraries Resources widget. You will find a "Reference Sources" tab that provides hyperlinked access to what are considered key resources, in the context of a course or a subject search.

In the case of the *Blackwell Guide to the Philosophy of Education* or the *Sage Handbook of Educational Leadership*, these are hyperlinks that take you to electronic books. You also have a link here to Credo Reference and the Oxford English Dictionary. This is by no means an exhaustive list; I can't emphasize that enough. There are other places to find them. You can also go directly to the library website, www.lib.unb.ca, and, from the "Research by Subject" box, choose a topic of interest, such as anthropology. The subject guide for anthropology will list, under "Top e-Reference Materials," a number of encyclopedias and, sometimes, handbooks although that is less likely the case. If you go to the detailed guide, typically in the reference area, you might come across a few handbooks as well as encyclopedias. As it says here, under the "Reference Sources" tab, to find more of these, you should probably search UNB WorldCat.

WorldCat is the search available at www.lib.unb.ca by default and it also appears in subject guides under the “Find Books” tab. If I wanted to look for handbooks on special education, and add the word “handbook” as a key word, from my result list I can limit the format to e-books. We can see that some possible e-books of interest start to appear. I can click on “view now.” It is telling me that it is an EBSCO e-book. I click on “view eBook” and it takes me in.

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