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ABSTRACT

This brief review of the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) system is intended to make users more aware of (1) the system as a whole, (2) the process of indexing educational literature for the database, and (3) the role of the Thesaurus of ERIC Descriptors in the overall information dissemination process. An overview of the ERIC system is provided, and a discussion of ERIC vocabulary maintenance includes descriptions of the 1977 Vocabulary Improvement Project (VIP) and the Vocabulary Review Group. In addition, information retrieval methods and tools for manual and computer searching are considered; and a discussion of ERIC's indexing provides general guidelines as well as detailed discussions of educational and age level descriptors, identifiers, and publication types. Further hints for relevant retrieval consider non-subject access and the target audience. Also included in the text are a listing of ERIC's searchable fields and vendors' field access labels; sample Resources in Education (RIE) and Current Index to Journals in Education (CIJE) entries; listings of mandatory educational and age level descriptors, publication/document types, and descriptors corresponding to publication type categories; and a guide for assigning pubtype codes. (KM)

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INDEXING AND RETRIEVAL IN ERIC: THE 20TH YEAR

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION
CENTER (ERIC)

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INTRODUCTION

This 11th edition of the *Thesaurus of ERIC Descriptors* is significant because it coincides with the twentieth anniversary of the ERIC database. Both ERIC and the *Thesaurus* have come a long way since 1966, from a fledgling project within the federal government to an information system known and accessed worldwide. ERIC has grown from a database of 3,000 items to one of 600,000 references. Its *Thesaurus*, which began with 2,300 core terms (compiled by "free indexing" 1,700 documents on teaching the disadvantaged), is now recognized as the definitive vocabulary of education and a model for other databases.

THE ERIC SYSTEM

The Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) is a national information system established in 1966 by the federal government to provide ready access to educational literature by and for educational practitioners and scholars.¹ It is funded today by the Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI) of the U.S. Department of Education. ERIC collects and disseminates virtually all types of print materials, mostly unpublished, that deal with education—for example, program descriptions and evaluations, research reports and surveys, curriculum and teaching guides, instructional materials, and resource materials.

Central ERIC at OERI establishes policy and oversees the operation of the ERIC system. Centers of educational expertise at universities and professional associations operate the 16 decentralized ERIC Clearinghouses.² These Clearinghouses identify, acquire, and process educational information in specific subject areas

such as elementary, secondary, and higher education, educational management, social studies, languages and linguistics, and rural and urban education. Support organizations perform other technical services for the ERIC system. Among these services are maintenance of central computer tape files, reproduction of noncopyrighted literature, and development of specialized publications, such as this *Thesaurus*.

ERIC acquires and announces the availability of educational literature (e.g., journal articles, research reports, conference papers, bibliographies, innovative practice reports). The literature is cataloged, abstracted, and then indexed using key words from the controlled vocabulary—the *Thesaurus of ERIC Descriptors*. Abstracted citations for nonjournal literature appear each month in a bibliographic journal, *Resources in Education (RIE)*. Annotated references to journal articles are found in the companion monthly publication *Current Index to Journals in Education (CIJE)*. With the help of the *Thesaurus*, all materials processed by ERIC can be identified by manual searches of the printed indexes in *RIE* and *CIJE* or by computer searches of the ERIC tapes. ERIC provides convenient access to the actual text of nearly 270,000 documents at over 700 libraries and resource centers that subscribe to and maintain ERIC microfiche collections of most documents cited in *RIE* (see footnote 5, p. xii).

Important components of ERIC are its subject-area Clearinghouses. Responsible for locating, acquiring, and selecting literature in its respective area of education, each Clearinghouse indexes that material using the terms from the *Thesaurus*. Thus each Clearinghouse has a stake in the content of the *Thesaurus* and contributes regularly to updating of the ERIC vocabulary.

¹See Delmer J. Trester's *ERIC—The First 15 Years. A History of the Educational Resources Information Center* (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 195 289).

²Note the "scope of interest" statements on the inside back cover of this publication to see the diversity of the ERIC system and to identify individual Clearinghouses' areas of expertise.

VOCABULARY MAINTENANCE

The Vocabulary Improvement Project

After years of collecting, indexing, and disseminating educational literature, ERIC found that the thesaural constructions and terminology developed in 1966 (when the database was established) were not sufficient for the needs of the 1980s. The vocabulary, allowed to develop slowly over the years, needed some major revisions to bring it up-to-date. Many Descriptors entered in ERIC's early years had become obsolete. Others originally entered without definitions needed some clarification in order to be understood and used consistently. The hierarchical relationships needed some rearranging in order to reflect current thinking in education. As a result, in 1977 Central ERIC made a major commitment to upgrade the quality and usefulness of the controlled vocabulary by revising the *Thesaurus* totally—an unprecedented effort for an established, ongoing information system. The Vocabulary Improvement Project (VIP) was undertaken to implement this unusual and major revision. All 16 ERIC Clearinghouses, the ERIC Processing and Reference Facility, and users of the ERIC system were asked to participate in the project.

The project was conducted in two phases, labeled "Thesaurus Review" and "Production." Phase I took place between March and August 1978, during which time Clearinghouse vocabulary coordinators, users, and database searchers critically evaluated the *Thesaurus*. By August, over 60,000 Descriptor assessments had been completed, about 10,000 by non-ERIC personnel. The objectives of this phase were to verify the utility of *Thesaurus* terms, identify problems requiring action, and recommend solutions.

An interim period, September and October 1978, followed Phase I. Clearinghouse vocabulary coordinators were assigned groups of Descriptors, for which they collated and assessed Phase I evaluations. Having decided that efficient retrieval was the overriding VIP objective, the axiom "Usage determines meaning" was adopted for Phase II.

During Phase II (November 1978 through September 1979) VIP personnel wrote new Scope Notes and modified old ones, merged synonymous terms, updated terminology, and revised cross-references. Over 10,000 separate transactions were prepared over the 11-month period. All transactions were keyed into an interim "Play *Thesaurus*" (as distinguished from the "real" *Thesaurus*). Because of the absence of an electronic mail system or online revision procedures, the *Play Thesaurus* was used to coordinate across geographic distances all recommendations of the Clearinghouses and the Facility. The *Play Thesaurus* was updated 12 times during the project. All suggested adds, deletes, and changes were included in the *Play Thesaurus*, identified by originating Clearinghouse, and coded (approved/disapproved) by

the Facility lexicographers. In this way, all VIP staff were informed of each action taken on specific terms. When they had objections or suggestions, they could respond in a special "Comment" field that was incorporated within the Descriptor display for inter-Clearinghouse messages.

After the distribution of the last edition of the *Play Thesaurus*, Clearinghouse vocabulary coordinators and the Facility lexicographic staff spent several weeks reviewing the final recommendations and resolving unforeseen conflicts. The working copies of the "new" *Thesaurus* were ready by March 1980 for use in ERIC indexing. The master *Thesaurus* computer tapes—as well as the *RIE* and *CIE* resume files—were then updated to reflect the VIP changes.

By the time the VIP project was completed, extensive revisions had taken place. The 1980 *Thesaurus of ERIC Descriptors—Completely Revised* (the 8th edition) reflected the following: over 600 new Descriptors, over 1,000 deleted Descriptors, and over 1,400 new or modified Scope Notes. This edition of the *Thesaurus* also reflected deliberate changes in sexist terminology.

The Vocabulary Improvement Project was a massive undertaking—an unprecedented effort by a large information system to systematically evaluate its indexing authority, to cross-check it against the database, and to let usage determine meaning and outcome of each term.³ Although such a *thorough* revision will not be repeated in the near future, ERIC remains committed to maintaining a current and accurate vocabulary.

The Vocabulary Review Group

As a result of the success of the Vocabulary Improvement Project, some of the procedures established for it have been adapted for general ERIC implementation. Three features in particular remain: a specific vocabulary coordinator from each Clearinghouse to monitor the language of its own scope area (see p. v); user participation in vocabulary review; and a regular interactive process for vocabulary maintenance.

The Clearinghouse vocabulary coordinators, the ERIC lexicographic staff, a Central ERIC representative, and members from the user community now comprise the ERIC Vocabulary Review Group. The following user groups are represented: school librarians, university librarians, practitioners, and online search facilities. The Review Group both initiates and evaluates new terminology or modifications to existing vocabulary.

The interactive nature of the evaluation process allows all points of view to be heard before decisions are made in *Thesaurus* revisions. Effective retrieval remains the objective.

ERIC continues actively to serve the educational community. Users are encouraged to submit comments on this edition and suggestions for future editions of the

³See Barbara Booth's "A 'New' ERIC Thesaurus, Fine-Tuned for Searching" *Online* v3 n3 July 1979 pp. 20-29.

Thesaurus to Alan Moorehead, Director, ERIC, Department of Education, Washington, DC 20200.

INFORMATION RETRIEVAL METHODS AND TOOLS

Retrieval takes two forms: manual and computer (batch or online). For manual or batch searching, ERIC provides several printed reference tools; for online searching, a computer terminal provides immediate access to the same information cumulated from those reference tools.

Manual Searching

Manual searching makes use primarily of the monthly printed versions of *Resources in Education (RIE)* and *Current Index to Journals in Education (CIJE)*. Users locate titles in these publications through various indexes. *RIE* provides a Subject Index (made up of Major Descriptors and Major Identifiers—see pp. xiv and xvi), an Author Index,⁴ an Institution Index (showing institutions responsible for a document and/or the agency sponsoring it), and a Publication Type Index (see p. xvii). In *CIJE*, there are the Subject Index, Author Index (see footnote 4), and Journal Contents Index (indicating titles of articles listed by journal names). Semiannual or annual cumulations of both publications, including their indexes, are provided.⁵

Computer Searching

Computer searching permits a review of part or all of the ERIC database (*RIE* and *CIJE*) in a single effort, eliminating the difficulty of scanning separate monthly or even annual publications. Computerized retrieval makes possible searches, not only of Major and Minor Descriptors and Identifiers, authors, institutions, specific journals, and Publication Types, but

also of words or phrases not found in any of the printed indexes. In short, computer searching gives users the option to search every word of the document resume (i.e., bibliographic information, Descriptors, Identifiers, and abstracts or annotations) as published in *RIE* and *CIJE*. It should be noted that full-text searching in ERIC refers to searching individual words of the document resume and not of the document itself.

An exception to this traditional guideline is ERIC's new "ERIC Digests Online" (EDO) file, made available on The Source's ED-Line in April 1986. This new database consists of approximately 200 short reports ("digests") on current issues in education prepared by all 16 of the ERIC Clearinghouses. The full text of each digest is online, and each digest can be accessed by menu, key words (Descriptors from the ERIC Thesaurus), or fast command. Each digest also has its own "Notespace" for user comments. The EDO file will be expanded gradually. Most of the digests in EDO are announced in *RIE* and therefore can be identified in computer searches of ERIC via DIALOG, BRS, or SDC; however, the full text of each digest is currently available online only via The Source.

NOTE: Procedures for searching the ERIC database vary with each of the major online vendors, DIALOG, BRS, and SDC's Orbit. See p. xiii for the comparative chart, "ERIC's Searchable Fields and Vendors' Field Access Labels," or consult the vendor training materials for specific online commands.

A review of the procedures outlined in the "ERIC's Indexing" section of this Introduction (see p. xiii) is useful in determining whether manual or online searching is most appropriate. The relevant strategy then can be devised using the *Thesaurus* and possibly the *Identifier Authority List* (see p. xvi).

⁴For documents/articles listing three or more authors, only the first author is indexed in ERIC. For collected works or proceedings containing works by three or more authors and not listing an editor or compiler of the whole, no authors are indexed, however, individual author names appearing in such collections are usually included within the text of the ERIC abstract/annotation and can be retrieved by full-text computer searching.

⁵*RIE*, covering education documents, is issued monthly by the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office (GPO), Washington, DC 20402. GPO also issues semiannual *RIE* indexes.

CIJE, covering education journal articles, is published monthly by The Oryx Press, 2214 North Central at Encanto, Phoenix, AZ 85004-1483. Oryx Press also publishes the following:

—*CIJE* Semiannual Cumulations

One-volume cumulations of all main entries (descriptions of journal articles) and all indexes for a 6-month period. Prior to 1979, these were published by Macmillan Information, 855 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10022.

—*RIE* Annual Cumulations

Each in three volumes, two of cumulated main entries (abstracts) and one of cumulated indexes. Similar cumulations prior to 1979 were published under the title *Educational Documents Abstracts/Index* by Macmillan Information.

—Microfiche Cumulations

RIE Main Entry 1966-1980 and Annual Updates; *CIJE* Main Entry 1969-1980 and Annual Updates. Combined *RIE/CIJE* Subject and Fiche Index 1966-1980 and Annual Updates; Complete *RIE/CIJE* Cumulation 1966-1980 and Annual Updates.

Most *RIE* documents, identified by "ED" numbers in the ERIC database, can be ordered (microfiche or paper) from the ERIC Document Reproduction Service (EDRS), 3900 Wheeler Avenue, Alexandria, VA 22304-5110. EDRS delivers monthly *RIE* microfiche sets to over 700 standing order subscribers. Cumulated *RIE* indexes on microfiche (1966 present) by subject, author, and institution, as well as by *RIE* title, are also available from EDRS.

ERIC's Searchable Fields and Vendors' Field Access Labels*

Searchable Field		Field Label			Searchable Field		Field Label		
ERIC	BRS	DIALOG II	SDC	ERIC	BRS	DIALOG II	SDC		
1. Descriptor—				10. Geographic Source of Document (field added 1979)	GS	GP=	/GO		
a. Multisword Descriptor	Hyphen	no label necessary	no label necessary						
b. Descriptor Word(s)—word(s) within descriptor	DE	/DE	/W	11. Institution— corporate author	N	CS=	/OS		
c. Single Word Descriptor	MJ/MN	/DE	/T	12. Sponsoring Agency— funding agency	SN	SP=	/SPD		
d. Major Subject Descriptor	MJ	/MAJ	.	13. Journal Citation	SO	JN=	/SO		
e. Minor Subject Descriptor	MN	/MIN	.	14. FA# Segment— RE or OUE (derived from ERIC Accession Number field)	ED AN	/ED	RE/FS		
2. Identifier— describes subject fields with terms not found in ERIC thesaurus				EJ AN	/EJ	OUE/FS			
a. Multisword Identifier	ID (free text)	no label necessary	no label necessary	15. Availability					
b. Identifier Word(s)—word(s) within identifier	ID (free text)	/ID	/W	a. ERIC availability (from EDRS)		AV=	/AV		
c. Single Word Identifier		/IF	/T	b. Alternate availability	AV		/AV		
d. Major Subject Identifier		/MAJ	.	16. Governmental Status of Document (field added 1979)— federal, state, local	GV	GL=	/GO		
e. Minor Subject Identifier		/MIN	.	17. Report Number	NO	RN=	/NU		
3. Title	TI	/TI	/TI	18. Grant, Contract Number	NO	CN=	/NU		
4. Abstract/ Annotation	AB	/AB	/AB	19. Publication Type	PT	DT=	/DT		
5. Personal Author	AU	AU=	/AU	20. Language of Document (field added 1979)— language of text	LG	LA=	/LA		
6. ERIC Accession Number— document number as found in RE or OUE	AN	Type EDP or J#	/AN	21. Target Audience (field added 1964)	AD	TA=	/TG		
7. Clearinghouse Accession Number— number assigned to document by an ERIC Clearinghouse	CH	AN=	/CHAN	22. Descriptive Note— extends description of publication, e.g., "Paper presented at Vocational Education Association National Conference"	NT	/NT	/NO		
• Clearinghouse Code—two letter prefix to Clearinghouse Accession Number	CH	CH=	/CC						
8. Publication Year	YR	PY=	/SO						
9. Update	AN	UD=	/UP						

*Adapted from "Searchable Fields in ERIC—A Computer User's Guide via BRS, DIALOG, ORBIT," a brochure prepared by the ERIC Clearinghouse on Rural Education and Small Schools (1986)

ERIC'S INDEXING

General Guidelines

Knowing how something is stored obviously makes finding it easier. Understanding the methods by which literature is prepared for input into a computerized data-

base facilitates retrieval of that literature. Just as an indexer must consider the user's needs, so must the user/searcher be aware of the rules and guidelines followed during the indexing process.

ERIC's indexing aims to provide subject access to the documents and articles contained in the data-

base and announced in *RIE* and *CJE*. To this end, two fundamental rules outweigh all others:

- Index only what is in the document.
- Index at the level of specificity of the document.

These rules mean that implied statements are not indexed, and that very general Descriptors (e.g., SCHOOLS, rather than HIGH SCHOOLS or PRIVATE SCHOOLS or MEDICAL SCHOOLS) are not used unless that subject is treated extremely broadly in the document. These two guidelines should be kept in mind by users for effective retrieval.

Indexing rules are set forth in the *ERIC Processing Manual*,⁶ the system's official guide. Additional instructions, suggestions, and specific examples are detailed in the 400-page training-oriented *ERIC Abstractor/Indexer Workbook*.⁷

Major points relevant to retrieval are:

1. "Indexable" concepts, or key words, of a document are translated into Descriptors from the *Thesaurus*. Using the *Thesaurus* helps maintain consistency and avoids proliferation or scattering of concepts in the subject indexes.
2. Precoordinated (i.e., multiple-word) Descriptors are used whenever possible, rather than two or more Descriptors representing their component concepts. Thus SCIENCE CURRICULUM would be used rather than SCIENCE plus CURRICULUM.
3. Descriptors are assigned to identify subject content, educational level, age level, validation status of a program, research methodology employed, tests utilized, form or type of document, etc. (See pp. xv, xvi, xvii for lists of Mandatory Educational Level Descriptors, optional Age Level Descriptors, and Publication Types.)
4. Up to six "Major" Descriptors are assigned to a single document. They cover the main focus of the document. Major Descriptors appear in the *RIE* and *CJE* printed Subject Indexes. In the document resume section of *RIE* and the main entry section of *CJE*, Major Descriptors are identified by an asterisk.
5. Additional Descriptors, called "Minor" Descriptors, are also assigned to a document or journal article. They appear in the printed resumes (without an asterisk) but do not appear in the printed Subject Indexes of *RIE* or *CJE*. (See examples that follow.)
6. Major Descriptors cover the main focus or subject of a document. Minor Descriptors indicate less important aspects within the document, as well as such nonsubject features as methodology, form, or educational level.

NOTE: Major Descriptors appear in the Subject Indexes of *RIE* and *CJE* and therefore can be searched manually. Minor Descriptors do not appear in the Subject Indexes but are searchable by computer.

SAMPLE RIE ENTRY

ED 353 565 ES 007 945
 Anderson, Richard C. And Others.
 Becoming a Nation of Readers: The Report of the
 Commission on Reading.
 Illinois Univ., Urbana, Center for the Study of
 Reading; National Academy of Education,
 Washington, D.C.
 Special Agency—National Inst. of Education (IEE),
 Washington, D.C.
 Pub. Date—1985
 Contract—800-01-0017
 Note—113p.
 Available from—University of Illinois, Becoming
 a Nation of Readers, P.O. Box 2770, Section
 A, Champaign, IL 61820-2770 (\$4.50 ea. in-
 cluding postage, separate orders add \$1.00)
 Pub. Type—Books (01)—Reports Descriptive (141)
 Index Type—MFI/PC/M Postage.

DESCRIPTORS

Descriptors—Classroom Environment, Classroom
 Techniques, Elementary Secondary Education,
 *Literacy, *Literacy Education, Professional
 Development, *Reading Improvement, *Reading
 Instruction, *Reading Programs, *Reading
 Tests, Teacher Education, Teacher Effectiveness.

Fulfilling a need for careful and thorough
 synthesis of an extensive body of findings on
 reading, this report presents leading experts' inter-
 pretations of both current knowledge of reading
 and the state of the art and practice of teaching
 reading. The introduction contains two claims: (1)
 the knowledge is now available to make work-
 able improvements in reading throughout the
 United States, and (2) if the practices seen in the
 classrooms of the best teachers in the best schools
 could be introduced everywhere, improvement in
 reading would be dramatic.

SAMPLE CJE ENTRY

ED 339 620 SF 315 479
 The University and the Community: Partnerships
 for Excellence in Teacher Education. Koch, Robert
 A., And Others. Arvon in Teacher Education, 27
 no. 27-31 Win 1985-86 (Report L-86)

Descriptors—*Premier Teacher Education, *Edu-
 cational Cooperation, *Cooperative Programs,
 Higher Education, *Program Development
 Identifiers—Sun Coast Area Teacher Training Pro-
 gram, Florida

The Sun Coast Area Teacher Training Program is
 an honors program at the University of South
 Florida which complements the teacher education
 program. It maintains partnerships with local
 school districts, organizations, and educational
 agencies as well as the legislature, business com-
 munity, and the University of South Florida
 Medical School (MS).

⁶The *ERIC Processing Manual* (1980-82 revision) is available for \$40.00 from the ERIC Processing and Reference Facility, 4833 Fugby Avenue, Suite 301, Bethesda, MD 20814. Sections relevant to retrieval, Section 6 Abstracting/Annotating (Sep80) and Section 7 Indexing (Oct80), may be purchased for \$3.75 each from the ERIC Facility. The manual also appears in the ERIC microfiche collection (for *RIE* manual, ED 219 082, Abstracting Section, ED 219 087, Indexing Section, ED 219 088) and is available from the ERIC Document Reproduction Service.

⁷Revised edition, 1981, in ERIC microfiche collection (ED 207 614) and available from the ERIC Document Reproduction Service.

Educational/Age Level Descriptors

Since ERIC indexes educational literature from all levels—preschool through postdoctoral, infant through adult—it is important, where appropriate, to "tag" documents with "leveling" terms. These leveling terms are Descriptors from the *Thesaurus* that are included in the Descriptor Field of the *RIE* and *CIE* resumes. They refer to either the educational level or age level of the population discussed in the document. Sometimes both educational and age level Descriptors may be assigned.

Assignment of at least one of the 'Educational Level' Descriptors is mandatory for every document and journal article, unless it is entirely inappropriate (such as an essay on 'the role of education in society'). Since a variety of *Thesaurus* terms could conceivably be used to tag these levels, ERIC has developed lists of preferred leveling Descriptors. The Mandatory Educational Level Descriptors procedure was implemented in February 1975.

This required assignment of Educational Level Descriptors has a practical implication for the searcher. For example, a computer search of the Descriptor **READING SKILLS** would pull out all the references in ERIC to reading skills, regardless of educational level. Adding the Descriptor **SECONDARY EDUCATION** would limit the output to those references dealing with grades 7 through 12; adding **HIGH SCHOOLS** instead would limit the output to reading skills in the upper secondary grades. Similarly, the Descriptor **TWO YEAR COLLEGES** would focus a search more discretely than would the term **POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION**. Thus the same guideline holds here in searching as in subject indexing: use the most specific Descriptor available for a specific search.

On the other hand, a document indexed at a narrow educational level would, in most instances, not also be "indexed up" to a broader level, and exhaustive searches of broader levelers require that each of their respective narrower levelers also be used. For example, one would need to search **SECONDARY EDUCATION**, **JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOLS**, **HIGH SCHOOLS**, and **HIGH SCHOOL EQUIVALENCY PROGRAMS** to achieve an exhaustive search at the **SECONDARY EDUCATION** level.

NOTE: Use the most specific Educational Level Descriptor possible. Use broader and narrower Educational Level Descriptors to retrieve at broader levels.

Age Level Descriptors were mandatory from 1980 until mid-1982, when the requirement was abolished. Eleven Age Level Descriptors still are used to index age level, however. Each covers an approximate age range, and one or more are used when a document or journal article is concerned strictly with age-level groups or populations. It should be noted that the use of specific other terms such as **ADOPTED CHILDREN** and **ADULT**

DROPOUTS would eliminate the need also to index such generic terms as **CHILDREN** and **ADULTS**.

The Mandatory Educational Level Descriptors and the Age Level Descriptors appear with their Scope Notes in the following charts.

MANDATORY "EDUCATIONAL LEVEL" DESCRIPTORS (Procedure Implemented February 1975)

- **EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION**
Scope Note: Activities and/or experiences that are intended to effect developmental changes in children, from birth through the primary years of elementary school (grades K-3)
- **PRESCHOOL EDUCATION**
Scope Note: Activities and/or experiences that are intended to effect developmental changes in children, from birth to entrance in kindergarten (or grade 1 when kindergarten is not attended)
- **PRIMARY EDUCATION**
Scope Note: Education provided in kindergarten through grade 3
- **ELEMENTARY SECONDARY EDUCATION**
Scope Note: Formal education provided in kindergarten or grade 1 through grade 12
- **ELEMENTARY EDUCATION**
Scope Note: Education provided in kindergarten or grade 1 through grades 6, 7, or 8
- **ADULT BASIC EDUCATION**
Scope Note: Education provided for adults at the elementary level (through grade 6), usually with emphasis on communicative, computational, and social skills
- **PRIMARY EDUCATION**
Scope Note: (See above)
- **INTERMEDIATE GRADES**
Scope Note: Includes the middle and/or upper elementary grades, but usually 4, 5, and 6
- **SECONDARY EDUCATION**
Scope Note: Education provided in grade 7, 8, or 9 through grade 12
- **JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOLS**
Scope Note: Providing formal education in grades 7, 8, and 9—less commonly 7 and 8, or 8 and 9
- **HIGH SCHOOLS** (Changed from "Senior High Schools" in March 1983)
Scope Note: Providing formal education in grades 9 or 10 through 12
- **HIGH SCHOOL EQUIVALENCY PROGRAMS**
Scope Note: Adult educational activities concerned with the preparation for and the taking of tests which lead to a high school equivalency certificate, e.g., General Educational Development program
- **POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION**
Scope Note: All education beyond the secondary level—includes learning activities and experiences beyond the compulsory school attendance age, with the exception of adult basic education and high school equivalency programs (Before April 75, restricted to "education beyond grade 12 and less than the baccalaureate level")
- **HIGHER EDUCATION**
Scope Note: All education beyond the secondary level leading to a formal degree
- **TWO YEAR COLLEGES** (Changed from "Junior Colleges" in March 1983)
Scope Note: Public or private postsecondary institutions providing at least 2, but less than 4, years of academic and/or occupational education

OPTIONAL "AGE LEVEL" DESCRIPTORS

INFANTS

Scope Note: Aged birth to approximately 24 months

YOUNG CHILDREN

Scope Note: Aged birth through approximately 8 years

CHILDREN

Scope Note: Aged birth through approximately 12 years

TODDLERS

Scope Note: Approximately 1-3 years of age

PRE-SCHOOL CHILDREN

Scope Note: Approximately 2-5 years of age

PRE-ADOLESCENTS

Scope Note: Approximately 9-12 years of age

ADOLESCENTS

Scope Note: Approximately 13-17 years of age

YOUNG ADULTS

Scope Note: Approximately 18-30 years of age

ADULTS

Scope Note: Approximately 18+ years of age

MIDDLE AGED ADULTS

Scope Note: Approximately 45-60 years of age

OLDER ADULTS

Scope Note: Approximately 65+ years of age

The Mandatory Educational Level Descriptors are flagged within the body of the *Thesaurus* with a special instruction in the Scope Note:

SECONDARY EDUCATION

EN Education provided in grade 7, 8, or 9 through grade 12 (note: also appears in the list of mandatory educational level descriptors)

NOTE: As mandatory terms, Educational Level Descriptors always have precedence over the Age Level terms. Educational Level terms are never Major Descriptors unless they are the subject of the document.

Identifiers

"Identifiers" are key words or "indexable" concepts intended to add a depth to subject indexing that is not always possible with Descriptors alone. Identifiers are not found in the *Thesaurus*, since they are generally: (1) proper names, or (2) concepts not yet represented by approved Descriptors. In the resume sections of *RIE* and *CUE* they appear in a separate field below the Descriptors. They may be "major'd" with an asterisk just as Descriptors are. Major Identifiers, like Major Descriptors, appear in the printed Subject Indexes of *RIE* and *CUE*.

EA 330 014 DE 130 307
 Summary of Changes in Regulations Approved by
 the US AA Convention, Division of Higher Educa-
 tion, 11 9-19 9:28:35 Jan 22 1986 (KAPMAN,
 LWA)
 Foreign Higher Education, International
 Cooperation, Student Financial Aid, Student
 Exchanges, Group Meetings, Eligibility
 Examinations, Standards, Scheduling, Financial
 Policy, Comparison, Drug Abuse, Learning
 Tools, Program Administration, Academic Control,
 & Other Subjects
 → Identifiers: *National College Athletic Associa-
 tion, Association
 The National College Athletic Association's reg-
 ulation changes concerning student financial aid,
 program administration, academic standards,
 membership, eligibility, membership governance,
 social employment policy, playing and practice
 seasons, and amputations are summarized (MSE)

IDENTIFIERS

Identifiers are used to index geographic locations, per-
 sonal names, test or program names, specific legisla-
 tion, etc., as well as concepts not found in the *Thesaurus*.
 In the latter case, the Identifier Field provides a
 "tryout" for candidate Descriptors. Identifiers are exam-
 ined regularly for their suitability as Descriptors. Since
 ERIC is a literature-based information system, every De-
 scriptor must be supported by a document or article in
 the database. Identifiers often provide that evidence
 and serve as the justification for Clearinghouse propos-
 als for new *Thesaurus* terms.

Recent examples of former Identifiers that now
 appear in the *Thesaurus* as Descriptors are COM-
 PUTER NETWORKS, CONFLICT OF INTEREST, FAC-
 ULTY PUBLISHING, BEHAVIORISM, ACCESS TO IN-
 FORMATION, CORPORATE EDUCATION, ANGER,
 SCIENCE AND SOCIETY, and COGNITIVE DISSO-
 NANCE. New Descriptors are announced in the
 monthly issues of *RIE* and *CUE*. Identifiers that are
 proper names (person, place, program, organization,
 etc.) rarely become Descriptors.

As of mid-1980, all terms in the Identifier Field
 must conform in format to terms in the *ERIC Identifier
 Authority List*® (IAL) or to the rules and guidelines for
 creating new Identifiers.® Items are purged from the
 IAL as they are upgraded to Descriptor status and
 shifted to the *Thesaurus*.

As Identifiers are elevated to the *Thesaurus*, their
 index postings are transferred to the Descriptor field.
 All such Identifier-to-Descriptor conversions occurring
 before December 1980 are fully reflected in the ERIC
 file. December 1980 was the last time a general
 reload of the ERIC backfile was performed. Conver-
 sions since that time, therefore, are not fully reflected
 in the database, and posting counts for Descriptors
 added after December 1980 may represent combined
 Descriptor/Identifier usages. (See related discussion
 under "Transferred Descriptors," p. viii)

*The IAL is available for purchase from the ERIC Processing and Reference Facility. *Alphabetical Display* (\$20.00, approx. 390 pp.), *Category Display* (\$20.00, approx. 200 pp.). The main *Alphabetical Display* lists all approved Identifiers in the ERIC files, alphabetically A to Z, together with postings data for each; some cross-references and Scope Notes are provided. The *Category Display* serves as a companion volume to the main display, listing Identifiers alphabetically within 20 broad categories (e.g., Geographic Locations, Project/Programs, Tests/Testing).

®Guidelines are detailed in the *ERIC Processing Manual, Section 8: Vocabulary Development and Maintenance (Part 2)—Identifiers (April)*, available for \$3.75 from the ERIC Facility or as ED 219 090 from the ERIC Document Reproduction Service.

NOTE:

1. Like Major Descriptors, Major Identifiers appear in the Subject indexes of *RIE* and *CUE*.
2. Major and Minor Identifiers can be searched online similarly to the way Descriptors can. See "ERIC's Searchable Fields" on p. xiii for variations among vendors.
3. To be safe, searches of Descriptors with add dates after December 1990 (when the last general ERIC reload occurred) should consider usages (postings) not only in the Descriptor field, but in the Identifier field as well.

Publication Types
PUBTYPE Codes

All documents are categorized by their "form" of publication (i.e., Publication Type or PUBTYPE) as well as by their subject. A special section of the document resume identifies the PUBTYPE by means of a three-digit code. PUBTYPES are assigned to every document and journal article (beginning September 1974 for *RIE*, August 1979 for *CUE*). They appear in the monthly printed issues of *RIE* along with the bibliographic information.

PUBTYPE

ED 205 524
All Our Kids Can Learn to Read: Guide to Parent and Citizen Action, Chicago Schools MATHE.
Designs for Change, Chicago, Ill.
Pub Date=65
Note=179p
Available from: Designs for Change, 220 South State St., Suite 1120 Chicago, IL 60604 (312) 329-1100, including postage.
Pub Type=Guides - Non-Classroom (051)
EDRS Price - MF01 Plus Postage, PC Not Available from EDRS.
Description=Community Involvement, Educational Improvement, Evaluation Criteria, Parent Participation, Reading Achievement, Reading Improvement, Reading Instruction, Reading Skills, School Community Programs, School Organization, Test Interpretation
Annotation=Illinois (Chicago) behavior of ill intended for parents and all citizens concerned about improving Chicago's 342 public schools, this handbook explains how important reading is to a decent education and future...

Printed issues of *CUE* do not include PUBTYPE designations. However, all assigned PUBTYPES for both *RIE* and *CUE* are on the ERIC tapes and are searchable by computer.

In *RIE*, they are also searchable manually in the Publication Type Index (first published in July 1979). This index is organized numerically by PUBTYPE code and provides reference to title and accession (ED) number for each document having that code.

PUBTYPE INDEX

(055) Guides - Non-Classroom

- All Our Kids Can Learn to Read: Guide to Parent and Citizen Action, Chicago Schools MATHE. ED 205 524
- Alternative Education Programs for Disruptive Students ED 205 613
- Activities in Our Schools: Tapping the Skills of All: A Handbook for Classroom Leaders Produced by NEA ED 205 613

Codes and category names for the 36 PUBTYPES are

CODE	PUBLICATION/DOCUMENT TYPES
010	BOOKS
	COLLECTED WORKS
020	=General
021	=Conference Proceedings (See also 150)
022	=Satire
030	CREATIVE WORKS (Literature, Drama, Fine Arts)
	DISSERTATIONS/THESSES
040	=Unformatted
041	=Doctoral Dissertations
042	=Masters Theses
043	=Ph.D. Theses
	GUIDES
050	=General
	=Classroom Use
051	=For Learner (Instructional Materials)
052	=For Teacher (Teaching Guides)
055	=Non-Classroom Use (For Administrative and Support Staff, Teachers, Parents, Clergy, Researchers)
060	HISTORICAL MATERIALS
070	INFORMATION ANALYSES (Literature Reviews, State-of-the-Art Papers)
071	=ERIC Information Analysis Products
080	JOURNAL ARTICLES
090	LEGAL/LEGISLATIVE/REGULATORY MATERIALS
100	AUDIOVISUAL MATERIALS/NONPRINT MATERIALS
**101	=Computer Programs
110	STATISTICAL DATA (Numerical/Quantitative)
120	VENTFONTS (Open Papers, Position Papers, Essays, etc.)
	REFERENCE MATERIALS
130	=General
131	=Bibliographies
132	=Directories/Catalogs
133	=Geographic Materials
134	=Vocabularies/Glossaries/Dictionaries/Glossaries
	REPORTS
140	=General
141	=Descriptive (Program/Project Descriptions)
142	=Evaluative/Feasibility
143	=Research/Technical
150	SPEECHES, CONFERENCE PAPERS (Individual) (See also 021)
160	TESTS, EVALUATION INSTRUMENTS
170	TRANSLATIONS
**171	=Multilingual/Bilingual Materials
999	OTHER MISCELLANEOUS (Not Classified Elsewhere) (Avoid use of this category, if at all possible)

*Added April 1983
**Added July 1984



GUIDE FOR ASSIGNING PUBTYPE CODES (A CROSS REFERENCE FROM SPECIFIC KINDS OF DOCUMENTS TO MOST APPLICABLE PUBLICATION TYPE CODE)

(Reference: ERIC Reproduction)

PUBLICATION TYPE	PUBTYPE CODES
Annual Report	401
Announcement	402
Article in Periodical	403
Book Review	404
Booklet	405
Booklet	406
Booklet	407
Booklet	408
Booklet	409
Booklet	410
Booklet	411
Booklet	412
Booklet	413
Booklet	414
Booklet	415
Booklet	416
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Booklet	498
Booklet	499
Booklet	500

PUBLICATION TYPE	PUBTYPE CODES
Annual Report	401
Announcement	402
Article in Periodical	403
Book Review	404
Booklet	405
Booklet	406
Booklet	407
Booklet	408
Booklet	409
Booklet	410
Booklet	411
Booklet	412
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Booklet	500

PUBLICATION TYPE	PUBTYPE CODES
Annual Report	401
Announcement	402
Article in Periodical	403
Book Review	404
Booklet	405
Booklet	406
Booklet	407
Booklet	408
Booklet	409
Booklet	410
Booklet	411
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Booklet	500

ADDITIONAL 1. The codes 401-500 are assigned to documents that are not listed in this guide.
 2. The codes 401-500 are assigned to documents that are not listed in this guide.
 3. The codes 401-500 are assigned to documents that are not listed in this guide.
 4. The codes 401-500 are assigned to documents that are not listed in this guide.
 5. The codes 401-500 are assigned to documents that are not listed in this guide.



To determine the proper PUBTYPE code for a document, an ERIC indexer examines the item and then checks the "Descriptor to Publication Type Table" (see p. xviii). For example, if the document in hand is a feasibility study, the table readily identifies it as a "code 142" item.

Similarly, this cross-reference chart is useful in the retrieval process. For example, if a user wanted samples of facility guidelines, the PUBTYPE code 065 could be searched, or an examination of the PUBTYPE code 066 could be used to help find autobiographies.

NOTE: To allow flexibility in classification, up to three PUBTYPE code assignments are permitted for a single document or article. All may be searched online. All cataloged for *RIE* appear in the Publication Type Index of that journal.

Publication Type Descriptors

Labeling of publication type or document characteristics is also done by the use of Descriptors. For example, a document that includes the complete survey instrument (e.g., a questionnaire) used in a research study would be PUBTYPE coded 143 (Research/Technical Reports) and 180 (Tests, Evaluation Instruments). But it would also carry the Minor Descriptor QUESTIONNAIRES (minor, because "questionnaire" is not the subject of the document). The use of specific form terms is not unusual in the Descriptor Field. However, as of March 1982, certain very broad form terms that coincide exactly with names of PUBTYPE Categories are not used for indexing document form in the Descriptor Field. These 22 form terms and their corresponding PUBTYPE codes are:

These very broad terms may be used as Descriptors (Major or Minor) if they apply to the subject of the document, as noted in the *Treasures*.

PUBTYPE INSTRUCTION	BIBLIOGRAPHIES	131
	131	BIBLIOGRAPHIES (131)
	131	LITERATURE REVIEWS
	131	LITERATURE SURVEYS
	131	LITERATURE SYNOPSIS
	131	LITERATURE TRENDS
	131	LITERATURE CRITICISMS
	131	LITERATURE COMMENTARIES
	131	LITERATURE ANALYSES
	131	LITERATURE INTERVIEWS
	131	LITERATURE TRANSLATIONS
	131	LITERATURE REVISIONS
	131	LITERATURE CORRECTIONS
	131	LITERATURE ADDENDUMS
	131	LITERATURE SUPPLEMENTS

Thus if a document were a bibliography about how to compile bibliographies, it would have the PUBTYPE 131 (Bibliographies) and also the Major Descriptor BIBLIOGRAPHIES (major, because it is the subject of the document).

NOTE: 'Document Type' Descriptors (see table on p. xviii) should not be Major Descriptors unless they are the subject of the document.

FURTHER HINTS FOR RELEVANT RETRIEVAL

Non-Subject Access

One usually looks for information in ERIC by subject area, using Descriptors, identifiers, and/or free-text phrases. Publication Type offers an additional refinement of the search process. There are other elements of ERIC's cataloging that are separate from the indexing process, however, that help limit a computer search even more precisely. They include a document's language, geographic origin (country, or country and state/province), and Target Audience.¹⁰ All three of these data elements are searchable only by computer. Language appears on both *RIE* and *CUE* citations as of January 1979. Geographic origin is used only for *RIE*, effective January 1979.

DESCRIPTORS CORRESPONDING TO PUBLICATION TYPE CATEGORIES	
DESCRIPTOR	PUBTYPE CODE
ALPHABETICAL AIDS	110
BIBLIOGRAPHIES	131
BOOKS	010
COMPUTER SOFTWARE	101
CONFERENCE PAPERS	140
CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS	021
DICTIONARIES	124
DIRECTORIES	132
DOCTORAL DISSERTATIONS	041
GUIDES	050
MASTERS THESES	042
MULTIMEDIA MATERIALS	171
PRACTICUM PAPERS	043
REFERENCE MATERIALS	130
REPORTS	110
RESEARCH REPORTS	113
SERIALS	022
SPEECHES	110
STATISTICAL DATA	110
TESTS	180
THESES	040
VOCABULARY	134

¹⁰Further details on the Language, Geographic Origin, and Target Audience fields are given in the ERIC Processing Manual, Section 5: Cataloging, available for \$3.75 from the ERIC Facility. An earlier version of this document (without the Target Audience description) is available as ED 219 086 from the ERIC Document Reproduction Service.



Target Audience

Educational documents and journal articles are sometimes written for particular audiences. ERIC currently identifies these audiences in a special "Target Audience" field. This field is used when an author clearly specifies an intended audience, otherwise, it is left blank.

For consistency, eleven distinct audiences have been defined by ERIC, as follows:

- Policy-makers
- Researchers
- Practitioners
 - Administrators
 - Teachers
 - Counselors
 - Media Staff
 - Support Staff
- Students
- Parents
- Community

NOTE: The ERIC computer system automatically adds the generic audience "Practitioners" to records cataloged by any of the five "practitioner" subcategories.

The Target Audience field may be used to limit a computer search more narrowly. For example, adding Target Audience Practitioners to a search of the Descriptor DROPOUT PREVENTION would focus the search on literature on dropout prevention written specifically for practitioners.

Target Audience is an optional cataloging element. Not all documents identify an audience; some identify more than one. There are no restrictions on the number of audiences that may be cataloged as long as the above authority list is adhered to; however, if the number of practitioner groups involved is three or more (out of the five available), only the generic term "Practitioners" is cataloged.

The Target Audience field has been a fully defined cataloging element for *RIE* since January 1984, and for *OJIE* since September 1984. The terms "Practitioners" and/or "Students" have been added retrospectively to selected *RIE* citations announced during the period May 1975 through December 1983. No citations prior to May 1975 contain the Target Audience field.

Each of the major online retrieval vendors provides computer access to ERIC's Target Audience data in a different way and has a different segment of records containing Target Audience data on its file. These differences are summarized below:

ERIC/CS	
Audience	via the suffix "TA" + # e.g. S 1 A = PRACTITIONERS
The Segment	via the number OJIE from Superl comprehensive and journals (May/25 Dec/83) Practitioners and Students only
ERIC/CS	
Audience	"Target Audience" data merged with identifier data e.g. PRACTITIONERS Great Britain West Indians Counselors MATHS I AUDIENCE Counselors
	Segmenting must be done with the number e.g. PRACTITIONERS(1) AND (RANGE) AND AUDIENCE(1)
The Segment	via the number OJIE from Superl comprehensive and journals (May/25 Dec/83) Practitioners and Students only
ERIC/CS	
Audience	via the suffix "AO" + # e.g. PRACTITIONERS,10
The Segment	via the number OJIE from Superl

NOTE

1. Target Audience was added as a new data element to *RIE* in January 1984 and to *OJIE* in September 1984. There are some retrospective *RIE* loadings of "Practitioners" and "Students."
2. Target Audience is not captured for all documents and journal articles, but only for those approximately 25% explicitly claiming a target audience.
3. Target Audience does not appear in the printed *RIE* and *OJIE* abstract journals.
4. Online access to Target Audience varies from one vendor to another.

CONCLUSION

This brief review of the ERIC system has been intended to make users more aware of the system as a whole, of how the educational literature is indexed for the database, and of how the Thesaurus fits into the overall information dissemination process.

Throughout this process, ERIC is committed to high quality performance standards while serving the entire spectrum of the educational community. Close contact and interaction with users in the field is of prime importance to ERIC. In this sense, ERIC is more than a database (or a thesaurus); it is an active network of dedicated professionals, responding to and anticipating the information needs of both the scholar and the practitioner in the broad field of education.