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ABSTRACT

The guide provides a quick reference to the database, services, and additional resources of the ERIC System that may be of use in adult English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL) literacy work. It first explains the role of the National Clearinghouse for ESL Literacy Education, then describes the ERIC database and the kinds of adult ESL literacy materials contained in it, outlines a strategy for planning a database search, lists common descriptors used in the database for adult ESL concepts, and lists points of access to the ERIC system, including electronic mail and World Wide Web addresses, print resources, services for obtaining print copies of materials, and ACCESS ERIC, the agency that coordinates the ERIC system's outreach, dissemination, and marketing functions and provides general reference and referral services. (MSE) (Adjunct ERIC Clearinghouse on Literacy Education)

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**NCLE**

fact sheet

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**Adult****ESL****Literacy****Resources****System****ERIC****in the**

prepared by MaryAnn Cunningham Florez

The Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) system is a nationwide information network of clearinghouses coordinated by the U.S. Department of Education's National Library of Education. It provides information and materials about education topics to educators, parents, and the public.

The National Clearinghouse for ESL Literacy Education (NCLE) is an adjunct clearinghouse within this system. NCLE provides information, resources, and referrals on teaching English as a second language to adults. Contact NCLE or visit its web site for a list of publications and services.

#### **National Clearinghouse for ESL Literacy Education (NCLE)**

4646 40th Street, NW

Washington, DC 20016-1859

Tel: 202/362-0700, x200 Fax: 202/362-3740

E-mail: [ncle@cal.org](mailto:ncle@cal.org)

World Wide Web: <http://www.cal.org/ncle>

### **ERIC Database and Adult ESL Literacy Materials**

At the center of the ERIC system is the ERIC database. The world's largest education database, it contains over 950,000 bibliographic records and full-text documents related to education, including such materials as conference proceedings, research reports, and curriculum guides—many on topics in adult ESL literacy and instruction.

The database can be searched any number of ways, through various interfaces. You can search it at libraries and other educational institutions, on-line via CD-ROMs, or via on-line public access catalogs. You can also access the database via the Internet (See "ERIC on the World Wide Web" below). Keep in mind that different search mechanisms will have different features and limitations, such as the extent of the database available for searching or the variety of criteria to be used for searching. These differences will greatly affect the success of your search, whether you are new to searching the ERIC database, or you are an experienced user desiring a highly specific search.

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## Planning a Search Strategy

**Define** the topic in your own words.

*I want to locate curriculum units on citizenship for adults learning English as a second language.*

**Divide** the topic into its major components. These components will generally be the key words or concepts that you will use to construct your search.

*citizenship, adults, ESL, curricula*

**Use** the *Thesaurus of ERIC Descriptors* to locate subject descriptors that best represent the components of your topic. The *Thesaurus of ERIC Descriptors* lists all the terms used by the ERIC system to describe and index each of the abstracts of the documents and journals in the database. The search interfaces do not require use of ERIC descriptors only. Some interfaces provide pull-down menu choices for the field to be searched (author, title words, journal name, etc.) Use of ERIC descriptors may simply help refine your search and accurately target each step in the search process.

*Relevant ERIC descriptors: citizenship education, adult, education, adult programs, English (Second Language), limited English speaking, non English speaking, curriculum guides*

**Combine** your components in a search strategy to extract the documents that you need. All search interfaces for the ERIC database are based on Boolean logic. Boolean logic allows you to combine multiple concepts in a way that will retrieve a specific set of documents from the database. It employs three primary operator terms that enable you to define the way in which the terms or concepts are combined: "and", "or", and "not." Using "and" to join your terms ("adult education *and* English as a Second Language *and* reading skills") will result in a set of documents in which each individual document contains all the terms. Using "or" to join your terms ("adult education *or* English as a Second Language *or* reading skills") will result in a set of documents in which each document contains at least one of the terms, but not necessarily all. In general, using "and" restricts the results and using "or" broadens them. Using "not" eliminates terms or concepts you specifically don't want included.

*citizenship education **and** adult education **or** adult programs **and** English (Second Language) **or** limited English speaking **or** non English speaking **and** curriculum guides **not** secondary education*

**Refine** your search, if necessary. Too many documents in your results? You can also limit the search by specifying a publication type such as research report or curriculum guide, narrowing the dates of publication, or reducing the descriptors that you use. Too few documents? Add more descriptors or descriptive terms for each concept in your topic.

*citizenship education **and** adult education **or** adult programs **and** English (Second Language) **or** limited English speaking **or** non English speaking **and** curriculum guides **or** instruction **or** curriculum development **not** secondary education*

Following are some of the most common descriptors used when searching for materials about adult ESL literacy and instruction. These terms can be combined and used with other topic terms to expand or limit your search to materials relevant to adult ESL literacy instruction. They are not an exhaustive list of descriptors, but they can get you started in your search for ERIC documents about adult ESL.

#### **Common Adult ESL Descriptors for Concepts:**

adult basic education  
adult education  
adult literacy  
adult programs  
literacy education  
migrant adult education  
adult learning

English (second language)  
limited English speaking  
non English speaking  
second language instruction  
second language learning  
vocational English (second language)

#### **Related Descriptors:**

assessment  
evaluation methods  
curriculum guides  
program evaluation  
professional development  
workplace literacy

When you have extracted the documents that you want, you will be provided with an abstract for each document. This abstract will contain reference information about the document (title, author, sponsor, publication data, ordering information, length, etc.), a brief description of the document's contents, and a list of the ERIC descriptors assigned to it. You can use this abstract to decide if you want to view the document in its full-text version.

## **Quick References for Accessing ERIC**

### **ERIC via E-Mail**

AskERIC e-mail question and answer service: [askeric@ericir.syr.edu](mailto:askeric@ericir.syr.edu)

*Send a message requesting education information to AskERIC and receive an individualized response with ERIC database searches, ERIC digests, and Internet resources within 48 hours*

### **ERIC on the World Wide Web**

ERIC: <http://www.aspensys.com/eric/>

*The starting point for information on and links to the ERIC system on the World Wide Web has links to all clearinghouses and other components of ERIC.*

ERIC Clearinghouse for Adult, Career, and Vocational Education: <http://ericacve.org/>

*The clearinghouse devoted to general adult education (not specifically adult ESL education)*

ERIC Clearinghouse on Languages and Linguistics: <http://www.cal.org/ericcl/>

*The clearinghouse devoted to languages, language learning, and linguistics (including ESL)*

ERIC digests: [http://www.ed.gov/databases/ERIC\\_Digests/index/](http://www.ed.gov/databases/ERIC_Digests/index/)

*a searchable, full-text collection of over 1,800 ERIC digests added to the database since 1992*

Search ERIC options: <http://ericae.net/search.htm>

*links to various search interface options via the ERIC Clearinghouse for Assessment & Evaluation*

ERIC Document Reproduction Service (EDRS): <http://edrs.com>

*search for and order full-text copies of documents in paper, microfiche, or electronic formats*

Directory of ERIC Resource Collection: <http://ericae.net/derc.htm>

*a list of over 1000 organizations offering access to the ERIC collection, usually in microfiche*

## **ERIC in Print**

All About ERIC - free copies available from ACCESS ERIC or any ERIC component  
*brochure describing various aspects of ERIC, including searching the database*

Resources in Education (RIE) - available from Government Printing Office at (202)512-1800  
*monthly announcement of current education-related documents (ED numbers)*

Current Index to Journals in Education (CIJE) - available from Oryx Press at 800-279-ORYX  
*monthly announcement of current education-related journal articles (EJ numbers)*

Directory of ERIC Resource Collections - free copies available from any ERIC component  
*list of over 1000 organizations offering access to the ERIC collection, usually in microfiche*

Thesaurus of ERIC Descriptors - available from Oryx Press at 800-279-ORYX  
*list of descriptive terms used by ERIC to index and search documents in its database*

## **Copies of ERIC Documents or Journal Articles**

Citations in ERIC represent both documents (indicated by an ED prefix to their identification number) and journal articles (indicated by an EJ prefix to their identification number).

Copies of full-text ERIC documents (citations with ED numbers) can be purchased through:

ERIC Document Reproduction Service (EDRS)

7420 Fullerton Road, Suite 110

Springfield, VA 22153-2852

Tel: 800-443-3742 or 703/440-1400

Fax: 703/440-1408

E-mail: [service@edrs.com](mailto:service@edrs.com)

WWW: <http://www.edrs.com>

Copies of journal articles (citations with EJ numbers) can be obtained from the journal's publisher or borrowed from a subscriber to the journal, or purchased from reproduction services such as:

The UnCover Company

3801 East Florida Avenue, #200

Denver, CO 80210

Tel: 800-787-7979 or 303/758-3030

E-mail: [uncover@carl.org](mailto:uncover@carl.org)

WWW: <http://uncweb.carl.org/>

UMI Information Store

500 Sansome Street, Suite 400

San Francisco, CA 94111

Tel: 800-248-0360 or 415/433-5500

E-mail: [orders@infostore.com](mailto:orders@infostore.com)

WWW: <http://www.umi.com/infostore>

## **ACCESS ERIC**

ACCESS ERIC coordinates ERIC's outreach, dissemination, and marketing, providing general reference and referral services.

1600 Research Boulevard, 5F

Rockville, MD 20850-3172

Tel: 800-538-3742 or 301/251-5789

Fax: 301/309-2084

E-mail: [acceric@inet.ed.gov](mailto:acceric@inet.ed.gov)