Searching In CINAHL Transcript

This tutorial will show you how to effectively search CINAHL to find articles from nursing and allied health journals. CINAHL stands for Cumulative Index of Nursing and Allied Health Literature. We are looking at the advanced search page of CINAHL, which is the default page when you click into the database. Although databases like CINAHL can get you more reliable results than Google, they are not as intuitive regarding keyword searches. The database will search for exactly what you type in, it doesn’t notice when you’ve made a spelling error and suggest what you might have meant. CINAHL Headings are a controlled vocabulary that are assigned to content to make it more uniform and easier to find. By starting a search with CINAHL headings you can be sure that you are using the same language that the database uses to describe the same concept. Let’s say we are looking for journal articles about mental health and the elderly. We might not be sure whether articles on this topic are assigned the term “elderly” or older adults or aged. To find the appropriate term, we’ll click on CINAHL Headings up at the top of the page, type in our keyword and hit search. You can see right at the top of the list that the database says to use Aged to refer to this population. If we scroll down, we will see Aged in the list of relevant topics. We can click the check box next to Aged and it will be added to our search. We can then select “Browse Additional Terms” to continue adding concepts to our search. It will retain our selected search terms. Let’s add mental health, since we want articles about the mental health of the aged. It looks like Mental Health is a term used by the database. If we click on Mental Health we will be able to see the term in a hierarchical view with similar concepts. We can scroll through these to determine which will be the most relevant to our search. This is useful to look at because we can look at other concepts that might be useful. The higher up a concept is on the tree, the broader it is, so if I checked Psychological Processes and Principles, it would search everything under that concept. For this example, I will just stick with Mental Health. You will see the database saved our search, note that the default is set to combine search terms with OR. We want to change that to AND because we want articles that discuss all of these concepts together. Let’s hit “Search Database.” Okay, so now that we are in the results page I want to point out a few ways you can narrow down your options to get the most relevant resources. First, you can change the publication date to a certain date range. This is especially useful when you want recent information
on a topic, which is often crucial in the health professions. Let’s take the slider all the way up to 2012 to see material that was published in the past 5 years. Next we can limit to certain source types, like academic journals, and also things like language and geography. We’ll click on academic journals to make sure we only get material that was published in a scholarly source. You can also change how the results are displayed by clicking on Relevance and changing it to your preference, like Date Newest. You can click on the title of an article to view more information. You will be able to see things like author affiliation, major subjects, and read the abstract, which can help you determine whether or not this article will be of use to you without having to read the whole thing. You can view the full text by clicking on the PDF Full Text icon to the left. If you would like to save or cite this article, there are some tools on the right side of the page that can help you do so. You can print, email the article to yourself, cite it, you’ll see APA is right near the top, and you can also save the URL by clicking on the Permalink. One thing to note about the citing feature is that you need to check the citation before you hand in your paper. Although the database does a pretty good job of grabbing all the right information, sometimes it will make mistakes. We can head back to our results list and continue to look through the results. Remember that searching is process that takes time and the willingness to try different combinations of keywords to get the right source for you. As always, if you need more help with your research, your librarians are here to help. Happy searching!