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Moving Through the Research Process

You will want to approach any search that you embark on as a series of iterative steps.

Step 1: Identify & focus your topic.

1. Write down your broad topic.
2. List some things you would like to research related to your topic.
3. Draft an opening research question.

For help with this, try [Mind Mapping Your Topic](#).



Step2: Select a starting database.

See our [A-Z list of research databases](#).

Step 3: Launch your reference manager and your annotation tool (if using).

See [Citation Management Tools](#) for help choosing a reference manager. Set up [Hypothesis](#) if you would like to use an annotation tool.

Step 4: Identify keywords & construct search strings.

Keyword	Synonyms

Combine your keywords into a “search string” to search the databases. Use your main keywords with “AND” or “OR” to narrow or expand your search.

Setting up a means of tracking your searches – nothing fancy – just the database and what the search was - you’ll want to track these so that you don’t inadvertently repeat searches.

Search string	Database used

Step 5: Scan the first set of results.

- Look at titles and publication dates to decide which articles you want to look at in depth.
- Select an article and begin the skimming and scanning process.

- If the list has too many **irrelevant results**, consider selecting different keywords and revising your search.
- If the list has **too many results**, consider setting date limiters or narrowing your results by searching phrases instead of keywords.
- If the list has **too few results**, consider selecting different keywords.

Step 6: Dive into the first set of results.

Identify additional keywords by scanning the abstract and intro. Also look at the subjects or descriptors that are assigned to the article.

Digital Literacy Learning in Higher Education through Digital Storytelling Approach

Chan, Banny S. K.; Churchill, Daniel; Chiu, Thomas K. F.

Journal of International Education Research, v13 n1 p1-16 Jun 2017

It is necessary to develop digital literacy skills with which students can communicate and express their ideas effectively using digital media. The educational sectors around the world are beginning to incorporate digital literacy into the curriculum. Digital storytelling, one of the possible classroom activities, is an approach which may help engage and motivate students to learn digital literacy skills. To investigate this approach, the present small-scale study employs the methods including interviewing and analysing the artefacts of three students selected from a purposive sample on a multimedia course. The findings indicate that the three students have improved in terms of three aspects of digital literacy skills, namely, digital competence, digital usage and digital transformation regardless of their prior knowledge and levels of digital literacy.

Descriptors: [Story Telling](#), [Technological Literacy](#), [Prior Learning](#), [Class Activities](#), [Student Motivation](#), [Interviews](#), [Student Attitudes](#), [Teaching Methods](#), [Multimedia Instruction](#), [Higher Education](#), [Learner Engagement](#), [Skill Development](#), [Video Technology](#), [Films](#), [College Students](#), [Case Studies](#), [Qualitative Research](#), [Business Administration Education](#), [Journalism Education](#), [Community Colleges](#), [Foreign Countries](#)

Clute Institute, 6901 South Pierce Street Suite 239, Littleton, CO 80128. Tel: 303-904-4750; Fax: 303-978-0413; e-mail: Staff@CluteInstitute.com; Web site: <http://www.cluteinstitute.com>

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Subjects

Additional keywords

Work through your list and save the articles that you want to read more thoroughly to your reference manager and then prepare to do another search.

Step 7: Modify your search approach based on what your initial search produces.

Try another search using new keywords, or changing dates, or trying different search phrases. Follow the process that you did for your initial search.

Step 8: Conduct a thorough search and move your search forward.

- Practice citation chaining. This allows you to see how ideas evolve over time. By looking at “works cited” pages, you can start to trace where ideas began, and by looking at the citing articles you can see where and how ideas are evolving.
- Look at works-cited pages and select articles that you want to engage with further. Locate these articles by pasting the article title into the UA Library search box.
- Paste the article title into Google Scholar and take a look at the articles that have cited it since it was published.

Step 9: Identify patterns in the research and increase your focus.

As you conduct database searches on your research topic, you are likely to see specific articles, journals, and authors show up repeatedly.

These patterns are a cue that you should look for research related to your topic by examining the articles that are being cited and by searching the journals where the research is being published.

You should also conduct searches for specific authors that are working in your field of research.

Additional articles, journals, and authors

Step 10: Write and synthesize.

Remember to avoid unintentional confirmation bias in your research by taking time to **engage with all perspectives related to a particular issue**. This is once step in ensuring that you are conducting a comprehensive search.

Step 11: Cite your resources.

Use your [citation manager](#) to keep track of your citations.