

Tutorial 9 Transcript - Research demonstration

(Part 2 Finding books)

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Now, previously we had a look at accessing broad, general information on our desired topic via the information sources listed in the pyramid's base there, notably the encyclopedia Credoreference. What I'd like to do now is move up to the second tier on that pyramid and demonstrate how to locate books relevant to our assignment topic.

Firstly though, let's just remind ourselves of our assignment topic. Which was: The ideal of human rights is not universal. And we need to discuss that.

Okay, so what I'm going to do is go to the library catalogue. And you'll recall from a previous module in this series that we were looking for a known book, and there were two avenues in which we can use the library homepage to search for a book. So we've got the search engine Summon up the top, and we've got the library catalogue down here. I have a preference toward the library catalogue, so I'm going to demonstrate the keyword search today.

Instead of demonstrating the basic keyword search though, I'm going to have a look at the advanced keyword search. So it's prompting me to enter my keywords, which I've removed from my assignment question. So I'm going to stick with my very basic keywords. I'm going to put in: Human rights and Universal. So keyword there: Human right; the AND operator; Universal. So we're going to click on search there.

And you'll see there that it returns one-hundred-and-thirty-six results. And just from the first two results there, they're looking pretty good for what I'm chasing. One-hundred-and-thirty-six is a lot though; I'd prefer fewer results. So I'd like to narrow my search. So what I'm going to do is return to my search screen, and look for a way to narrow my search. Now one way you can do that is I'm going to ask the library catalogue to only return those books where the terms Human rights and Universal appear in the title of the book. So I'm going to change both of those to title, and then run the search again.

This time I get twenty-two results. So that's much fewer than the one-hundred-and-thirty-six we had before; so that's a nice— a bit more of a manageable size. Now I like the look of that second one there: Universal human rights in theory and practice. And if I click on the plus sign there, of course I can find information about the book: the two copies; where they're located; and the call number that will allow me to find the book.

But what I want to show you: when you find one book – this is a bit of a trick here for the library catalogue – when you find one book, you can find others like it very easily. So, I'm going to click on the title of the book, and it tells me a little bit about the book, but the important stuff here is down here in the Subjects.

So whenever a book comes into the library it gets tagged with particular subjects. And you can see that they're hyperlinked. So we've got: civil rights and human rights and cultural relativism. And if I

click on any one of these subjects, it will take me to all those books in the library catalogue that have been tagged with that particular heading. I'm particular interested in this last heading here, because that wasn't something that we sort of came up with in our assessment of the question when we were pulling out keywords. And I've had a look in a dictionary and looked up this word: cultural relativism – don't underestimate the value of a dictionary at university – and basically it's the view that all beliefs, customs and ethics are relative to the individual within his own, or her own, social context – so right and wrong are culture specific. And this is pretty much what we're after. We want to know whether human rights are a universal thing or whether it's a very narrow, individual thing. So, cultural relativism becomes another keyword that we have from our question.

So what I'm going to do is just click on cultural relativism, and it will take me to all those books in the library that have been tagged with that – so there are seventy-six in all. And we can go through those. So that's essentially how you can search the library catalogue; very basic introduction. By putting in your keywords, finding one book that is useful or relevant to your assignment topic, and then having a look at the subjects that have been assigned to that and then launching off them. And that's the basics of the library catalogue.