Name: _________________________________________________________________________________

PSYC 3350 – Social Psychology – Dr. Scuderi
Search Preparation Worksheet
Created by John Siegel, MLS, AHIP – Associate Professor of Library Science

TIP: Be sure to review the General “Tips and Tricks” for Searching on the back side/second page of this handout BEFORE you complete this worksheet.

1. Write your research question in the space below:

   ______________________________________________________________________________________

   ______________________________________________________________________________________

2. From your research question above, write the major concepts (either single words or short phrases) below.

   Major concept #1: ______________________________________________________________________

   Major concept #2: ______________________________________________________________________

   Major concept #3 (if applicable): ______________________________________________________________________

   Major concept #4 (if applicable): ______________________________________________________________________

3. For each of your major concepts, write several synonyms/alternate terms that might be useful for searching. This is a beginning list – you may add to it later.
   a. HINT: Consider using Wikipedia (www.wikipedia.org) and Psychology Wiki (psychology.wikia.com) to come up with synonyms/alternate terms.

   Synonyms for major concept #1:
   ______________________________________________________________________________________

   ______________________________________________________________________________________

   Synonyms for major concept #2:
   ______________________________________________________________________________________

   ______________________________________________________________________________________

   Synonyms for major concept #3 (if applicable):
   ______________________________________________________________________________________

   ______________________________________________________________________________________

   Synonyms for major concept #4 (if applicable):
   ______________________________________________________________________________________

   ______________________________________________________________________________________

*SEARCH PREPARATION WORKSHEET CONTINUES ON NEXT PAGE*
4. Using your major concepts and synonyms, write several search statements that you will use to search for research resources.

a. ________________ AND ________________ AND ________________ AND ________________
   Major concept #1       Major concept #2       Major concept #3       Major concept #4
   (if applies)          (if applies)

b. __________________ AND __________________ AND __________________ AND __________________
   Synonym for Major concept #1       Synonym for Major concept #2       Synonym for Major concept #3       Synonym for Major concept #4
   (if applies)          (if applies)

c. Another search I may try (HINT: Mix and match your major concepts and synonyms):
   ________________ AND ________________ AND ________________ AND ________________
   (if applies)          (if applies)

   Key Points:
   ➔ Keep in mind that the database(s) search every word that you enter. The more terms you use, the fewer articles you will find.
      o Avoid entering your entire question or part of your question (word for word) as your search. In the example above, you would not want to search for ‘Does extraversion influence attraction in dating’ or ‘attraction in dating.’
   ➔ Focus on major concepts, which are single words or short phrases. Short phrases are usually 2-3 words.
      o Leave off words that do not add meaning, such as a, an, in, the.
      o Leave off words that are implied, such as effect, influence, and more.
   ➔ Remember that databases only search the identifying information of an article and the abstract (short description/summary), not the entire article, so you have to use synonyms/alternate terms.
      o In the example above, a synonym for dating is relationships or mate selection.
   ➔ You often have to think broader or narrower.
      o In the example above, the research question mentions dating. If you are finding too few articles, you need to think broader. Thinking more broadly, extraversion deals with personality. You might want to search personality. There may be articles that discuss extraversion in the article.
      o If you find too many articles, you need to narrow your search. Rather than dating, you might use men or women to focus on a specific sex.

General “Tips and Tricks” for Searching

• When searching, keeping it simple and taking time to think about your search terms will give you better results!

EXAMPLE:

Research Question: Does extraversion influence attraction in dating?

Major concept #1: extraversion  Major concept #2: attraction  Major concept #3: dating

Search statement: extraversion AND attraction AND dating

Synonyms: gregarious [from Wikipedia], talkative [from Wikipedia], sociable [from Psychology Wiki], men, women, relationships, mate selection [from Wikipedia]

Other search statements: extraversion AND attraction AND relationships
gregarious AND attraction AND mate selection