When preparing to search for articles or instruments, which are both part of the Advanced Research Project (ARP) and Dissertation process, finding appropriate articles and selecting and instrument can get tricky. This is why today our focus will be on three databases (PsycTests, HAPI – Health and PsychoSocial Instruments, and ProQuest Dissertations and Theses), which will be used in the ARP and Dissertations part of your degree.

Before jumping into the features of the database and how to locate them, however, let me briefly explain the importance and wonderfulness of the Site Map. If a vague notion about a book, article, program, service, etc provided by the library sticks in your mind but the actual location remains murky, Site Map, my friend, is the best place to go. Things are arranged by frequently used topic categories (About the Library, Library Books and Journals, etc), E-Book Databases, Databases listed in Alphabetical Order. When in doubt, explore the Site Map and see if the “I think I remember this but I cannot remember where I found it” feeling emerges.

Now onto the various Access Points we make available for getting to these Databases:

Database page of the library website (www.atsu.edu/atsmlib/databases) – Right Hand Side
Site Map (Index) of the Library website (www.atsu.edu/atsmlib/siteindex)

Library-CGHS Program Page (guides.atsu.edu/library-cghs)
ProQuest Dissertations and Theses

Access to dissertations published by DHED students and students from other universities as well. This is the database to consult, when an idea for your dissertation or ARP is sprouting, but the viability or uniqueness is in question.

Search Subject Areas – Of primary interest/importance for most DHED, DHA, and ARP students will be the Health & Medicine field. It is perfectly fine to explore these other categories as well, but random topics are likely to appear.

Search Databases – Proceed directly without question to ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global: Health & Medicine! The e-books might be interesting to browse, when time allows, but for ARPs and Dissertations articles are the focus!

Start Searching – ProQuest reminds me of a slinky. Yep – it bounces up and down and then search is clicked and lots of articles appear or no articles appear. In between is just not something this database gets. For Proquest, the trick is to really focus on limits. These are going to be on the left hand side of the page. Once more, focusing on the subjects ProQuest recommends rather than those we think are appropriate could be useful.

HAPI: Health and PsychoSocial Instruments Database

Instruments are a key component and a required part of an ARP or Dissertation. Now – this is when modification and out-of-the box thinking are necessary! Please do not expect to find a carbon copy of the exact instrument needed for your project. This is highly unlikely. What makes HAPI unique and suitable for most projects, though, is that it combines both health and psychology components rather than focusing on just one.

PsycTests

For psychology focused projects or papers, this is ideal. DSM IV, etc are right here. If seeking a paper or instrument that provides a broader perspective, this is not for you. It might, if you have some psychological components to your project, be useful to see what is available.

Index Feature

Both PsycTests and HAPI have an index feature. If you are looking for terms in either database and you are struggling to find relevant documents, the index might give you some good ideas of what words or terms to use. What makes the index for these database different from the subject headings in PubMed or CINAHL, for instance, is that you can search individual “groups.”

Completeness

Judging how much to search, how long to search, and when to stop searching requires a few components. Namely – the requirements (journal, instructor) and familiarity with the subject are probably the top two.
Requirements, the sooner you get these from the journal or instructor the better. These can help limit by, for instance (year, country, gender), the articles reviewed. Number of required articles or sources are another requirement. Generally speaking, have enough to solidly back-up your point. This is not something, initially, that will make sense, which is why open communication is essential—particularly for those early assignments.

Familiarity with the topic is both a good and bad thing. Familiarity allows for a good idea regarding completeness (new ideas, old ideas, trending ideas) regarding a topic. It can also not push the “stretch” component of projects. Right now, this might not appear to be an issue. During my graduate program, the “stretch” component sometimes led me to spend more time searching and delving into a topic than I otherwise might have, whereas my classmates put things together in a short time and focused on completion. For me, personally, the stretch component outweighs most other things, but finding a way to get the “stretch” while also completing the assignment in the timeframe is the trick.

Planning Ahead

This is not something to take lightly. It is something I still struggle to do, particularly when it comes to carving out time for projects that are interesting but might only benefit my personal development. What to do? Simple—map out those deadlines and start earlier than you can possibly imagine thinking is necessary. Then—when a tough spot/barrier appears, contact your instructor or me (if it is searching related) and I am happy to help.