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## Research Process

These pages offer an introduction to the research process at a very general level.

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# Brainstorming

The best way to pick a topic is to have plenty of time to think about it very early on. If you are in a dissertation track program, you will want to start thinking about potential topics as soon as your first course.

Begin thinking about the type of research you would like to do by asking yourself the questions below. Record topic ideas in a log or journal, making sure *not* to evaluate any ideas during the process. Remember, even seemingly silly ideas can lead you to relevant new topic areas and research questions. This process can be an invaluable way to recall ideas that you may forget as you progress through your program.

- What are your major interests within your discipline?
- What personal experiences have you had that were particularly significant or meaningful to you, as it relates to your discipline?
- What coursework did you take that you found most exciting?
- What theories and concepts are most interesting to you?
- Are there some ideas you have studied which you are curious about and would like to explore more?
- What are your career goals upon completion of your degree?
- What are the major issues or problems faced in your industry today?
- Have you read any interesting articles or books related to your discipline?

The next step is to start identifying keywords related to your potential topic ideas. Try to break down your topic or research question into 2-4 overall main ideas; these main ideas become simple keywords which “point the way” to research in that area. Similar to the Topic Ideas Journal, keep a keyword list when you are researching a topic.

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# Mind Maps

Credo Reference

Microsoft Word

Mind Meister

## Additional Websites

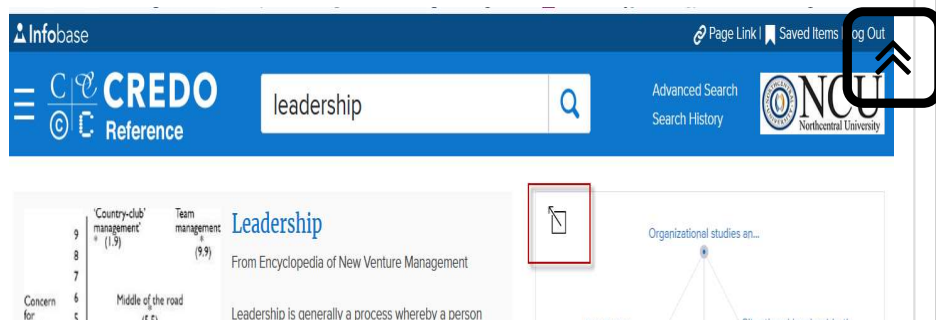
### • Credo Reference

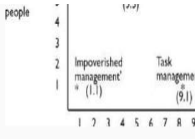
Provides access to a large number of encyclopedias, dictionaries, thesauri and other reference books. Subjects covered include art, biography, business, economics, education, history, literature, music, psychology, religion, and science and technology.

Mind maps, also called concept maps, are diagrams that demonstrate relationships between concepts, ideas or other pieces of information. Mind maps can be particularly helpful during the brainstorming process as they may lead to you important related topics and help you to expand your search.

The **Credo Reference** database provides a Mind Map tool that displays the connections between Credo Reference search results in a visual, interactive and easy-to-use format. Follow the instructions below to view Mind Maps in Credo Reference.

1. On the Library's home page, select A-Z Databases to navigate to Credo Reference.
2. On the Credo Reference home page, search for your topic keywords using the basic search box, or select from the Research Popular Topics displayed. Note that Mind Maps exist for only broad-level topics, so it is important to keep your search terms broad.
3. If a Mind Map exists for your topic, you will see it displayed on the right-hand side of the screen. Click on the **Expand Mind Map** button in the upper corner to open it up.





influences others to accomplish a set of goals or objectives within an organization. Leadership and authority can be confused with each other. Authority describes the assigned power one person has over another; however, having authority does not make...

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**Articles** **Images**

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**leadership**

From Collins Dictionary of Business

the process of influencing others to achieve certain goals. Effective leadership is often seen as the outcome of leadership qualities (traits) which some people

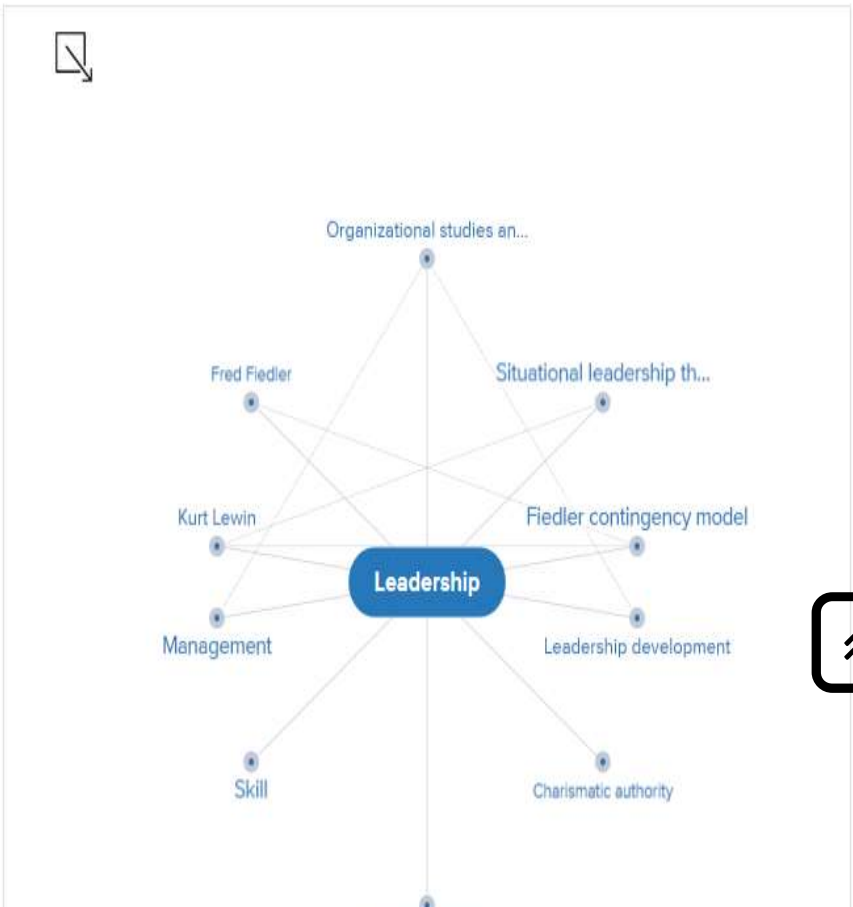


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[Business intelligence > Data warehouse](#)

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4. The map displays your search term at the center of the map and related in the surrounding ring. The surrounding concepts represent concepts that show up most frequently with the central concept, in Credo's content as a whole. The bigger the font size, the more frequently the concepts occur together. The panel on the right shows Credo reference articles related to the central concept.



Servant leadership

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5. Click on any term in the map to re-center the search around that node, with new words populating the map in new directions.



Business intelligence › Data warehouse › Leadership

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6. The terms that you've visited are saved in the Recent Mind Maps list at the bottom of the Mind Map.

Embed </> Export to PDF 

7. Click on any term to return to that view of the map.

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## Gale Academic OneFile Topic Finder

- **Gale Academic OneFile** 

A comprehensive database that currently contains more than 12,000 journals covering topics from Science, Technology and Medicine to the humanities, including Educators Reference Complete and 25+ specialization databases from Gale. Full-text available.

The Gale Academic OneFile Topic Finder is a tool designed to help you find new topics or keywords and discover new connections found in the top results. There are two ways to visualize below which words and subjects are found most often in the text of your search results.

To access the Topic Finder, click the link on the bottom of the Academic OneFile home page.



## Biology

Chemistry

## History

Marketing

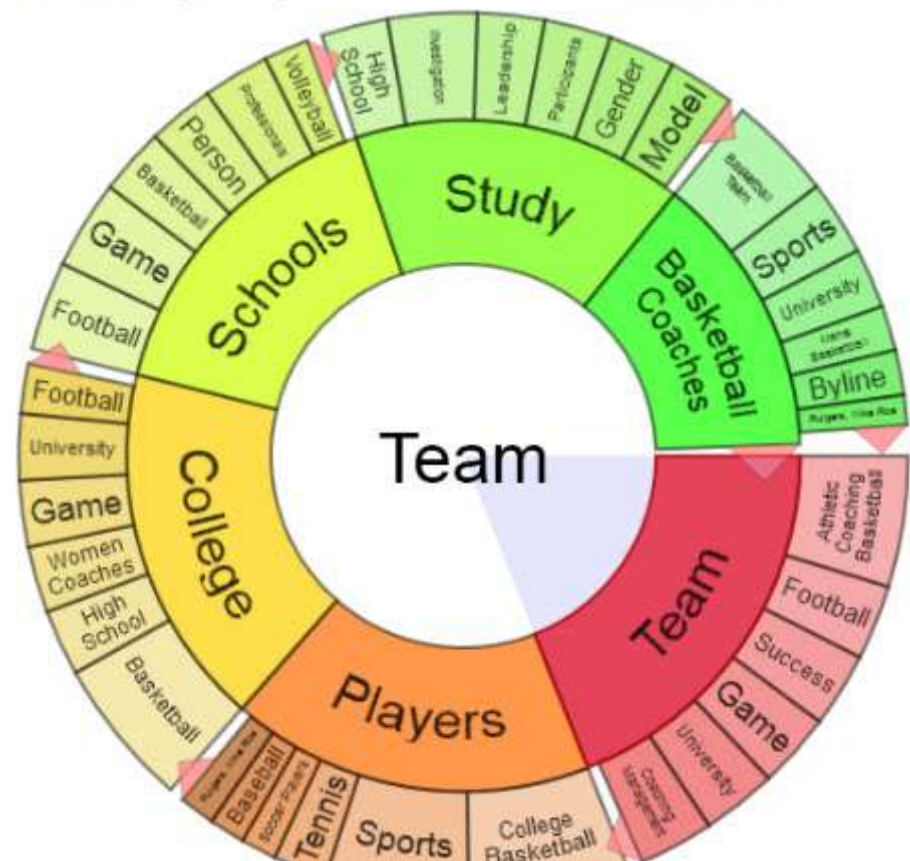
Use the Topic Finder to discover the context of your search term and uncover hidden connections.

athletic coaching

Search

There are two ways to visualize below which words and subjects are found most often in the text of your search results.

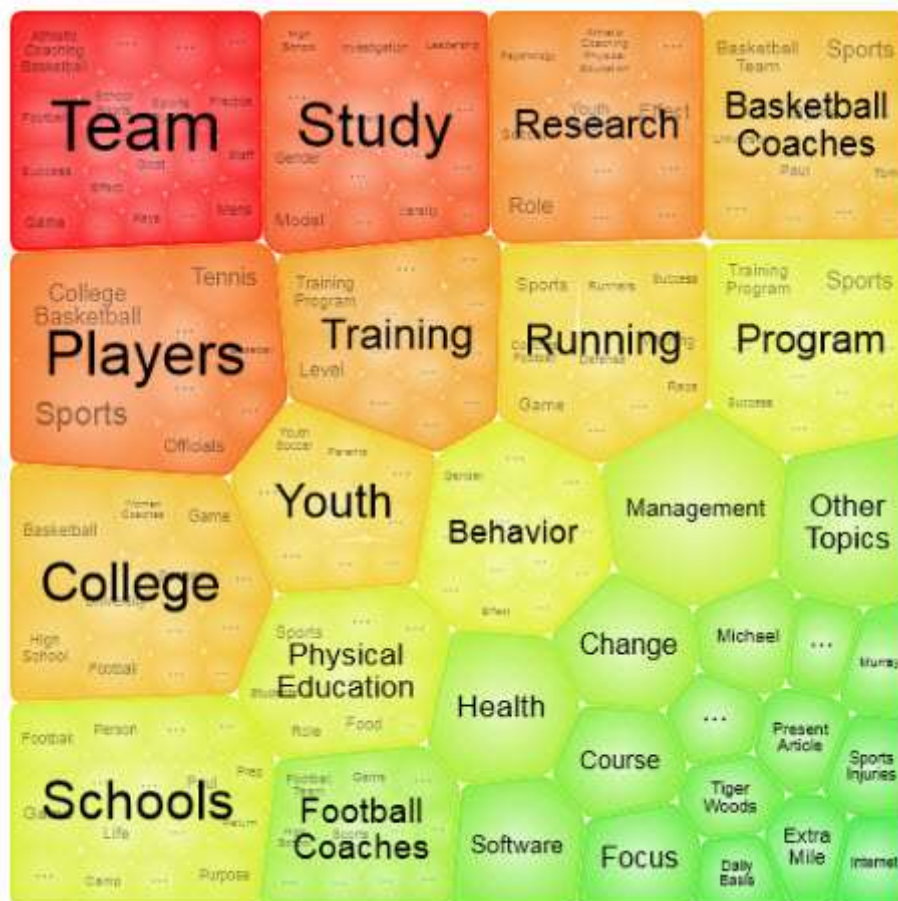
[Reset](#) [Help](#)



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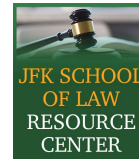
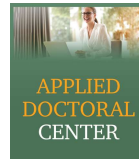
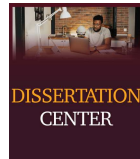
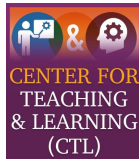
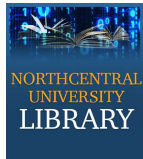






**Subjects:** Arts & Humanities, Business, Computing & Information Technology, Dissertation Resources, Education, Government & Criminal Justice, Health, Medicine & Nursing, Law, Library Services, Tools & Resources, Marriage & Family Science, Psychology & Social Work, Sociology & Diversity Studies

research, field codes, Google Scholar, literature review, measurements, organizing citations, peer-reviewed journals, popular sources, primary sources, research design, research methods, research topic, research\_process, scholarly sources, searching, secondary sources, statistics, tests, theoretical frameworks, theory



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