



**Chapter Council Presents  
Sharing Roundtables  
MLA Annual Meeting  
San Antonio, TX  
Monday, May 16, 2005**

## **Table 12A: Expert Searching**

**Facilitator:** helen-ann brown

**Recorder:** Barbara Henry

**Participants:** Jeanne M. Burke, Kathy Cable, Ross Ljungquist, Marlyse H. MacDonald, Joan Nashelsky, Barbara Benisch Sisolak

helen-ann brown reviewed the MLA Expert Searching Statement, seeking a clear definition of what or who an expert searcher is. The consensus of the table was that the Task Force document's language was too complicated.

The basic questions to be asked by a searcher are:

What do you really want? Be as specific as possible.

What are you going to do with it?

How much do you want?

How much can I expect to find?

Have you read anything lately on it?

Use PICO to help focus the question.

There is a continuum of searching – from a basic search with no subject knowledge to a complex search across multiple databases with deep subject knowledge. Part of being an expert is recognizing where you are on the continuum. Expert searching doesn't necessarily mean you search in an evidence-based way. Some topics are not applicable.

Questions arising in the discussion:

What kind of training do we need? Web-based interactive tutorials, mini-med schools, in-person classes. We need to learn advanced searching techniques – stay on top of how interfaces are changing.

It would be nice if vendors could teach us what they are adding to their databases and interfaces. Perhaps have classes at regional meetings. Vendors need to ask us what we'd like to see added or changed with their products.

What happened to the Gold Standard Search that used to be in the NLM Technical Bulletin?