In this video clip we will be searching for books, videos, eBooks, and more in SMSU’s library using MnPALS, the online catalog.

On the SMSU Library homepage, select the Books option to bring up the search box for the online catalog. Book results will also come up in the OneSearch option, but I’ll demonstrate directly from the Books search box.

The default is to search in All Fields which is the most frequent search. If you were looking for a specific title or an author, you could choose those options from the dropdown menu.

For my example I am going to use the search terms school assessment and will use the All Fields search option. When my results are returned, I can see there are 350 items that match my search. Note that results are returned in Relevance order. This means the item that most closely matched the search terms is put at the top of the results. Many times in the catalog, seeing the most recent item published is useful. To do that, change the Sort option to date descending. This would bring the newest items to the top.

As I look at the results screen I can see ways to narrow my search off to the right. I recommend looking through the topics to get ideas for other terms to use to narrow your results and/or to use in other searches. You can also limit by year of publication and narrow by format. Take note of all the different types of materials that are found in the catalog. This includes all the types of materials that are housed in the library and some internet resources, excluding articles; you will not find any articles in the MnPALS catalog. You will find periodical titles (so magazines and journals), but not the articles themselves.

I’m going to sort my results by date now and look for a recent book on this topic. If I wanted to find this book on the shelves, I would need to write down this call number and take note of which collection the item is in. I will also want to note if the item is available or not.

If you are an off-campus student and need to borrow materials, please see the Interlibrary Loan page for details about how materials can be mailed to you.

If I were to use the Collection filter on the right to look at only eBooks, I will see the location is SMSU Library E-books, I will see a call number, and I will see a link to Online Access. The verbiage may be slightly different for different resources, but you clicking on that will bring you to the full-text of the item. If you are off-campus, you will be prompted to login with your StarID and password.

If you have any questions about searching in MnPALS, please contact an SMSU Librarian.