Planning a Research Strategy &
Keeping a Record of the Process

Building a Library Search Strategy
In your research, start with the general and work toward the specific. Translate your topic into keywords and subject headings. Record what you found (and where you found it) so that you can refer back to this information as you continue your research. Remember to evaluate the information you collect: Is it scholarly, peer-reviewed or refereed material?

Topic Statement or Question: ________________________________________________________________

Identify Keywords or Main Concepts (drawn from above):

_____________________________________________________________________________________

List Synonyms (words having the same or nearly the same meaning):

_____________________________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________________________

Find Background Information:
List reference sources that you used (encyclopedia, dictionaries, almanacs, etc.):

_____________________________________________________________________________________

Use the Online Catalog (looking for books in WorldCat Local);
First, search with keywords. Connect the Keywords and Synonyms you identified above using Boolean operators AND, OR, NOT, (see handout, Boolean Operators Search Tips). From your results, select a promising title. Using the individual record, identify Subject Headings:

Subject: __________________________ Subject: __________________________

Subject: __________________________ Subject: __________________________

Book Title: __________________________

Book Title: __________________________

Book Title: __________________________

Use Databases for Journal (magazine) Articles:

Journal citation: __________________________ Database Used: __________________________

Journal citation: __________________________ Database Used: __________________________

Journal citation: __________________________ Database Used: __________________________