The library catalog is probably the best place to begin research for most assignments. The catalog is fairly easy to use, however, the tips below on creating effective searches will be helpful. Go to the library home page at http://academics.tctc.edu/lynx and click the first link under “Find Books”.

Here is the home page for the library catalog:

Note that the default type of search is Keyword.

There are also different ways to search:
- Author
- Title
- Subject
- Series
- Periodical title

Title and author searches are the easiest, since they generally give the smallest lists.

Click “details” to see more information.
Each record is divided into either two or three tabs. The first, “item information,” shows you if the item is available, the call number, and publication date. The middle tab may not be available for some older books. It contains various information such as summaries, tables of contents, book reviews, and sometimes an example chapter.

The third tab, “catalog record”, contains the important subject headings that tell you more specifically the topics included in the book.

**Search Strategies**

In any database, there are different methods of narrowing or expanding your search to obtain more or fewer results. Entering only one term that is very broad will yield a list of results that can be huge, while using search terms that are more specific and in only one field will give a results list that is considerably smaller than the first. For example, in the library’s catalog, a keyword search on the word management gets a results list of more than 4700 items.

There would be many false hits in this large list. It would include any book with the word “management” in the catalog record, such as those about the management of your emotions, financial management, etc.

But a subject search of the phrase organizational change drops the number of results down to 221. So, if you are doing research on only one aspect of a large topic, this is a good method for narrowing a list down to what is relevant. A keyword search retrieves any instance of the word anywhere in the catalog record, a subject search uses only the subject headings assigned to the title.

Use the subject headings assigned to a book that seems to be on target to find more items with those same subject headings. Then you can narrow your search further if needed.