Strategies to narrow topics

- Identify a population such as an age group, geographic location, or cultural group
- Specify a setting in which to conduct your study (private school, public school, rural, inner city, etc.)
- Consider a specific point of view (teacher, administrator, student, parent, etc.)
- Use limiting options in a database to help you identify ways to narrow down the search
- You can also get clues from the information you are finding - do you see similarities or connections between articles in your initial searches? What are some common themes that can lend you ideas?

Example

Reflective teaching in schools might become

Reflective teaching practices in public high schools
Strategies to broaden topics

- Take away one of the specific limiters in your topic
  
  iPad App usage in 4th grade math classrooms might become:
  
  App usage in middle school math classrooms, or even:
  
  App usage in middle school.

- Use the research

  Look at the suggested tags or keywords in the Abstract of a result you like – it may offer additional information to help you broaden your topic.

- Read the research

  Read through an article or two. The more you know about a subject the better able you will be to intelligently broaden the topic without losing focus or your intended purpose.

- Talk to professors, advisors, executive sponsor, classmates, or your librarian. A fresh set of eyes may help you see a way to broaden your topic.