**Developing Research Questions**

What is a research question?

* A research questions **focuses** the topic for the research. A research question should be **clear, concise**and **arguable**.
* A tightly focused research question creates a path through researching.  When research questions are specific, the student can write an **arguable research paper** rather than a report of information.

 Steps to take to write a research question:

1. Choose a general topic that is *interesting*  - the most difficult research takes place when the researcher is not invested in the topic.
2. Do some *preliminary research* – this is what Wikipedia and Google are for.  When the researcher wants to get a basic understanding of the topic, these are good avenues to start down, provided that the researcher knows these are not citable sources.
3. Consider your *audience* – mostly, you will be writing for someone who will evaluate you (a teacher) so take a formal tone in your research and writing.
4. Start asking *questions* - Taking into consideration all of the above, the researcher should start asking open-ended “how” and “why” questions about the general topic.

 Evaluate the research question:

* Is the question clear?  With so many research resources available, the question must be as clear as possible in order to be effective in directing the researcher.
* Is the question focused?  This can be the most difficult for the researcher. Questions should be specific enough to be well-covered.
* Is the question complex? Research questions should not be answerable with a simple “yes” or “no” or by easily-found facts.  They should, instead, require both research and analysis on the part of the writer.

Hypothesize: After developing a solid research question, the researcher should think about the next steps in the process. Where do you think you’ll find credible sources?  What argument are you hoping to make?

 Examples of **focused**, **complex**, and **clear** research questions:

**Topic**: Immigration

**Clear research question**: *How are immigrant groups responding to the current presidential elections?*

**Resource Action Project:** Develop an anti-immigrant photo exhibit to be displayed at your school or specific classes. Presentation/lesson to ICL.

**Topic:** Racial Inequalities

**Focused research question:** *How is the #Blacklivesmatter movement affecting the African American community?*

**Resource Action Project:** Organizes a “teach-in” about the #Blacklivesmatter to dispel myths and describe details of the movement. Presentation/lesson to ICL.

**Topic:** Homophobia in the US

**Arguable research question:** *What are common traits of homophobic behavior in America, and how can these behaviors be prevented?*

**Resource Action Project:** Creates a website that supports victims of homophobia through helpful resources, testimonials, inspirational stories, counseling serves, etc. Presentation/lesson to ICL.

**Topic:** Sexism

**Arguable research question**: What are the effects of gender socialization on domestic violence?

**Resource Action Project**: Creates a Public Service Announcement about gender socialization and posts it on Youtube. Presentation/lesson to ICL.

**Topic**: Media

**Focused research question**: *How does media bias affect the perception of transgendered people in society?*

**Resource Action Project:** Performs a TEDTalk-style presentation and discussion for a group of classes. Presentation/lesson to ICL.

**Bad Research Questions!**

Poor research questions are generally lower level questions.  Questions that begin with who, when, and where generally can be answered quickly and with little information.   When developing research questions, stay away from these types of questions because once they are answered, your research stops there.

**Research Questions Proposed**

Remember, research questions focus the topic for the research. A research question should be **clear, concise**and **arguable.**

Please list 3 research questions you are considering. Place questions in order of preferred ranking 1-3.

Question 1:

Preliminary search yielded adequate results.

Preliminary search did not yield adequate results.

Question 2:

Preliminary search yielded adequate results.

Preliminary search did not yield adequate results.

Question 3:

Preliminary search yielded adequate results.

Preliminary search did not yield adequate results.

**DUE: Thursday, March 10, 2016**