

Lesson Title

Selecting and Refining a Topic: Creating a focused research question

Lesson Outcomes

Students will...

- Identify resources for choosing a topic in a graphic organizer.
- Identify common research challenges like scope and nature of the topic in a shared Google doc.
- Create a research question and include it in the shared slide deck.
- Using the research question, the student will find three relevant articles.

ACRL Frame

Research as Inquiry

- Determine an appropriate scope of investigation
- Deal with complex research by breaking complex questions into simple ones, limiting the scope of investigations

Searching as Strategic Exploration

- Determine the initial scope of the task required to meet their information needs

Method

Workshop, flipped model

Intended Audience

First year students who are required to develop a topic for a research assignment.

[Note: especially relevant for students in ENG1020, 1021, 1030, etc.]

Timing

Students should have a topic in mind.

Time Required

75 min

Location

Virtual/Zoom classroom

Materials

- https://drive.google.com/file/d/1WLfPvdCAEGC_Aahd2SorxbF78iwq0Wg2/view?usp=sharing

NOTE: Make copy of this doc at beginning/before class in order for students to be able to fill it out and refer back to it later as a resource if needed

- https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfBbILdlaiK1iEP2_SXPIUjdQFcPFfKRslkfHMZW-e6UlgksA/viewform

Lesson Objective- Stated for Students

One of the most important steps in the research process is your choice of topic. Choosing a topic begins with deciding what **you are most passionate about**, and then narrowing down and refining your potential topic to reflect a specific research question. We will work together to identify and refine a topic, shaping it into a research question and using a variety of library resources and other tools.

Activity

Instructor opens the “[handout](#)” and shares screen with class

Instructor adds link to [handout](#) to chat for everyone to review as a class / or in the embedded library area under the “In-Class Activity” Tab

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1WLFpvdCAEGC_Aahd2SorxbF78iwq0Wg2/view?usp=sharing

- Lead discussion/model the process of having an idea/broad topic and narrowing it to a research question, thinking about underlying issues, possible solutions, etc.
- Break class into four groups, each group takes one “broad topic” and completes the row
- Come together as a class, maybe share out if time
- Individual work: now it's your turn to try this out on your own!
- Students open **Opposing Viewpoints** and explore the “Browse Issues” area: you don't have to be “married” to the topic/issue that you find but choose one that is interesting to you
- [Students work for five or ten minutes on their chosen issue- narrowing down the topic through the process: [Google Form](#)

Essential Questions [can ask these questions to students one on one or as a whole group]
[also can give them the topic/research question worksheet]

What is a topic?

What does it mean to refine or narrow your topic?

What is a research question? Why do we create research questions?

How is a concept map useful in crafting your research question?

How do you know which keywords to use in your search?

Guided Practice/Independent Practice/Check for Understanding

- [Google Form](#)

Reflection:

Did you have a refined topic coming into the class? What was your topic? (Didn't have one, General or Broad topic, super specific/refined topic) What were the steps you took to refine your topic? Do you have a refined topic? Do you have a research question?