Specifying Research Questions

A Writing Guide Presentation

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What is your research assignment?
Today’s Workshop:

1. The Initial Question/s
   [EXERCISE 1]

2. Initial Research Techniques
   * Broad Q to Specific Q*
   * Specifying Research Terms*
   * Initial Research Options*
   [EXERCISE 2]
INITIAL QUESTIONS

Make a list of answers to these questions and look for connections, mash-ups, overlaps.

EX1: TAKE 10 MINUTES TO DO THIS

What is the prompt? Or: What is the project?
- Is there a seed text?
- If yes, what is the role of the seed text (as described by your professor for UW P3)?

What lenses does the assignment imply?
- What is the class name/department?
- What are class themes?

What lenses do YOU bring?
- What are you interested in?
- What are you an expert in already?
Finding your final research question is a layered process!!
You get from 1 to 2 by going through a research process of elimination, confirmation and revision.

What are the umbrella terms and what do they contain?

Who would you be interested in hearing from? Disciplines?
### SPECIFYING SEARCH TERMS

Multiple ways of trying to capture an idea

Working with **Synonyms**

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#### Search Term Worksheet

**Search Question:** Write down the research question you have developed. (Example: What is the connection between smoking and depression among teenagers?)

**Major Concepts:** List as many as apply. (Example: smoking, depression, teenagers)

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**Search Question:** Write down the research question you have developed. Use the chart below to help you figure out some search terms.

**Major Concepts:** List as many as apply.
INITIAL RESEARCH

Where should I be looking?

What sources can be helpful in initial research?

EX 2: USE YOUR NEW TERMS AND TEST THEM.

- **Academic Research**: Library databases CLIO. [https://clio.columbia.edu/](https://clio.columbia.edu/)

- **Contemporary Culture Research**: public search engines

- **Visual/ Image Research**: public and academic image search

- **Qualitative and Personal Approaches**

- **Others?**
What are the **umbrella terms** and what do they contain?

Who would you be interested in hearing from. **Disciplines**?

Multiple ways of trying to capture a similar idea. Working with **Synonyms**.

Begin to research on a **variety of platforms**.

You get from broad to specific by discovering, eliminating, confirming and revising.
QUESTIONS?
Includes materials from...
