



# RESEARCH QUESTIONS

FEBRUARY 24, 2023



## LAB 2

Narrative	Mean Deflection	Highest Deflection	Lowest Deflection	Range
my male coworkers keep vomiting emotionally on me	5.921429	12.5	1.4	11.1
my coworker keeps telling me how to do my job	4.607143	9.1	0.9	8.2
my boss trash talks my coworker to me	4.521429	7.9	2.1	5.8
I've been overworked for months and my manager won't help	3.735714	10.6	1.2	9.4

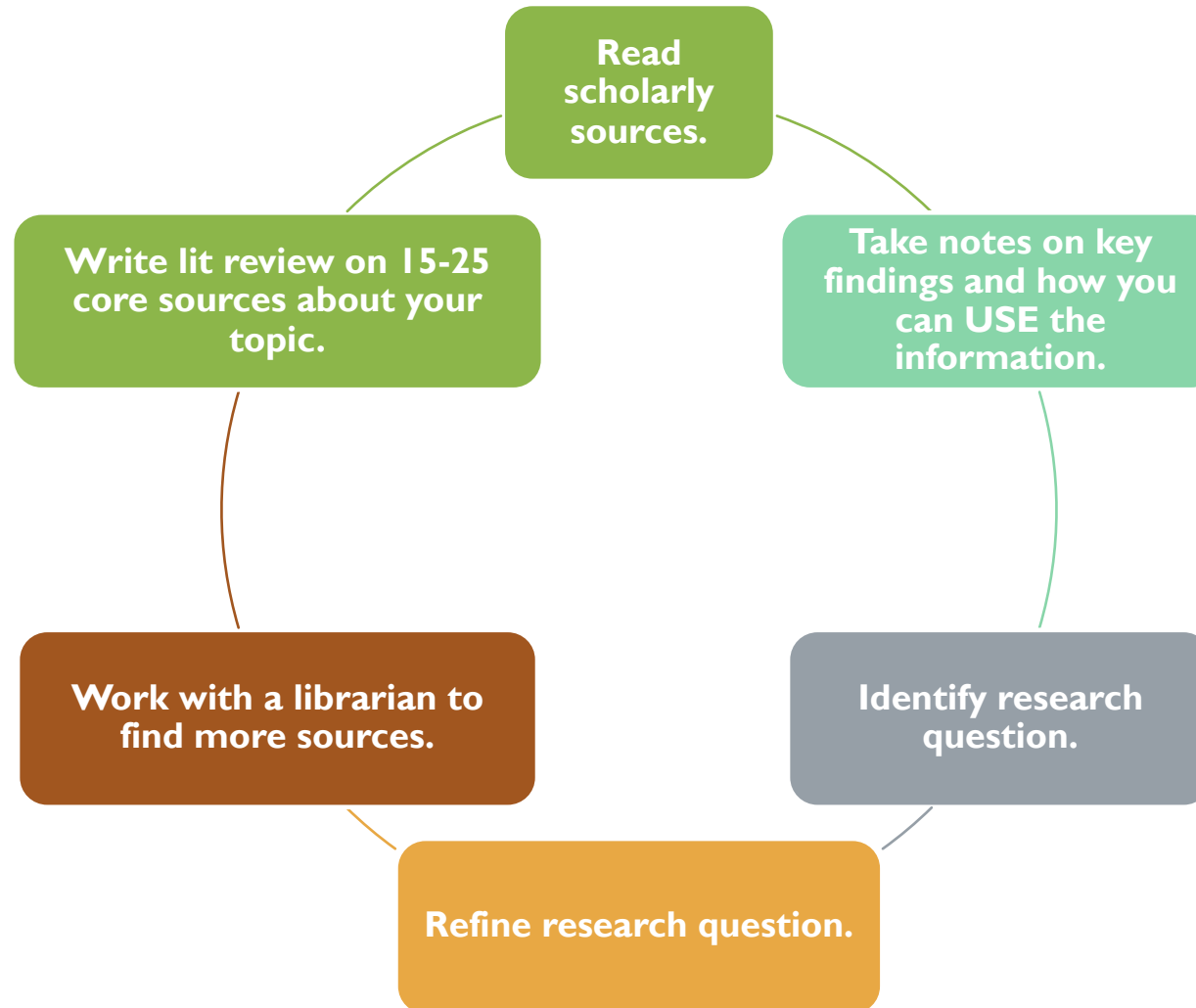
## LAB 2 - MY MALE COWORKERS KEEP VOMITING EMOTIONALLY ON ME

- Highest Deflection ABOs:
  - Overwhelmed employee cares for distressed employee
  - Helpless Data Entry Clerk Aid Emotional Data Entry Clerk
- Lowest Deflection ABOs:
  - Emotional Peer confide in Data Entry Clerk
  - Emotional Male seeks advice from female Co-worker

# WHERE DO RESEARCH IDEAS COME FROM?

- Everyday experiences that inspire our curiosity
- Conversations with classmates, instructors, family, friends
- Reading about current events and controversies
- Carefully reading scholarly sources

# RESEARCH IS AN ITERATIVE PROCESS, GOING BACK AND FORTH BETWEEN STEPS.



# ONE TECHNIQUE: FIND A PAPER YOU LOVE AND BUILD ON IT

- You will build your research on an existing line of research, contributing to the cumulative body of science.
- You can save time by borrowing effective methods rather than devising a research plan from scratch
- You have a concrete link to the scholarly literature you will review
  - Look at the article's references
  - Identify who has cited the research you are building on

## BUILD ON WHAT WE ALREADY KNOW

- Your research must connect to existing body of scholarship
- Find an interesting study and extend the work by:
  - Replicating the existing study
  - Vary the research setting
  - Choose a different case
  - Change the independent or dependent variables
  - Use a different method

# RESEARCH

“You want to find the question that is sufficiently easy that you might be able to answer it, and sufficiently hard that the answer is interesting. You spend a lot of time thinking and a lot of time floundering around.”

- Theoretical Physicist, Edward Witten





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# WHAT MAKES A RESEARCH QUESTION 'GOOD'?

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1. **Feasibility**: Can you start and finish an investigation of your research question with the resources that you can obtain and in the time that is available?
  2. **Social Importance**: Will an answer to your research question make a difference in the social world, even if that is only in terms of helping people understand a problem they consider important?
  3. **Scientific Relevance**: Does your research question help to resolve some contradictory research findings or a puzzling issue in social theory?

# FEATURES OF A GOOD RESEARCH QUESTION

- Applies to aggregates:
  - collections of people, groups, institutions, regions, or governments
- BAD: Why does NC Governor Cooper want to remove Confederate statues from state-controlled property?
- GOOD: What factors predict state legislators voting to remove Confederate monuments?

# FEATURES OF A GOOD RESEARCH QUESTION

- Examines empirically observable patterns
  - Empirical = data
- BAD: Why does my roommate hate her chemistry professor?
- GOOD: What teaching methods are most different between high and low-rated chemistry professors?

# FEATURES OF A GOOD RESEARCH QUESTION

- Generalizable beyond one unique instance to other people, places, times, or events
- BAD: Why did a nurse kill her patient in Texas?
- GOOD: What workplace factors make homicidal nurses more likely?

# OUR QUESTIONS SHOULD

- Go beyond yes/no questions
- Add to what we already know
- Study differences between groups, relationships, or time periods
- **Be able to be answered using ACT simulations**

# COMMON ISSUES WITH QUESTIONS

- Variables, but no question
  - Industry and occupational misconduct
- Too broad
  - What factors help low-income individuals obtain better-paying jobs?
- Values / 'should' questions:
  - Do we need to classify crimes as hate crimes?

# RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Topic

Focused Topic

Question

Significance

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Workplace harassment

Focused Topic

Question

Significance



## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Workplace harassment

Emotional consequences for  
victims of workplace harassment

Question

Significance

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

# Workplace harassment

Emotional consequences for  
victims of workplace harassment

How are occupational identities in different  
industries culturally expected to feel after  
experiencing harassment from a supervisor?

# Significance

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

# Workplace harassment

Emotional consequences for  
victims of workplace harassment

How are occupational identities in different  
industries culturally expected to feel after  
experiencing harassment from a supervisor?

understanding how responses  
to workplace harassment may  
differ

# RESEARCH QUESTION FORM

I am studying...	because I want to find out...	in order to better understand...
TOPIC	QUESTION	SIGNIFICANCE

## EXAMPLE FROM BOYLE & MCKINZIE

Topic

- Mechanisms of sexual assault labelling

Question

- How different strategies for labelling sexual assault events affect emotional and relational outcomes

Significance

- why many women who have experienced non-consensual sexual encounters do not label them as sexual assault

## EXAMPLE QUESTION

Topic

- Parenthood and occupations

Question

- Why is work/life balance more difficult for parents than non-parents?

Significance

- stress

# HOW CAN WE FIX IT?

Topic

- Parenthood and occupations

Question

- Why is work/life balance more difficult for parents than non-parents?

Significance

- stress

# LET'S WORKSHOP A FEW

Topic

Question

Significance



# ANSWERABLE WITH A SIMULATION

- How / Process Questions
- Abductive Research:
  - the research process starts with 'surprising facts' or 'puzzles' and the research process is devoted their explanation
- Model-building questions:
  - What happens if we take expected scenarios and change one thing -- 'play out' the consequences

# WAYS OF BRAINSTORMING QUESTIONS (BOOTH ET AL)

- **Think about the history of your topic**
  - How does it fit into a larger socio-historical context?
  - What is the history of the topic? How was the topic changed over time?
- Ask about the structure or composition of your topic
- Ask how the topic is categorized
- Turn positive questions into negative ones
- Ask “What if” and other speculative questions
- Ask questions that are suggested by your sources

# WAYS OF BRAINSTORMING QUESTIONS (BOOTH ET AL)

- Think about the history of your topic
- **Ask about the structure or composition of your topic**
  - How do the parts of your topic fit together as a system?
  - How does your topic function as part of society as a whole?
- Ask how the topic is categorized
- Turn positive questions into negative ones
- Ask “What if” and other speculative questions
- Ask questions that are suggested by your sources

# WAYS OF BRAINSTORMING QUESTIONS (BOOTH ET AL)

- Think about the history of your topic
- Ask about the structure or composition of your topic
- **Ask how the topic is categorized**
  - How can your topic be grouped into kinds?
  - How does your topic compare/contrast with others like it?
- Turn positive questions into negative ones
- Ask “What if” and other speculative questions
- Ask questions that are suggested by your sources

# WAYS OF BRAINSTORMING QUESTIONS (BOOTH ET AL)

- Think about the history of your topic
- Ask about the structure or composition of your topic
- Ask how the topic is categorized
- **Turn positive questions into negative ones**
  - Why has a larger pattern not happened in a subset of your population?
- Ask “What if” and other speculative questions
- Ask questions that are suggested by your sources

# WAYS OF BRAINSTORMING QUESTIONS (BOOTH ET AL)

- Think about the history of your topic
- Ask about the structure or composition of your topic
- Ask how the topic is categorized
- Turn positive questions into negative ones
- **Ask “What if” and other speculative questions**
  - How would things be different if your topic never existed, disappeared, or were put into a new context?
- Ask questions that are suggested by your sources

# WAYS OF BRAINSTORMING QUESTIONS (BOOTH ET AL)

- Think about the history of your topic
- Ask about the structure or composition of your topic
- Ask how the topic is categorized
- Turn positive questions into negative ones
- Ask “What if” and other speculative questions
- **Ask questions that are suggested by your sources**
  - Build on agreement through extension
  - Build through disagreement through challenging

# RESEARCH QUESTION ASSIGNMENT

- Due Friday March 3 to [em.k.maloney@duke.edu](mailto:em.k.maloney@duke.edu)