Research as Inquiry

UNHP 1100
ACRL Definition

• “Research is iterative and depends upon asking increasingly complex or new questions whose answers in turn develop additional questions or lines of inquiry in any field.”

-http://www.ala.org/acrl/standards/ilframework#inquiry
In other words

• Iterative: on-going and complex and often with different processes informing each other. Researchers are persistent and allow their findings to inform ongoing research.

• Asking increasingly complex questions: start with the answerable. Your research and findings may enable you to dig deeper after preliminary questions are answered.

• Researchers develop additional questions or lines of inquiry in response to what they learn / find. Often when one question is answered, another one presents itself.
Knowledge into Practice

- Ask questions!
- Discover unanswered questions or questions for which there are conflicting answers.
- Limit or focus the scope of your question appropriately. Remember that science moves in small steps.
- Determine which research methods to employ based on your question(s)
- Organize, evaluate, and synthesize data and information gathered from a variety of perspectives or approaches
- Scrutinize data for errors, omissions, inconsistencies, and unanswered questions.
- Recognize your limitations and seek input from experts
Asking Questions of Primary Sources

• Primary sources may prompt more questions than they answer.
  o Secondary sources may be required to contextualize the information presented in primary sources.

• When working with primary sources, you may find that your initial question cannot be directly/quickly/sufficiently answered.
  o Let the primary sources available guide the direction of your research!
  o Especially in the case of this final project, your presentation will only be as good as your analysis of the primary sources selected. Care more about the source than your initial research topic.