Formulating a Research Question

- Sources We Use When Formulating a Research Question Include:
  - Personal Experiences
  - Stated Objectives of a Program
  - Research Articles
  - Theory
  - Pragmatic Reasons
    - Identify Research Question to Meet Qualifications of Grant
Own Experience

Examples of questions you may formulate based on the following experiences:

- **Your Cousin Drops Out of School**
  - Research Question – What factors decrease the probability that students will drop out of school?

- **Mother Divorces Father**
  - Research Question – How do factors decrease the likelihood that husbands and wives will divorce?

- **Family of Orientation is Poor**
  - Research Question – What factors motivate children from impoverished conditions to attend college?

- **Friends Make Racist Comments**
  - Research Question – Does having friends of color reduce likelihood that individuals will make racist remarks?
Program Objectives

Examples of questions you might formulate based on program objectives:

- Program objective is to increase high school graduation rate
  - Research Question - Are those who participate in your program more likely to graduate from high school than other students in their high school?

- Program objective is to increase the yield of a farmer’s crops
  - Research Question - Do those farmers who use pesticide X harvest more corn than those farmers who do not?
Examples of questions you might formulate based on research on the following topics:

- Research about volunteers may lead you to formulate the following question:
  - What types of program involvement results in satisfied volunteers?

- Research about poverty in rural areas may lead you to formulate the following question:
  - What factors are most effective in alleviating the feminization of poverty in rural areas?
Examples of questions that might be generated from Social Learning Theory

Under what conditions are children most likely to learn “bullying” behaviors?
Pragmatic - Grant

- USDA Grant - What factors increase the likelihood that Native Americans will attend college?

- Service Learning Grant - How does Service Learning impact retention for “at risk” populations?
Evaluating Your Research Questions

- **Feasibility**
  - Can you answer the question?
    - Time
    - Money

- **Social Importance**
  - Will it make a difference? Or just curiosity?

- **Scientific Relevance**
  - What does the literature say?

- **Social Diversity**
  - Remember Diverse World
  - Is question different for different groups?
Questions or Comments, Contact:

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