

Best Practice
Principles of Your First Project
(or what you should do)

Developing **research ideas** is
more about **communication**
than **creativity**

Five Parts of a Research Project

a question, problem, or provocation

sources (primary or secondary)

an analytical activity

an audience

concrete products

What Is a Project?

sequence of related activities

derived from a question, issue, or problem

requires the development of resources

requires an audience and/or other participants

results in a product

What Is a Project?

event
meeting
workshop
conference
symposium

research
analysis
investigation
experiment
development

telling a story, writing an argument,
answering a question, developing a theory

Question

What is the role of Richmond, VA
in the American Civil War?

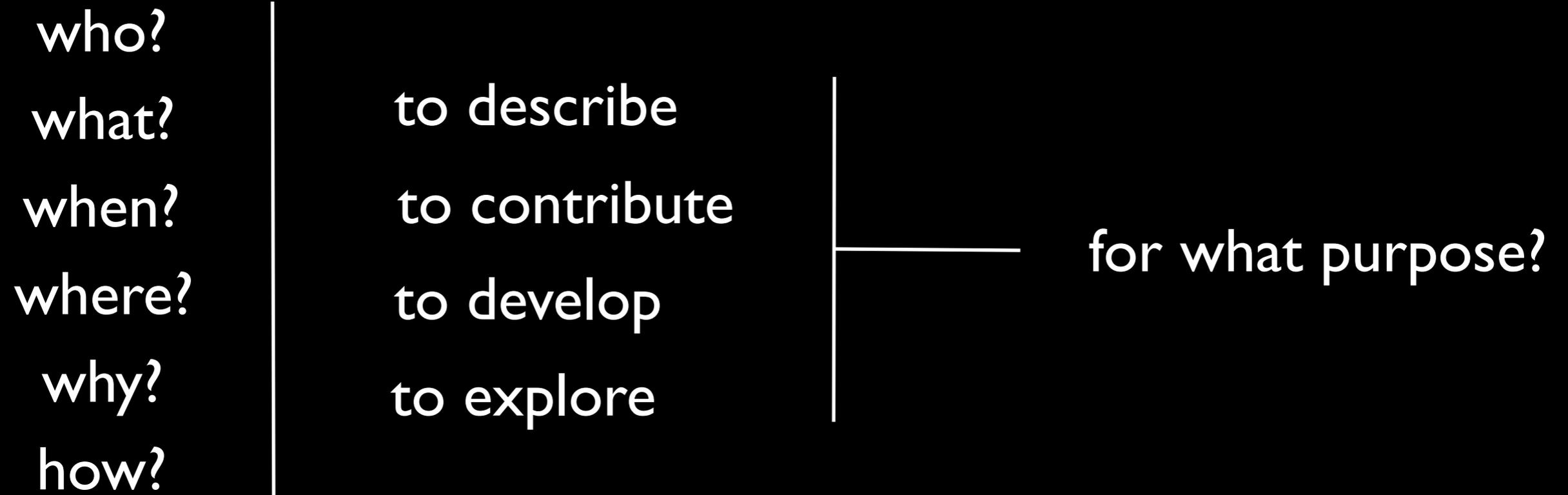
Problem

George Alfred Townsend (1865) and Kenneth Noe (1997): “Richmond ... remains an offstage presence, a sort of metropolitan version of Hamlet's father, mentioned with frequency but rarely seen.”

Provocation

"Mining the Dispatch," seeks to explore—and encourage exploration of—the dramatic and often traumatic changes as well as the sometimes surprising continuities in the social and political life of Civil War Richmond.

Creating and/or Refining your Question



Sources and Materials

scarcity and abundance

primary and secondary

feasibility

quality and complexity

Serving Many Masters

"the roots of the concepts [of interdisciplinarity] lie in a number of ideas that resonate through modern discourse —the ideas of a unified science, general knowledge, synthesis and the integration of knowledge."

- Julie Klein, *Interdisciplinarity: History, Theory, and Practice*. Detroit: Wayne State University, 1990.

So How Do You Know It is a Good Idea?

- It has an audience of more than YOU
- It challenges disciplinary assumptions
- It innovates a new method or approach
- It clearly elucidates its own value
- It improves on previous efforts

What's a Bad Idea?

Thinking that only your opinion or work on the project matters.

Starting a project without considering your commitment to it.

Looking at someone else's project and attempting to duplicate it wholesale.

Not having a clear measure of what is considered project success.