What is a Research Problem?

- A research problem is an educational issue or concern that an investigator presents and justifies in a research study.
- Researcher must discover and define a specific topic problem from a broad and general problem area.
- The specific topic is the Research Problem







Key Concepts

- What is a research problem and why is it important?
- Can and should the "problem" be researched?
- How does the "problem" differ for quantitative and qualitative research?
- What are the five elements that comprise the "statement of the problem" section?



Characteristics of Research Problem

- It should ask about a relationship between two or more variables.
- ◆ It should be clearly stated (precise and concise)
- ◆ It can be stated as a question or as a statement, indicating the primary objective of the study.
- ◆ It should be testable by empirical methods should be possible to collect data to answer the questions(s) asked.



Why is the Research Problem Important?

- Establishes the importance of topic
- Creates reader interest
- Focuses reader's attention on how study will add to literature







Where is the Research Problem Located?

- Look in the opening paragraphs, and ask yourself:
 - What was the issue or problem that the researcher wanted to address?
 - What is the concern being addressed "behind" this study?
 - Why was the study undertaken in the first place?
 - Why is this study important?







How Does It Differ from Other Parts of Research?

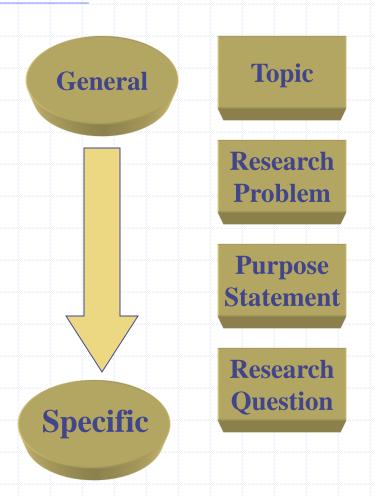
- A research problem is an *issue* or *problem* in the study
- A research topic is the broad subject matter being addressed in a study.
- A purpose is the major intent or objective of the study.
- Research questions are questions the researcher would like answered or addressed in the study.







Differences Among Topic, Problem, Purpose and Questions



Distance Learning

Lack of students in distance classes

To study why students do not attend distance education classes at a community college.

Does the use of web site technology in the classroom deter students from enrolling in a distance education class?





