Research Cycle Learning Outcomes

See below for examples of learning outcomes that correspond with different parts of the Research Cycle. Use these to generate ideas for your class, keeping in mind that you may want to create learning outcomes that focus on steps between stages of the research cycle, such as how to create a question that fills a gap in the scholarly conversation.

Students will be able to…

Stage 1: Developing a research topic/ question

- develop a research question that can be answered within the time and resources available.
- develop a research question that stands to make a contribution to the scholarly conversation.

Stage 2: Understanding the scholarly conversation

- **Finding Sources**
  - use keywords and databases to identify relevant sources.
  - evaluate sources to determine their relevance to the research topic.

- **Building Bibliographies**
  - use bibliographies of books and articles to identify additional sources.
  - utilize Google Scholar to find other scholarship that cites a relevant article or book.

- **Reading Sources**
  - identify the argument in an article and the evidence the author uses to support it.
  - evaluate the merit of each article's argument based on the evidence provided.

- **Synthesizing Sources**
  - compare arguments from different sources to find similarities and differences.
  - identify gaps or possibilities for new interpretations in the current research.

Stage 3: Conducting primary research

- use methods of discipline (archival work, interview, run participants through study, lab work, etc.)
- follow disciplinary norms to select methods that will yield information relevant to the research questions.

Stage 4: Analysis

- develop a clear, arguable, and well-supported argument.
- acknowledge and respond to alternative explanations or limitations of the research findings.
- create meaningful connections between their results and the scholarly conversation mapped out in Step 2.

Stage 5: Presentation of research

- **Written communication**
  - follow conventions to produce an academic report on findings.
  - create a report of the research results that would be accessible to a general audience.