Developing a Research Question Quiz – Answer Sheet

1. A researchable topic is neither too broad nor too narrow. What do you think of the following research questions?

To what degree do American prisoners blame childhood abuse for their crimes?

Too broad

Do the students in Mr. Elkhorn’s fifth grade class at Springfield Elementary School prefer taking tests in the morning or in the afternoon?

Too narrow

For the first example, most researchers would find it very difficult to collect this type of subjective information from the large number of incarcerated persons in the United States. In the second example, both the population being studied and the variable to be examined are so specific that it would be difficult to find sufficient information in the literature.

2. Select the most effective research question from below.

How do violent video games affect children?

The third example provides enough specific information to:

• Interest the reader
• Describe exactly what you intend to show
• Explain why your problem is worth addressing

3. Revise the following research question below to be more effective.

Why should clinics implement electronic medical records?

Your revision should come from a broad subject area that interests you (electronic medical records), be narrow enough to allow you to become a local expert (replace "clinics" with the name of a specific clinic to be more focused), be related to ideas that others have researched, and have available information (do a database search for electronic medical records to find out!) So a more effective research question could be something like:

What impact would the implementation of electronic medical records have on patient costs and quality of care at the XYZ Clinic?