**Topic Development Worksheet**

Turabian provides a helpful exercise in articulating a topic: the XYZ approach. Fill in the XYZ for the following:

I am working on the topic of X because I want to find out Y so that I can help others understand Z.

The X should refer to your basic topic, like:

- The history of interpretation at Fort Fisher
- American Revolution Bicentennial exhibits
- The history-in-a-box technique
- Battleship North Carolina Visitors

The Y should refer to your most basic research question, some element of the topic more narrowly focused, such as:

- How local and national politics affected the interpretation of African American history at the site
- What was interpreted and how it came about
- How the technique is currently being used and what social and economic conditions are affecting its use
- Their habits and motivations for visiting

The Z should answer the question “So what?” It should state why curators, educators, and scholars should pay attention to the topic. For instance:

- How to navigate through complex issues to create meaningful, historically accurate interpretation
- The social and political factors that led to commemorative rather than interpretive exhibits
- The best practices for history-in-a-box
- How to help visitors access deeper historical meanings by starting with the physical context

Your XYZ statement will change as you progress. State your topic in the XYZ format: