

## Developing a Controlling Idea and Focus Statement

- 1) In 2-3 sentences, describe the most interesting/compelling findings of your research (primary and secondary) and why you believe they are valuable/important for us to understand.
- 2) How are your findings different from the general assumptions **you** had about your research site, community, issue, or place when you started the semester? How are your findings different from what **most other people** assume about your research site, community, issue, or place?
- 3) How does what you are seeing stand out from or is aligned with material you have found in your secondary source research?
- 4) Put those three things together to craft an overarching, controlling idea for what you want to explore in your researched ethnographic inquiry essay. Here is a template you can work from. You don't have to use it exactly but it can help you identify what it is you think your research has to offer:

Many people assume \_\_\_\_\_ when they think about \_\_\_\_\_, but through my ethnographic research in/at/about \_\_\_\_\_, I have come to understand \_\_\_\_\_.

- 5) Now build on that “what you have come to understand” to craft a focus statement.

“In this essay, I will explore/discuss/analyze/reveal \_\_\_\_\_.”

And break that into three sections:

“First, I will \_\_\_\_\_”  
“Second, I will \_\_\_\_\_”  
“Third I will \_\_\_\_\_”

This is your controlling idea and focus statement. Now think about how you imagine providing an “opening” for this focus. Also, how does your primary and secondary research fit into the three sections of your essay?