QUESTIONS TO FOCUS THE RESEARCH CONVERSATION

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Where do your sources overlap or *converge*?

- What do your sources have in common?
- What points of agreement can you find between authors?
- What common terms, concepts, or ideas occur in your sources?

> ***Not all your sources will have obvious similarities, but you should begin to see common points around which you can group your sources.***

Where do your sources differ or *diverge*?

- What distinguishes your sources from one another?
- What arguments might occur between the authors?
- What is the basis or the motivation for the disagreement?

> ***Points of conflict among experts are particularly important and productive areas for research. If you detect a disagreement among your sources, look closely and think about what it means for your own work!***

Where are *you* located in relation to your sources?

- Where do your ideas fit into the conversation between sources?
- With whom do you find yourself most agreeing? Disagreeing? Why?
- Have you changed your mind or altered your perspective based on what you've read about your topic?

> ***Your perspective should always be evident in your research. With each source you use, consider how it fits into (or changes) your own approach to your topic.***

How will each source add to the *legitimacy* of your argument?

- What are the credentials or accomplishments of the authors you're using?
- What are the publication details of your sources (academic journals? Professional Websites?)
- How directly does each source address your topic?

> ***You may not want to emphasize the credentials of each author you use, but it's important to consider how each source can affect the credibility of your ieas. For instance, quoting an original source is always better than quoting something that has been reported elsewhere.***