Project Topic Resources: Youth, Gang, and Media Violence

Your specific research and policy questions on this topic may vary. This handout is designed to give you some suggestions on how to research issues related to violence and youth, including gangs and the influence of violent media.

As an example, I would suggest that you approach this topic by imagining that you have been asked to chair a commission that will make recommendations to the Congress about how to prevent or reduce youth violence in the schools. Alternatively, you might be asked to chair a commission that will make recommendations to the Congress about media violence, including television and video games. Your report (which will be the term project for this course) should first include a discussion of the causes and consequences of youth violence, or the effects of media violence on children and youth, citing supporting research. The second part of your report should address your social policy recommendations, based on existing programs and policies. Because your commission involves political appointments, different point of view will emerge in your discussion, but you should be prepared to defend the policies/programs you recommend with sound research. What policies/programs would you recommend?

Begin your task by searching for resources. These resources should be based on sound research. You may consult with popularized books or articles, and you may find examples of program or agency brochures, but you should include some reference to the research that forms the basis for these popular articles and program brochures.

1. **Search Ebscohost, Infotrac, and the Internet.** Through Ebscohost or Infotrac, you can be assured of finding research-based articles. You will have to be more discerning in your search of the Internet. Any reputable Internet site should provide information on the organization that has produced the site and how to contact that organization directly. Sites that will be especially useful are those that include links to other sites and resources, including books, articles, films, and so on. You should cite any Internet site you use (see Project Guidelines for suggested format for citation). Useful Ebscohost, Infotrac, and Internet search keywords related to youth violence include:
   - at-risk youth
   - school safety
   - school violence
   - media violence
   - entertainment violence
   - youth violence

As you are finding articles on Ebscohost, you can copy and paste the reference to the articles, as well as quotes from the articles into Word or another word-processing document. Be sure to put quotation marks around those sections you quote from. You might also want to provide your own summary of the main points of the article. Organizing your research in this way will save you the expense of printing out complete articles.

2. **Check out the Public Agenda website** ([www.publicagenda.org](http://www.publicagenda.org)), under the topics of Family, Education, and Crime. You will find a number of resources on youth and media violence, school violence, and other issues.
3. Some sociological sites or search engines can be useful in directing you to good resources. You can try the site of your textbook publisher at: http://www.wadsworth.com/sociology_d/. Click on the icon of your textbook, Andersen and Taylor, 2nd edition, 2002, and go to Research On-Line. You might also find useful links through the Social Problems textbooks. Another sociological site is the website of Allyn and Bacon: http://www.abacon.com/sociology/soclinks/index.html You will see categories like “violence and abuse” and “juvenile delinquency,” both of which will get you to some relevant sites.

4. A website with extensive links to sites related to all kinds of violence is MINCAVA: the Minnesota Center Against Violence and Abuse: http://www.mincava.umn.edu. You will find links to articles, books, other web sites, organizations, and programs on youth and gang violence, television violence, school violence, and conflict resolution.

5. Websites specifically related to youth violence and “at risk” youth include:
   http://www.childrensdefense.org/ is the web site of the Children’s Defense Fund, which has lots of statistics, research, and programs, as well as links to other sites. Look under youth violence.
   http://www.cdc.gov/ is the web site of the Center for Disease Control. Interestingly, it has a lot of information and links concerning “Youth Risk Behavior.”
   http://www.child.net is a good general site with lots of links to research and programs related to youth and violence.
   http://www.ed.gov/ This is the web site of the US Department of Education. It has a special section on school violence that includes research and model programs and ideas.
   http://www.ohd.hr.state.or.us/ is the Oregon Health Department's site that contains information on programs and research, including the 1999 Oregon Youth Risk Behavior Survey findings. Also search all State of Oregon websites through www.oregon.gov.

6. Websites specifically related to media violence include:
   http://www.cln.org/themes/media_violence.html Community Learning Network’s Violence in the Media Theme Page includes publications from a variety of sources on the topic, and links to other sites, including the APA and other national organizations.
   http://www.accesseric.org is the web site for ERIC. Try searching for resources on violence and media, as well as school safety
   http://www.nctvv.org is the web site of the National Coalition on Television Violence.

7. You might also find good information at Criminal Justice sites. Some good sites include Amnesty International’s USA report on “Rights for all,” (http://www.amnestyusa.org/) the Sentencing Project (http://www.sentencingproject.org), and other sites listed at the end of Chapter 9 of your text.

8. Contact local organizations that are working on after-school programs for youth (like the Boys and Girls Club, YMCA, Self-Enhancement, Inc. (www.selfenhancement.org) and others) and on conflict resolution and mediation skills and programs in the schools. See the University of Oregon Program on Violence Prevention and Conflict Resolution. Check out the Multnomah County Commission on Children, Families, and Communities, particularly their comprehensive plan that includes violence prevention. You could interview someone involved in a program, review their literature, and ask them for resources about teen pregnancy that they would recommend. They might also have conducted their own research as a way of evaluating the effectiveness of their program. A person from such an organization might be your reviewer.