1. What is an auteur? Who popularized the idea?

An Auteur exerts maximum control over a production.  An auteur director brings a crystal clear vision to the production.  They know everything they want before they film a single shot.   They know where scenes take place, character motivations, and the tone of the film.  Maybe most important is they know how to achieve what they want.   The word auteur was introduced by the French critic Francois Truffant.  Many famous auteur filmmakers have followed including Alfred Hitchcock, Howard Hawks, Akira Kurosawa, Stanley Kubrick, and Jean Renoir.  More modern examples include Quentin Tarrantino, Kevin Smith, Peter Jackson, Sam Raimi, Steven Soderbergh, and David Fincher.

1. What effect did the lack of formal education have on Truffaut’s career?

Truffaut was expelled and ultimately dropped out from formal education.   The effect was it freed up his ability to devote his time doing precisely what he wanted to do which was read 3 books a week and watch 3 movies per day.  This couldn't have been possible had he continued to attend school.

1. Being a good director requires what?

A good director must have clear vision.   They are the ones who chart the course for the film.  Although it's the entire crew who form a collaborative team effort, it's the single-minded focus of the director who guides the way.   They know the charater's motications, hopes, and fears.   They crystalize the tone of the film.  Utimately the success or failure of the film rides on the performance of the film's director.

1. Compare and contrast the way Sam Raimi made Evil Dead and the way Tarantino made Reservoir Dogs:

Raimi’s Evil Dead started from a short film that he showed a dentist’s union who invested in actual movie Evil Dead. Sam Raimi knew next to nothing about filmmaking, distribution, or film finance but he, Bruce Campbell, and Robert Tapert bought suits and pretended to know what they were talking about. They literally just acted.

Quentin Tarantino wrote Reservoir Dogs in three weeks. He gave it to a producer he met at a party, who passed it on, who passed it on, and ultimately wound up in the hands of Harvey Keitel who helped make the film. Tarantino spent years writing scripts long before ever making a film.

So the difference between these two filmmakers is Raimi had little to no experience before he started making Evil Dead whereas Tarantino spent years learning before making Reservoir dogs. What they had in common obviously is they did a good job selling their ideas to other people.