

CEPC 0904
Professor Jack Hester
Due July 11, 2020 at 11:59pm EDT

Homework 2 — Revising Your Project Idea

20 points

Submission link: <https://canvas.brown.edu/courses/1085057/assignments/7832702>

Submit as a Word document or PDF

A few days ago, you submitted your initial project idea. By now, you have likely received some general feedback from me via one-on-one discussion or comments on Canvas. Crafting a specific research question will help you to create hypotheses to test and to determine which data you need to find or collect in order to answer your question. We will go over some methods for analyzing data in the coming days.

As a reminder, your project doesn't have to be related to public health and you can use whatever data set you like as long as it's from a reasonably reputable source. If you have questions as you work on this assignment, please feel free to reach out.

With all of that in mind, this assignment will walk you through some steps to help you focus your topic into a question. And one last thing before we proceed... don't worry if some of these steps seem difficult or take you a while, because that's perfectly normal!

First, restate your topic of interest in the following form:

I want to learn about/study _____.

Example: I want to learn about how music affects academic performance.

Second, let's ask another question: why?

I want to learn about (answer above) because (I want to find out ...)_____

Example: I want to learn about how music affects academic performance because I want to figure out whether students can improve their grades by listening to different music.

Finally, let's consider the reason (so what?):

I want to learn about/explore (answer above) because (answer above) so that/in order to _____

Example: I want to learn about how music affects academic performance because I want to figure out whether students can improve their grades by listening to different music and therefore maximize their learning and do well in their courses.

You've thought a bit more about your research topic, why you're interested, and what its importance is. Now, let's focus on creating a narrow research question and figuring out the basics of how you're going to answer it. Now think about your topic in terms of a *specific* question that can be answered. If it helps, you can think of this as a "I will _____

by (doing/performing/asking/etc.) ____.” Keep in mind that you don’t want to come up with a question that’s too broad because then you won’t be able to easily perform concrete research, not to mention that such a topic might take you years to study! Certainly we don’t want topics so niche that there is nothing to unpack, but such questions are typically an exception and most researchers struggle to narrow broad topics. I realize that this next step might be a bit confusing or difficult, especially if this is your first time working on a research project. Don’t worry; give it your best shot and if you don’t seem to be on the right track I’ll be happy to guide you.

Your question: _____

Example: How does the genre of a music a student listens to while they’re studying for an exam impact their score on the related test? (Note, there are a lot of details “missing” here, but we’ll get to those in future assignments).

One last thing before you finish this assignment... start thinking about how you plan to execute this research and what kinds of data you will need in order to answer your question. The next assignments will help you through these important steps.

I will provide this as a word template on the homework course web page, but you are also welcome to print out, hand write, and scan this assignment.