

Class Activity: Developing a Debatable Research Question

Name: _____

- When you “Think Like a Researcher” you are focused on a research **question** rather than a research **topic**.
- The possible answers to your question must be debatable, i.e., allow for reasonable disagreement among readers.
- You must also be able to **articulate the problems** that underlie the research question.
- This problem must have **social significance and academic significance**.

| | Issue (Broad) | Research Question (Narrower) | Underlying Problem(s) | Social and Academic Significance |
|---|---|--|--|---|
| | What is the issue or overall topic that interests you? | What is a specific research question you want to investigate? | What is the problem that makes your question worth investigating? | What is the social and academic significance of your issue/problem? |
| 1 | Food Deserts | Why have food deserts proliferated and what can be done to improve the availability of healthy food for people living in them? | Lower income areas tend to lack stores that sell healthy foods. This is a problem because it leads to health problems for people who often have limited access to quality healthcare and may lack transportation and income to purchase healthy foods from distant stores. | public health, economics, law, political science, nutrition, childhood development and obesity, social justice/poverty |
| 2 | Rising Cost of a College Education | Is a college education worth the investment for students in the social sciences and other degree fields that are assumed to be less lucrative upon graduation? | Many students are emerging from 4-year degree programs with staggering student debt and few job prospects. Young adults may be forced to make career and life decisions based primarily on debt rather than aspirations. | debt upon graduation, value of education, economics, impact to choices available for career and life plans, bankruptcy |
| 3 | Police Brutality and Racism | How do current training guidelines and work culture perpetuate police brutality and racist practices? | Cases of excessive force and racism by police against people of color are widespread and receiving much more public attention in recent. Protests and calls for reform are becoming more common. | Black Lives Matter, global attention to US police violence, US history of racist laws and enforcement, questionable training practices, disproportionate surveillance, and incarceration of people of color, militarization of police |

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Directions:

Use the table below to pose research questions and provide explanations related to the subject you've identified. NOTE: This exercise is intended to help you become more conversant in your research interest. You may pose different research questions about the same topic or explore different topics.

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| 1 | | | | |
| 2 | | | | |
| 3 | | | | |