

Learning Guide: Understanding Research Questions (Draws on the videos)

1. Fiala says “Ideas are easy. Good ideas are hard.” He talks about several approaches to getting a good idea for a research question: deduction, induction, comparing competing explanations, and looking for ways to help address a need, problem or issue. Which of these approaches for “getting a good idea” does the article that you read with your partner use? It may (probably does) use more than one. Give a specific example of each one of these five approaches that the author(s) used.
2. Fiala also presents Kazdin’s suggestions for how to get a good question. Can you find examples of any of Kazdin’s suggestions in the article you read?
 - a. A metaphor
 - b. Graphic representation (which you will use in Assignment 1)
 - c. Different scales that affect how people act (family versus community)
 - d. Process versus state
 - e. Domains of inquiry
 - f. Implications of the research
3. What is the problem with the following as a research question: “My study is about the way people make health decisions.”
4. Why do researchers base their work on mid-range rather than grand theories?
5. Why do professionals often draw upon more than one theoretical framework to inform their practice?
6. Based on all of the readings and videos for our class, write a paragraph of ***your definition of*** the characteristics of a “good” research question.

Extension Questions

- A. Look at the assessment criteria for Assignment 2. What resources from the first three weeks of this class do you have to help you respond to this assessment criterion?
- B. Look at question the Flow Chart for Articles You Read. Box 1 asks about the researcher’s objectives. How can you use what Fiala says about “good” research questions to help answer this question?