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Resources for Teaching Research and Statistics in Psychology

Title of Resource	Activity: Developing a Research Idea Using Headlines
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Brief Description:	Using a current news headline as inspiration, this activity has students develop a research idea into a working hypothesis.
Keywords:	Generating Quality Hypotheses; Generating Research Ideas; Identifying Independent and Dependent Variables; Operational Definitions
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Instructors: This activity has students brainstorm research ideas that are then refined and developed into precise working hypotheses. As an in-class activity, present students with 2 to 3 current national or local news headlines. Have students brainstorm the various factors that might help explain the event to help them generate rough research ideas. (This activity can also be assigned in an on-line course by directing students to go to www.cnn.com and browse news stories posted within the last week). Students can either work in small groups or individually to use a specific news headline and work through the following handout.

Developing a Research Idea

Directions: Develop a research idea into a working hypothesis based on a current news headline by addressing the following.

1. What news story did you select?

2. State your rough research idea:

3. State your research question (What relation exists between 2 or more variables?):

4. Make sure your research questions R.O.T.S. by explaining the following:

   • Explain how your research question is **R**epeatable (i.e. not a onetime event).

   • Explain how your research question is **O**bservable

   • Explain how your research question is **T**estable

   • Rework your research questions from above make it more **S**pecific.

5. Define an independent and a dependent variable:

- Independent Variable (X): _____

    Operational Definition: _____

- Dependent Variable (Y): _____

    Operational Definition: _____

6. Develop a working hypothesis. That is form an expectation/prediction about how X will impact Y).