

Worksheet: Getting Started in Research – Establishing a Research Plan

Carefully consider the following questions and answer them step-by-step in a typewritten document. (For example – write Step 1, then answer A, B, C...) Once completed, email the document to the Research Consortium office at: research@aaahperd.org. A Research Consortium Fellow in your discipline, aligned as closely as possible with your area of research interest, will be identified to follow up with you.

The Fellow will review your plan, and set up a complimentary conference call to provide feedback on your research plan. Alternately, if you already have a mentor or colleague who could consult with you on your plan and then share this tutorial and ask for her/his assistance in working with you through these steps.

NOTE: Steps 1 and 2 could be conducted in either order. Ideally, you develop the theoretical framework first and then apply it to populations – but if theoretical frameworks are new for you, you may wish to begin with the research focus.

STEPS	TOPIC	ACTIVITY – Answer the following questions:
1	Decide on a Research Focus	A. In general, what populations most interest you? B. In general, what topics most interest you? C. Considering those topics and populations – get specific and selective and identify a more targeted population and topic of interest to you. D. Conduct a literature review in this area – List the key references and answer the following question: What are the research questions that remain to be answered within your specific topic and population?
2	Identify a Theoretical Framework	E. What theoretical framework is the best fit to help guide your research? F. Prepare a brief oral and written explanation of the framework and how it applies to your topic of interest. G. Practice explaining this framework to others (e.g., mentor, supportive colleagues, graduate students, etc.) until you become comfortable.
3	Develop and Outline a Progression of Studies	H. Develop a list of studies in a progressive order that could help to answer the research question(s) you have identified. Provide a very brief description.

4	Develop a research question	I. Keep it small and check to be sure it is significant and <i>consistent</i> with your theoretical framework J. Discuss your research question with a supportive colleague
4	Conduct pilot research & Talk with others about your research	K. List scholars in this area who would be ideal contacts to assist your work.
5	Follow the Theoretical Framework	L. Select the variables within the theoretical framework of most relevance to your research question M. Develop 5 research studies to examine those variables N. Order the 5 studies from first to fifth based on the most needed knowledge to be discovered or verified O. Get to work!
6	Communicating your research within the theoretical framework (See the “Writing a Publishable Research Manuscript” tutorial from the Toolkit for a more detailed explanation of this important topic)	P. <u>Communicate via Presentations</u> : Identify professional organizations’ annual meetings where you can present your work. Note the deadlines for abstract submission. Q. Ask a colleague for an example of an abstract that has been accepted for that organization R. Ask a supportive colleague to review your abstract and make suggestions, prior to submission. S. <u>Communicate through Publication</u> : Identify 5 journals that publish research similar to yours; rank them from “most likely to publish” to “possible to publish” T. Identify articles within your “most likely to publish” journal that report research similar to yours or in a way that you think organizes and structures the research coherently and powerfully and use it as a general template for your writing U. Edit your manuscript many times to be sure it reads smoothly with absolutely no typos. Match references in text and reference list for accuracy. V. Follow directions carefully for online manuscript submission. W. If you do not receive a review and decision within a reasonable time, contact the editor to ask for the status of your manuscript (it may have been misplaced or lost- editors do not mind checking and providing an update). X. If your manuscript is accepted – celebrate. If rejected, get back to work! Study the reviews carefully, make corrections if possible, and resubmit to the next journal or your list. Don’t delay.