**Activity Title:** Identifying Research Questions in a Discipline

**Purpose:** The purpose of this activity is to help students identify the types of research questions that scholars in their field are investigating in preparation for developing their own research questions. As a class, students will review multiple scholarly articles related to a topic or question, identify the research question or questions, and then discuss the characteristics of research questions that are found in the field.

**Framework Concepts:**

* **Research as Inquiry**
* **Scholarship as Conversation**

**Learning Outcomes:**

By the end of this activity, students should be better prepared to:

* Consider research as open-ended exploration and engagement with information
* Identify the types of research questions that scholars in their field investigate
* Formulate questions for research based on information gaps or on reexamination of existing, possibly conflicting, information

**Instructions:**

1. Divide students into pairs or small groups.
2. Assign each pair to review a scholarly article. All articles for the class should be on the same broad topic but focused on different aspects.
3. Each pair needs to identify the research question(s) in the article as well as the research method.
4. Make a list of all of the research questions used on the whiteboard, or on a shared virtual document (such as a Google doc or Padlet)
5. As a group, discuss the characteristics of good research questions, using the list as examples. Guiding questions could include:
	* How specific or broad are the questions?
	* Are the questions open-ended or closed-ended?
	* Can any of the questions be answered with a quick search or a single source?
	* Are there any that are poor research questions? Why?
6. Each pair should then develop an example of a new research question that builds on one of the existing questions.
7. Ask a few groups to share their questions. As a group, discuss the relevance of the proposed questions.
8. Emphasize that good research questions build upon existing research but seeks to add to the discussion or debate.
9. Have students reflect on what the activity means for their own proposed research questions.