

# Picking a General Topic Area Worksheet

Please listen to the Happy Doc Student podcast episode #44 as you fill out this form

**1. My degree program (and if appropriate, specialization) is:**

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*Examples: PhD in Psychology, PsyD with a specialization in Criminal Justice*

**2. Where do I see myself 5-years post-degree? You can have multiple answers here.**

**3. What do I genuinely want to be an expert in, that would be a logical step to my answer(s) in #2? You can have multiple answers here. Need help? If you were to give a TED Talk, what do you see yourself speaking about?**

**Exercise for clarity (do this for each general research area you listed in #3 above)**

Listen to episode #29: Leverage Your Librarian and then get into your university library. Locate and read at least 7 articles (you will likely need to scan 2-4 times that amount to land on a solid 7 articles).

***Tips:***

1. Limit search to last 3 years (expand if you need to, but don't go past 5 years)
2. Look for systematic literature reviews and/or meta-analyses (get a librarian's help if you can't find these and note you might have to extend the time frame a bit)
3. If you don't already have a system for organizing your articles, now is a good time to do that – check out the free resources on my website: [www.ExpandYourHappy.com/Store](http://www.ExpandYourHappy.com/Store)
4. Highlight/keep notes of possible research ideas

After reading 7 articles, you should have a pretty good idea as to whether or not you are onto something in terms of a GENERAL research area (or areas). List it/them here:

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*Examples: PTSD, Mindfulness Interventions, and Veterans; Restorative Justice and Recidivism; Learning Styles and Math Anxiety in College Students. If your area includes protected populations, meet with a faculty member early to understand potential challenges.*

Your next step is to meet listen to episode #14: The Best Dissertation is a DONE Dissertation and then meet with a faculty member to discuss your thoughts.