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Systematic is a commonly used word associated with the definition of research. Research involves a standard set of steps leading to a new conclusion that can be reproduced when using the same research methods. Research is often formal and supported by universal standards of practice that help assure quality and reputable results. Research can be scholarly in which the work adds to or supports existing knowledge. Typically, scholarly work is conducted in academic institutions that have access to resources such as Institutional Review Boards and collaboration between departments and external institutions, thus producing reliability. Creative activities can include but are not limited to art installation, poetry, music, and protesting. Creative activities do require research, though not as formal.

Such skills in research, scholarly thought, and creativity are helpful in promoting your own professional development but also in navigating through life. If you are working for a financial institution and need to review patterns of spending, having the appropriate skill set will help generate useful data that can help prevent financial loss. The more research one does the better one can make informed decisions, as one may review a school district's performance before moving to a new town. As we are all aware we are constantly flooded with information, not all of which is true or accurate. Having the ability to critically review information can help synthesize the truth. The war in Israel is a good example of the rapid spread of false video feeds and information used to influence opinion.

My first exposure to research was as a research assistant at Iowa State University studying the effects of Danazol on greyhound dogs. During this experience, I gained insight into the meticulous process of research methods, lab management, and data collection. Later, in my career I was able to do clinical research through the Child and Adolescent Psychiatric Treatment Network, looking at the effects of antidepressant medication on children. This was the first experience I had dealing with IRB, ethics panels, and consent paperwork.  Unfortunately, the funding for this program was canceled and I did not get to see the results.

I have yet to spearhead my own formally funded research. It has always been a dream of mine to be able to secure funding, conduct a field study, and publish an original work. However, I may never get to the point where I have the skills to do so. It is more realistic at this point in my career to focus on research that will affect my creative work. As an example, art often requires a narrative, such as the impact of industrialization on overpopulation.