General Steps to Define a Research Problem

- Generate and Test: Raise a question and do the following tests
- <u>Novelty test</u>: How novel is the question? You want to maximize novelty
  - Ideally, the question has never been studied in the existing literature
  - If it has been studied, what's the reason for further studying the question? Can you identify any COMMON deficiency of ALL existing work addressing the problem?
    - Yes: your research problem is how to address the identified common deficiency
    - No: it's not a compelling research problem (but can you make the question more challenging?)
- <u>Importance/Impact test</u>: How important is the question? What's the expected impact?
  - Why do we need to address this question? What if we don't address this question?
  - How would the world benefit from addressing this question? Who will benefit from it?
  - Aim to address a "big pain" or at least a "real pain"
- Every time you reframe a problem, try to do all the tests again.