



Gathering Information

INTRODUCTION TO THE COURSE

Introduction to Gathering Information Course

This class will teach you how to do research. Before you can write a story or a report, you must first be able to gather together the facts and background information. Basically, you can't write about what you don't know. Even though you've all been writing research papers and already know how to do a minimal amount of research - - this course will take you into areas of the library that you never knew existed. It will also teach you how to gather non-published information through expert interviews and surveys. The most common response from students after they have finished this course is: "I wish I had taken this class sooner."

THE 7-STEP SEARCH STRATEGY

For the first half of the course, you will learn and practice what is known as the basic 7-Step Search Strategy:

- Step One – Question Analysis
- Step Two – Informal Interview
- Step Three – Library
 - a) One-Step Sources
 - b) Two-Step Sources
- Step Four – Expert Interviews
- Step Five – Internet
- Step Six – Institutional Data/Social Data
- Step Seven – Synthesis

NOTE: When you are proficient at research, you will find that you actually skip around - - going back and forth between these steps. The exception is the first three steps: The Question Analysis, Informal Interviews and Library One-step are always the first place to start - - even for expert researchers. But, for the purposes of this class, I have to introduce the steps to you in some kind of order.

For the second half of the course, you will repeat all of the seven steps that you learned during the first half of the course plus learn how to conduct surveys and analyze the data.

ACCORDION FILE FOLDER:

To help you organize your research, purchase an accordion file folder with 18 sections. These are inexpensive (\$5-\$8) and can be found at any office supply or discount store. Staying

organized and creating a system for easy retrieval of research material are important components for conducting research. This system will prove invaluable when it comes time to review the material you gathered and start the writing process. You can use the same folder for both searches in this class.

Label the tabs of each division as follows:

1. Question Analysis
2. Informal Interview
3. One-Step Sources
4. Books
5. Newspaper Articles
6. Periodicals – General Interest Magazine Articles
7. Periodicals – Business Magazine Articles
8. Periodicals – Peer-Reviewed Journal Articles
9. Expert Interviews
10. Internet
11. Encyclopedia of Association
12. U.S. Government Manual
13. Using Government Information Sources
14. Washington Information Directory
15. Statistical Abstract of the U.S.
16. Lexis Nexis Statistical Database
17. Statistical Analysis Report
18. Surveys
(Include inside this section: completed surveys, totaled surveys & survey analysis)

NOTE: It is important that the tabs be placed in the order noted as it follows the order of the search strategy. For the First Search, the “Surveys” section will remain empty.

HOMEWORK:

Unless otherwise instructed, you do not submit the research that you gather as “homework” to the instructor. All of the research that you gather as “homework” will be filed in the accordion file folder for your future use. You will need this information in order to successfully complete Step 7 of the 7-Step Search Strategy: The Synthesis.