



Gathering Information

RESEARCH PROJECT #2

A Comparative Study

Includes a Formal Report and a Power Point Presentation

COMPARITIVE STUDY - PICK A TOPIC

The second search must be a comparative study. Pick a topic that will compare at least two objects of which a minimum of 5-7 assessment questions will be answered. Although the research process is the same (with the addition of some new material), the synthesis for this second research project will not look anything like the first. The synthesis for the second search will take the form of a Formal Report and a Power Point Presentation. As with the first search, you should pick a topic that's of interest to you.

Example Topics for a Comparative Study: (By no means is your choice limited these topics; these are just examples to get your creative juices flowing)

- Violence on television: A study that researches the ways and means that violent acts are shown on television and then makes a determination of: a) what types of violent acts appear most frequently, b) what types of programs show acts of violence most frequently, c) what time period do acts of violence appear most frequently, and/or d) which television channel airs programs with the most acts of violence, etc. (must have a total of 5-7 assessment questions).
- Choosing the right graduate school: A study that takes into account all of the possible universities that offer a graduate degree in your area of interest and then makes a determination of which university is the best choice for the researcher to attend. Data gathered should include: a) tuition, b) reputation./academic standing, c) accreditation. etc. (must have a total of 5-7 assessment questions).

INSTRUCTIONS

The second search will use the same skills developed in the first search and then expand on those skills. The first search taught you the basic 7-Step Library Search process. For the second search, you will go through the same 7-steps plus learn how to incorporate some qualities of quantitative research into your information gathering.

This class is a beginning research class and only scratches the surface of true scientific quantitative research - which would include a hypothesis and scientific experiments. For the purpose of this class, quantitative research means that you will collect data capable of being measured or expressed in numerical terms. This will include writing and analyzing a survey, recording information that you gather so that you can determine its mathematical significance, and then turning these numbers into charts and graphs for a basis of comparison.

The goal of the comparative study is to come up with your own findings. You are going to put research information together and interpret data in a way that has not been done already. The goal is NOT to restate information that has already been interpreted, but to put together existing information in a fresh, new way AND to discover original information through your survey.

EXAMPLE: A Comparative Study on Aids Studies have already been done and the data is already in on which age/gender groups are most at risk right now - - so finding that information and repeating it in your report is NOT how I want you to conduct your search. HOWEVER You could do a similar study by comparing these types of statistics for various cities from different regions of the U.S. and see if they stay consistent. (Do the same groups stay in the same brackets when comparing Houston statistics to LA or New York?) OR You could create a new study on Aids awareness in the Houston area by talking to or surveying Houston High School students.

HOW TO CREATE QUANTATIVE NUMBERS

Assessment questions will need to generate information that can be turned into quantitative numbers that can be measured. Because you will be comparing more than one item, when you evaluate the answers to your assessment questions you will be able to turn the answers into measurable data. The quantitative numbers will then be turned into charts and graphs in order to compare and contrast the objects being researched.

1) Create a table to track the answers to your Question Analysis questions. For example, if your topic was “Which Graduate School Should I Attend,” you would create a list of questions concerning graduate schools (and possibly different majors) and then track how each of the schools you are researching supplies answers

2) Students will design a survey that introduces new research that can be turned into quantitative numbers, which will then be turned into charts and graphs in order to compare and contrast the objects being researched. Week 5 teaches you how to design a survey and provides an example. Week 7 teaches you how to interpret the data on your survey and turn the numbers into percentages - - the example survey used in Week 5 will appear in a completed form to use, again, as an example in Week 7.

those questions.

EX:

Name of School	Tuition	Accredited	Enrollment	Class size (Avg)
Tom Jones Univ.	1,000 yr.	Yes	7,900	50
Star Wars Academy	1,450 yr.	No	12,664	300
Etc.				

FORMAL ANALYTICAL REPORT

The formal report is the type of written report you would turn in to your boss (or board members) that presents your research/findings in a professional manner: 1) your objective, 2) summary of research conducted, 3) findings and analysis, and 4) recommendations. In addition, the formal report will include an annotated bibliography and appendixes in the form of surveys, charts, and graphs that you have created by turning your research into qualitative data.

An annotated bibliography is a list of citations to books, articles, interviews, and documents. Each citation is followed by a brief (usually about 150 words) descriptive and evaluative paragraph, the annotation. The purpose of the annotation is to inform the reader of the relevance, accuracy, and quality of the sources cited.

POWER POINT PRESENTATION

Each student is required to provide a PowerPoint presentation highlighting the findings of his or her search.

Presentations must include PowerPoint slides that incorporate text, table, graphs and charts. Slides may also include photographs when appropriate. A minimum of 15 PowerPoint slides must be used.

SAMPLE RESEARCH PAPER:

A sample research paper will be posted in Section 8. The research paper will include a sample copy of a Formal Analytical Report and a sample PowerPoint Presentation. I will also post detailed instructions for each.