COMP

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Planning Your Research Project

LEARNING OUTCOMES

1   Understand academic research

2   Initiate the process

3   Develop a research plan

4   Consider possible resources and sites

5   Distinguish between types of sources

Rhetorical Situation for Problem-Solution Writing

- Topic
  - *Explore a topic that is of interest and compels writing*
- Purpose
  - *Become knowledgeable about the topic*
  - *Share the findings*
- Form
  - *Presented in a field report, on a Web site, or in a multimedia presentation*

Rhetorical Situation for Problem-Solution Writing

- Audience
  - *Instructors, peers, and the academic community*
  - *Includes specific audience as per writer's preference*
- Voice
  - *Formal or semiformal*
  - *Considerable, confident tone needs to be maintained*

Steps in Research Process

Beginning

Planning

Conducting research

Developing result

Understanding the Assignment

- Take initial notes about the assignment
- Record keywords, options, restrictions, and requirements
- Write down questions about the project and move ahead to find the answers

Selecting a Topic

- Involves identifying a suitable topic that the writers want to explore and write

- Making it manageable
  - *Select a topic which can be learned in a reasonable time and is related to the subject area established by the instructor*

Building Research Questions

- Helps in finding information and ideas about a topic
- Enhances the research goal
- Assists in gaining a focus for writing
- Need to know
    - *List simple and complex questions about the topic*
    - *Find supporting questions to be researched to answer the main question*

Developing a Working Thesis

- **Working thesis**: Preliminary answer to the main research question
  - *Focus of a research*
  - *Prepared by forming a statement that demands to be proved*

Developing a Research Plan

- Steps to find main concepts and key terms of the topic
  - *Use the library of congress subject headings*
    - **Library of Congress**: Classification used in academic and research libraries
  - *Conduct a initial search confirming resources on the topic*
  - *Use reference works*

Developing a Research Plan

- Primary
  - *Interviews*
  - *Observations*
  - *Analyze artifacts*
    - **Artifacts**: Object made by a human culture and later discovered
- Library
  - *Scholarly books*
  - *Periodical articles*
  - *Other resources*

Developing a Research Plan

- Internet
  - *Search engines and subject guides*
  - *Recommended Web sites*
- Library
  - *Scholarly books*
  - *Periodical articles*
  - *Other resources*

Resources and Sites

- Sources of information available range from
  - *Interviews to bibliographies*
  - *Journal articles to graphic study*
- Information sites
  - *Experts and population segments*
  - *Libraries, computers, social networking websites, and mass media*
  - *Testing, training, and observation sites*
  - *Municipal, state, and federal government offices*
  - *Business and nonprofit publications*

Primary Sources

- Original sources
- Offer firsthand information on a topic
- Convey directly about the topic
- Upside
  - *Produce information fitting the research needs*
- Downside
  - *Take time and may require specialized skills*

Secondary Sources

- Removed from the original at least once
- Provide secondhand information
- Upside
  - *Provide quality information and save research labor*
  - *Help by viewing the topic from multiple viewpoints*
- Downside
  - *Require searching of relevant data*
  - *Quality varies*
  - *Become dated*

Tertiary Sources

- Provide thirdhand information
- Discouraged for college research projects
- Upside
  - *Easy to find, access, and read*
  - *Serve as one starting point*
- Downside
  - *Distant from the original research and information*
  - *Lack reliability and detail required for college-level research projects*

SUMMARY

- Planning a research project is an important part of the project
  - *Start with topics that interest you*
  - *Learn as much as possible about the topic*
  - *Take a few risks by approaching each topic in a new way*
  - *Take plenty of time to research a variety of topics*