

# Inquiry into Disciplinarity

Discipline: “a field of study . . . training that corrects, molds, or perfects the mental faculties or moral character . . . control gained by enforcing obedience or order . . . a rule or system of rules governing conduct or activity”

Merriam Webster’s Dictionary, 10<sup>th</sup> ed.

## Project Overview

You will experience a variety of disciplines throughout your academic career, e.g., rhetoric and writing studies, math, history, biology, and so on, and you will have to eventually pick one as your major area of study. Some of you may have already made this choice and know what you want to major in; while others of you may not have yet narrowed your choices down to only one. But, regardless of where you are in deciding on a major, engaging and completing this project to learn about a specific discipline as a discourse community will be enormously helpful to you as you navigate your academic career.

Note that we will introduce you to and make distinctions between the terms discipline and disciplinarity. When we use the term, **discipline**, it might be helpful for you to think of “major” or the essential “*what-ness*” of the discourse community. This “what-ness” is the body of knowledge that distinguishes the discipline from others and is what your studies in the discipline will focus upon. It also includes the rules and regulations that govern it. For example: what kinds and how many courses are required for graduation, are labs a part of the courses, are internships mandatory, is there a local or state exam that must be passed, and so on. The goals of your chosen discipline are for

you to have a command of this knowledge and for you to be competent at putting that knowledge in to practice, usually in the career you wish to pursue upon graduation.

When we use the term, **disciplinarity**, however, we are referring to the “*how-ness*” of the discourse community, which includes the process(es) that both novices and insiders engage as they are subjected to the rules and regulations that sustain the specific discipline. The process of “*how-ness*” is not normally taught but is something that students are expected to learn and master on their own. For a variety of reasons and circumstances, this is more easily accomplished for some students than it is for others. Nevertheless, it is essential for the success of your academic career that you learn and master this process. To be successful in your chosen discipline, therefore, you must learn not only its disciplinary knowledge but also what it means to be an insider or member. In short, you will need to broadly understand the discipline’s discourse community, that is, its values, traditions, and everyday practices of behavior.

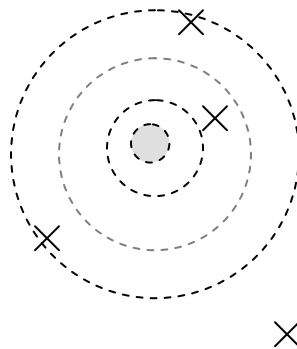
This project is designed to have you investigate the discourse community of a discipline you have either already chosen as your major or one that you may be considering as a possible major. The knowledge you gain from your research will help you to decide if, indeed, you *want* to pursue the discipline and to become an insider at all. Assuming that you do, you will then know what you must do to achieve this status. Conversely, if you decide the discipline is not for you, you will not waste your time, energy, and money pursuing an unsuitable major. In the latter situation, it is advisable that you investigate another discipline of interest to test for compatibility.

The purpose of this project, therefore, is to help you understand how a discipline is its own discourse community and, even more importantly, to help you understand the

process(es) of membership. Additionally, this project will develop your skills for conducting meaningful inquiry. When you engage in and successfully complete this project, you will have made meaningful knowledge that can benefit both you and your peers, and you will have acquired skills that you can apply to a variety of future, investigative situations: academic, professional, civic, and personal.

### Project Background

This project approaches the study of an academic discipline as its own specific, distinctive discourse community. In Chapter 1, we discussed several concepts that will be important to this project: discourse community and membership in a discourse community. As you recall, a discourse community **comes together around some shared thing, but there can be multiple and different perspectives about the shared thing.** Fans at a Bruce Springsteen concert, for example, would constitute a discourse community. We also discussed the conditions of membership in a particular discourse community. Recall the graphic we examined:



Graph 1 – Situatedness in Discourse Communities

We suggested thinking of the center as the space where the most powerful people in the discourse community reside—those people who reside over the community’s storehouse of knowledge and act as the gatekeepers to community access. They are the insiders. The circles moving out from the center represent levels of insider-ness and opportunities for change. So, in the case of a discipline, the people at the center might include the faculty; the next ring out might hold the graduate students and teaching assistants, then seniors who are close to graduation, then upper-division students, lower division students, new students, and outside the ring could be those students considering this particular discipline as a major.

To further elaborate on our approach to the concept of discourse community, we subscribe to *two ideas*. The *first* is that a discourse community includes the entire lived experience of people in response to their historical situatedness. The *second* idea is that lived experience is predominantly mediated by language. How would we, for example, be able to think if we had no language? How would we be able to reflect upon experience if we had no language? How would we be able to bring meaning and value to experience without language? How would we communicate with others about the meaning of experience without language? How then would we translate collective meaning into values, habits, customs, and traditions? How would institutions, such as marriage, religion, government, and education that are grounded in a group’s values, habits, customs, interests, and traditions exist? All of this is what we mean when we say that language mediates lived experience.

## Project Description

This rhetorically-grounded project requires that you think through carefully your role as a writer, the role you create for your audience, the methodology of your research, the method and quality of your argument, the conventions of the various genres you will use, the design of your various documents, and the effectiveness of your language choices.

## Purpose

The purpose of this project is for you to:

- learn about rhetorical inquiry
- design and conduct a research methodology
- investigate and make your own knowledge about a discourse community
- begin to establish a relationship with at least one professor and some upper-division students
- become a more rhetorically effective writer

## Goals

When you successfully complete this module, you will know how to do the following:

- conduct inquiry-based research
- design and use ethnographic research strategies
- write in a variety of genres
- adapt your writing for multiple audiences
- write and give oral presentations

- use rhetoric and writing studies concepts to guide your analysis of writing situations and your rhetorical writing decisions
- make and share knowledge with others through the action of writing

### **Project Deliverables:**

You will meet these goals by creating the following documents:

- research project plan (Gantt chart)
- research proposal
- research data collection instruments
- research progress report
- research report
- research report portfolio (planning guides, interview transcripts, surveys, document analyses, site observations, data coding, drafts, peer reviews)
- presentation(s)
- brochure

## **Questions of Inquiry**

### **Overview**

As you learned in Chapter 2, nothing is more important to meaningful inquiry than formulating good questions of inquiry. They will focus your investigative research process as you seek to answer them. Indeed, questions of inquiry drive the entire investigation.

To formulate effective questions of inquiry, of course, you must first locate your exigence/dissonance with your area of inquiry and topic. Your exigence is determined for you in this project of disciplinarity but we genuinely hope that you consider the reality of your present situation. This reality is the academic process you've begun, one that requires great focus, energy, money, and time. It includes choosing a major, working through the requirements of your major, and ultimately earning your diploma. You can ask yourself if it is desirable to know more now about what you're committing yourself to when you declare a major in a specific discipline. Is it desirable to know more about the disciplinary process you'll need to engage to become an insider to the discourse community of a particular discipline? If you can answer yes to even a part of these questions, you have located some degree of personal exigence that can motivate your engagement for inquiry. And relative to dissonance, for many this is often located between what they know now and what they *need* to know. In the case of this project your dissonance is most likely that you are interested in a particular area of study but don't yet have the insight and knowledge you require to become a member of that disciplinary discourse community.

Your audience for this project is the discourse community of your class colleagues. They share with you a similar exigence/dissonance with the topic. Therefore, provided that you genuinely engage your inquiry, conduct sound exploration and investigation, and write effective projects, you are likely to strike a chord with them. Thus, when you are rhetorically effective with the project, your discourse community will find your work not only interesting but also helpful.

## Direct Question of Inquiry

Recall from Chapter 2 that a direct question of inquiry is the organizing or guiding question of your entire inquiry. It functions both to chart your research journey and to keep you focused on the completion of that journey. To create an effective direct research question, follow the process outlined below:

### Process

1. To formulate a primary research question, first describe your exigence/dissonance with the area of inquiry

Exigence: This assignment requires that I conduct research into disciplinarity, so that's a part of my exigence. On a more personal level, though, I need to conduct this research so that I can enter the discipline of my major with a greater understanding of how to become a member or insider into its discourse community. This will help me to be more successful as a student.

Dissonance: I do not have knowledge about the disciplinarity of my major that I need to have.

2. Based on your exigence/dissonance, write your field of inquiry.

Field of Inquiry: disciplinarity

3. Focus your area following your preliminary research. In this situation, you need to identify one discipline that will be your topic.

Topic:: the disciplinarity of (insert the name of your major or discipline)

4. Now, state your purpose for conducting inquiry. Revise until you can condense your purpose into one sentence.

Statement of Purpose: As a current novice, I want and need to know about the disciplinarity of (insert the name of your major or discipline) so that I can more easily

become an insider in its discourse community and discourse community and thus be a more successful student.

6. Then, translate your statement of purpose into a question

**Direct Question of Inquiry:** How does a novice submit to and engage the disciplinarity of (insert the name of your major or discipline) to become an insider in its discourse community and thus become a more successful student?

**Note:** Later we'll ask you to argue *why* your primary research question is a good one.

### Indirect Questions of Inquiry

Remember that indirect questions of inquiry articulate *how* the direct research question will be answered. Your indirect questions function as a roadmap that will get you to your destination.

What remains to be done in this part of your inquiry process is to conduct sufficient exploration and investigation to determine a list of possible indirect questions that when answered will also answer your direct question of inquiry. As you are working, don't forget that the process of inquiry is recursive, that you are likely to move continuously across these tasks until you are satisfied that you have generated sufficient breadth and depth.

### Indirect Questions of Inquiry Planning Assignment

You have now explored, investigated, discussed, and determined a variety of possible indirect questions. You are now prepared to decide which indirect questions you will choose to guide the remainder of your inquiry process.

The following planning assignment requires you to recap your inquiry process and to add your indirect questions. Complete the form and submit it to your professor for approval.

**Indirect Questions of Inquiry Planning Assignment****Name:****Date:**

1. Describe your exigence/dissonance.
2. Based on your exigence/dissonance, what is your field of inquiry?
3. What is your focus?
4. What is your “statement of purpose?”
5. What is your direct question of inquiry?
6. What are your indirect questions of inquiry? You should have at least 3 or 4.

**Peer Review of Indirect Questions of Inquiry Planning Assignment**

Your Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Writer's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**Instructions:** Following these instructions, respond to each of the writer's indirect research questions individually, using the information in the box below.

The primary concern you'll want to address in your peer's planning assignment is the *quality* of each indirect question of inquiry. This can be difficult. The criterion you'll use to make this judgment is *scope*. Breadth and depth is another way to think about this. To make your assessment, you must try to imagine the scope of the data that each question will elicit (the data that might be collected, as a result of using the question to direct your inquiry).

Too narrow:

Do you believe that the scope of the question is too narrow? A narrow question might be answered, for example, with a simple yes or no or it won't, in your opinion, contribute much data to the project. Discuss why you think this.

Too broad:

Do you believe that the scope of the question is too broad? A broad question might address too much information and thus take the writer off-course. Discuss why you think this.

Sufficient:

The goal for good indirect questions of inquiry, relative to scope, is sufficiency: the questions should be neither too narrow nor too broad. Are the indirect questions of inquiry, in your opinion, of sufficient complexity to be not only interesting but also manageable? Discuss why you think this is.

### **Plans for Revision – Indirect Questions of Inquiry Planning Assignment**

When you receive the peer review written for your indirect questions of inquiry, read it carefully. Try not to be defensive; instead attempt to understand the peer

reviewers' observations and assessments. Ultimately, as the inquirer of your own project, you must judge which, if any, of the observations and assessments of your peer reviewers you will use to revise your questions.

Now, write a brief memo to your professor, describing the revisions you plan to make to your indirect questions of inquiry. Use the following format:

**MEMORANDUM**

Date:

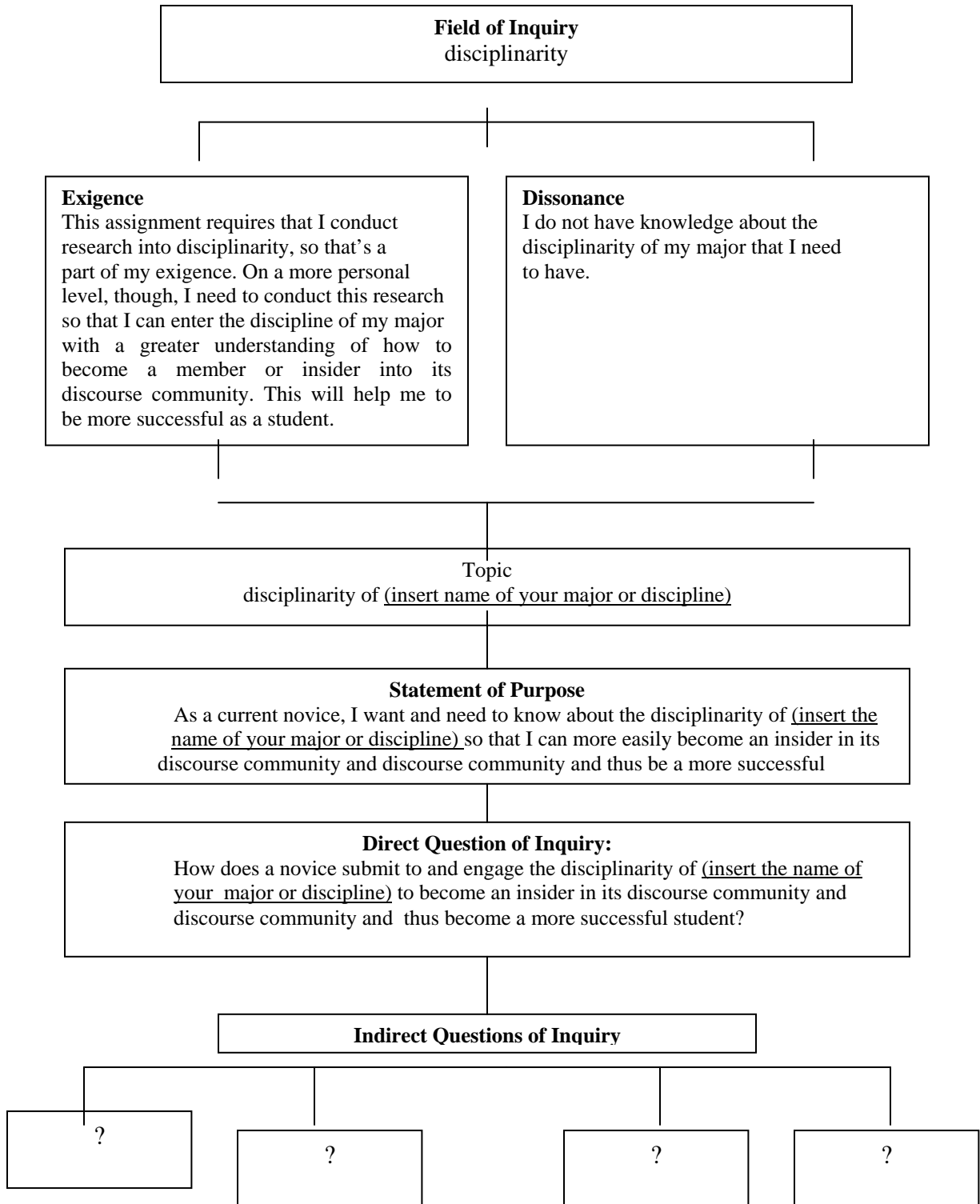
To:

From:

Subject: Plans for Revision – Project Plan

Discuss your plans for revision of your indirect questions of inquiry.

**Overview**



## Research Methodology/Methods

Now that you have established your direct and indirect research questions, it's time to consider how you'll go about seeking answers for them. In Chapter 3, we introduced you to a type of primary research called ethnography. In your present inquiry, ethnographic research should help you better understand the processes of disciplinarity that function within the discipline you've chosen to study and to thus better understand and appreciate what will be required of you to become an insider, should you choose this discipline as your major.

The research tools you will use to collect ethnographic data into your chosen discipline include:

- Interviews
- Surveys
- Site observations
- Document analyses

### Deliverable 1: Research Project Plan

As you read in Chapter 9, project planning is a type of time management. It helps you brainstorm everything that must be done to complete a project; to break larger tasks into smaller, more manageable tasks; and to allocate available resources. Normally, you would write a research project plan at the outset of a project and then revise it as circumstances required. To do this, however, you need a good understanding of your purpose, your objectives and goals, and the deliverables of your research project. You did not have this when you began this inquiry into disciplinarity, but you have now

articulated your questions of inquiry and know which research methods you will use. Therefore, you possess sufficient knowledge to complete a research project plan. You can, of course, revise the plan as you gain more knowledge and as circumstances require. Planning well now, however, will minimize revisions and thus save you time.

## **Components for Research Project Plan**

### **Research Project Plan Development Guide**

#### **Gantt Chart**

#### **Peer review**

#### **Plans for revision**

Research Project Plan Development Guide: Read or review the information about a Research Project Plan in Chapter 9. Then use the guide below to brainstorm and chart the content of your research project plan. As you develop the Research Project Plan, include the work you've already done on the project. In other words, include the time you've spent creating your direct and indirect research questions as well as any other work you've completed.

### Project planning Guide **Research Project Plan Guide**

1. Study your class and/or project syllabus to determine what deliverables, or assignments, your professor is requiring. List these.
2. Study this chapter module to see what components are required to produce each deliverable. List these under its corresponding deliverable.

3. Break down each component into as many discrete tasks as you can. List them in order of needed completion.

*You now have an outline of required deliverables, components, and tasks.*

4. Using a calendar, assess the amount of time needed to complete the project. Begin by writing the due dates of deliverables on the calendar. Then, write on the calendar each deliverable's start date. Using the outline you've developed in steps 1-3, decide how much time you need to complete the components and their tasks. Chart these onto the calendar. Tasks and deliverables *can* overlap.
5. Allow some "catch-up" time for completing all the tasks associated with research methods. Because you must rely on other people to complete this research, your project plan can be frustrated by others' schedules. It is wise, then, to plan for this.

Gantt Chart: Now that you have completed the Research Project Plan Development Guide, refer to pages xx-xx in Chapter 9 on Document Design to review the instructions for creating a Gantt chart. When you have completed the chart, you'll peer review with students in your class using the form below.

**Peer Review of the Gantt Chart Draft**

Your Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Writer's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

A peer review of your project plan functions as insurance that you've planned well. As you review someone else's project plan, address the following questions.

1. Using the outline you generated in steps 1-3 of the research project plan development guide, compare the writer's Gantt chart with your outline of deliverables, components, and tasks. To the best of your knowledge, has the writer included everything needed to successfully complete the project? If not, indicate what you think has been omitted and needs to be added.
2. Check the dates the writer has charted for deliverables. Are these the same as what you understand from the class and/or project syllabus? If not, indicate where there are differences between what they have and what you understand.
3. The writer's project plan does not need to look exactly the same as your plan. Looking at the plan carefully, however, does the writer's allocation of time resources for deliverables, components, and tasks seem reasonable, in your estimation? Indicate where you would have concerns if you had to follow their project plan.
4. Overall, assess how comfortable you would be if your professor told you that you had to follow the project plan you're reviewing.
5. On a scale of 1-10, with 10 being the highest and 1 the lowest, assess the appeal of the document's visual design. Do you have any suggestions for improvement?

Plans for Revision: When you receive the peer review written for your project plan, read it carefully. Try not to be defensive but, rather, attempt to understand the peer reviewer's observations and assessments. Ultimately, as the researcher of your own project, you must judge which, if any, of the observations and assessments of your peer review you will use to revise your project plan. Use the following tips to guide your revision process:

**Project Plan Revision Tips:**

1. If your peer reviewer identified omissions in their responses to numbers 1 and 2, you need to strongly consider adding these or, at the very least, articulating good reasons as to why you will not.
2. If your peer reviewer said they had concerns about your allocation of time resources, review your original reasons for planning the completion of tasks as you did. If you cannot justify your decisions, it might be wise to accept your peer reviewer's advice, assuming you can now justify these choices with good reasons.
3. If you are unsatisfied with your peer reviewer's rating of the quality of your document's visual design, review the software tutorial again and/or go to a computer lab on your campus and ask for assistance.

## **Deliverable 2: Research Proposal**

In Chapter 9 you learned that a research proposal looks to the future. It considers the researcher's exigence/dissonance in the present and illustrates how it can be addressed. That is, it introduces a field of inquiry, articulates a focus and statement of purpose, lists the direct and indirect questions of inquiry, and suggests appropriate

research methods for investigating it. In writing your research proposal, it's best that you assume that your primary reader, your professor who will either approve your proposal or make suggestions for revisions, knows little about this project. Therefore, you must teach them everything you know and have learned in this module so far. Gaining approval for your proposal will thus depend on how knowledgeable you are about the research project, as well as on the quality of your plan for actually conducting your inquiry.

### **Component for Research Proposal**

#### **Proposal in memo format**

Research Proposal: Read or review the information about Research Proposals in Chapter 9. Then use the Research Proposal Guide below to write your proposal. Because your instructor is your main audience for this document, write it in memo format.

#### **Research Proposal Guide and Memo Format**

**TO:** (your professor's name)

**FROM:** (your name)

**DATE:** (due date of the research proposal)

**SUBJECT:** Research Proposal for Inquiry into the Discipline of (put the name of your chosen discipline)

#### **Introduction**

In this section, you have four explicit purposes. (You may want to write this section last, since completing the other sections of the proposal will help you to articulate your overall purposes for the project.)

1. To describe the project to the reader (what is the project about?).
2. To provide good reasons for why you believe the project is worthwhile.
3. To argue why your project fulfills the objectives of the assignment (see project overview).

4. To tell the reader what you intend to accomplish (deliverables, knowledge for potential audiences, etc.).

### **Literature Review/Background**

A lit review both provides background for a project by establishing a context for it and helps you to define and establish the project's scope.

1. With what sorts of ideas is the project associated? How does the project fit in with these ideas?
2. What does the project explore, relative to these ideas (what are your research questions and why are these questions effective for your investigation?)
3. Has anyone, to your knowledge, ever explored these ideas in specifically the way you intend to explore them (for example, in this semester, in this discipline, and at this university)?

You will not, as we've previously said, conduct a formal literature review for this project, but you will conduct a sort of informal review. You will do this by reviewing prior reading assignments for this project to identify answers to the questions posed in the previous paragraph. You may quote, sparingly, from the reading assignments, but most of the literature review should be written in your own words.

### **Procedure/Methodology**

In this section, you must convince your reader that you have a plan for conducting your investigation and that the plan is both appropriate to the investigation and that it is doable within the timeframe you have to complete the project. Therefore, you need to address the following:

1. What data do you need to collect and how will you collect it (look at your indirect questions of inquiry)?
2. What do you need to complete your project (cooperation of a particular person(s), access, knowledge of software, computer support, etc.)
3. What is the time-frame for completion of all the tasks involved with the project (it's advisable to refer to your project plan [Gantt Chart] and to place it in an appendix)?

**Conclusion:** In this brief paragraph, your purpose is to convince your reader that you are confident that you can complete the project successfully and that you are enthusiastic about the prospect of your potential research findings.

## **Deliverable 3: Research Data Collection Instruments**

You will use the following research data collection instruments in your inquiry:

- Interviews
- Surveys
- Site observations
- Document collection and analysis

### **Components for Research Data Collection Instruments**

#### **Interview**

**Guide for formulating effective interview questions**

**Peer review**

**Plans for revision memo**

#### **Survey**

**Survey Grid**

**Peer review**

**Final Survey Document**

**Peer review**

**Plans for revision memo**

#### **Site observation**

**Site observation proposal memo**

#### **Document analysis**

**Document analysis proposal memo**

## **Interviews**

From your reading in Chapter 3, you know that the interview is a research method by which to collect data from individual people. For this project, you'll need to interview at least one professor in your discipline. If you interview more than one, we recommend that you target different ranks of professors: assistant, associate, or full. (You can find this information on a departmental webpage and/or in your school's undergraduate catalog.) Each person of these different ranks is likely to have a somewhat different perspective of the discipline and disciplinarity, so this is an easy way to multiply the perspectives you gather. If you can arrange to interview a professor during their regular office hours, most will be only too happy to talk with you.

It is also useful to interview students, but this may be a more difficult task to accomplish, since most students are pressed for time. Obviously, if you know a student in the discipline, you could ask to interview them. Another method is to try to catch students either going into or exiting a class, explain that you're conducting research for a class project, and ask if they could answer a few questions. If you are able to interview several students, it would be useful to target lower-division undergraduate, upper-division undergraduate, and graduate students.

Use the Guide for Formulating Effective Interview Questions on page x in Chapter 3 to get you started. Once you have completed the guide, use the peer review questions below to get feedback on your work.

**Peer Review for Guide for Formulating Effective Interview Questions**

Your Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Writer's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

*Instructions: Address the following for each interview question.*

Decide if you believe the interview question appropriately addresses the indirect research question the group has designated.		Write any leading or biased words you identify in the question.	How might the question be re-written to eliminate the leading influence or bias?
Yes/No	Indicate any other indirect research question you believe it might address.		
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			
6.			
7.			

8.			
9.			
10.			
Do you have any suggestions for other questions the writer might ask?			

Plans for Revision of the Guide for Formulating Effective Interview Questions: When you receive the peer review for your interview question heuristic, study it carefully and attempt to understand the peer reviewers' observations and assessments. Ultimately, as the inquirer of your own project, you must judge which, if any, of the observations and assessments you will use to revise your interview questions.

Now, write a brief memo to your professor, describing the revisions you plan to make to your interview questions. Use the following format:

Date: (current date)

To: (your professor)

From: (your name)

Subject: Plans for Revision – Interview Question Heuristic

Discuss your plans for revision of your interview questions.

## Surveys

From your reading in Chapter 3, you know that the survey is a research method by which to collect data from a sample population and that most surveys come in the form of questionnaires. Because surveys gather limited information from a large number of respondents, consider what population of people would provide the data you require. This population might include students in a class of your chosen discipline, students who belong to a club related to that discipline, and/or the faculty who teach in that discipline.

Review the information in Chapter on Surveys and then complete the Survey Question Grid on page xx. When you have completed it, use the peer review questions below to get feedback on your work.

### Peer Review of Survey Grid

*Instructions: Review the “Guidelines for Designing Survey Questions” to complete your review.*

1. Is there a good balance of question types? Why or why not?
2. Is the order of questions appropriate? Why or why not? What do you recommend for an effective order?
3. Does any question combine two or more thoughts? Which one(s)?
4. Draw a square around any technical terms or acronyms for which you don't know the meaning.

5. Draw a circle around any emotionally charged words or leading questions.
6. Put a check-mark beside any question that is unclear to you. Why does the question confuse you?

Final Survey Document: Revise your survey questions based on the feedback you have received. Ultimately, as the researchers of your own project, you must judge which, if any, of the observations and assessments you will use to revise your survey grid. Then, design your survey document, incorporating all the guidelines provided in “Guidelines for Designing Survey Questions” in Chapter 3.

### **Peer Review of Final Survey Document**

*Instructions: Put yourself in the place of a potential respondent and answer the following questions.*

1. Does the title give you a good idea of what the survey is about? What suggestions do you have?
2. Is the introduction complete? What suggestions do you have to make it stronger?
3. Does each question accept all possible answers? If not, what needs to be added?
4. Is the document design effective? Why or why not? What changes would you recommend?

Plans for revision of Final Survey Document: When you receive the peer review for your Survey Document, study it carefully and attempt to understand the peer reviewers' observations and assessments. Ultimately, as the researcher of your own project, you must judge which, if any, of the observations and assessments you will use to revise your interview questions.

Now, write a brief memo to your professor, describing the revisions you plan to make to your survey document. Use the following format:

Date: (current date)

To: (your professor)

From: (your name)

Subject: Plans for Revision – Survey Document

Discuss your plans for revision of your survey document.

### **Site Observations**

From your reading about site observations in Chapter 3, you know that the purpose of this research method is to gather data about people's behavior. Specifically, you want to observe how people relate to each other, for example, how students relate to each other and how they relate to the professor. You also want to observe how people relate to the physical space in their environment and how the design of this space then

impacts relationships among people. For example, the design of a classroom says much about how students can interact—are the chairs in rows facing a blackboard, are the chairs organized around a conference table, or in small groups? Take some time to brainstorm appropriate locations for your site observation. What are some places where you can observe students, faculty, or students and faculty involved in the discipline you've chosen to study?

Site Observation Proposal Memo: Write a brief memo to your professor, describing the location you've selected for your site observation. Explain why you think this is a good choice. Use the following format:

Date: (current date)

To: (your professor)

From: (your name)

Subject: Plans for site observation

Describe the location you've chosen and why you think it is appropriate to your inquiry.

## Document Analysis

As discussed in Chapter 5, analyzing documents used in your discipline is a research method that allows you to consider ways that writing functions in the discourse

community. You may choose any text used in the disciplinary discourse community, for example:

- Course syllabi
- Assignment sheets or memos
- Degree plans
- Course descriptions
- Journal articles
- Discipline-specific books
- Program descriptions
- Websites

To analyze your chosen documents, use the six categories or components of rhetorical analysis described on pages \_\_\_-\_\_\_ :

1. writing situation purposes
2. writing roles
3. methods of argument
4. organizational structures
5. functions

Document analysis proposal memo: Write a brief memo to your professor, describing the documents you have chosen for your analysis and the reasons for your choices. Use the following format:

Date: (current date)  
To: (your professor)  
From: (your name)  
Subject: Plans Document Analysis

Describe your choices for the document analysis and the reasons why you chose them.

### **Gathering and Interpreting Data**

Now that you have created and received feedback on these data collection instruments, you are ready to gather your data. Once you have done that, it's time to interpret that data according to your indirect questions of inquiry. This analysis will unlock insights that you will discover and share with others in the form of newly made knowledge. Below, you will find a basic process to get you started. Refer to Chapters 3 and 5 for more details about interpreting your data.

1. Read through all of your data.
2. Re-read your data. Mark anything that seems significant to you by highlighting, underlining, or circling it. This would include similarities, contradictions, and connections you may make across the data, as well as anything that seems extraordinary, unexpected, or out of place. Start making notes of your observations.
3. Re-read your data again with the purpose of sorting and classifying it according to your areas or criteria of analysis. Do not, however, restrict yourself to the areas on which your research questions were based. Be open to seeing themes and relationships you hadn't anticipated; also, be open to identifying any concerns you may have about the data. This step will require multiple read-throughs. (Some

people like to use colored pencils to mark the text, as they sort and classify. Using a different color for each area provides a visual representation of your coding and thus your analysis, which can be very helpful.)

## **Deliverable 4: Progress Report**

In Chapter 9, you learned that progress reports provide an account of your project's status. They will inform your professor of where you are in the project and will help to keep you on track. After completing a project report, you may need to adjust your Research Project Plan.

### **Component**

#### **Progress Report Memo**

Progress Report Memo: At this point you may have already gathered and interpreted your data. The questions below, however, allow for various levels of completion. Follow the instructions provided below to write your progress report. Use this form as a formatting guide for your document.

#### **MEMORANDUM**

Date: (current date)

To: (your professor's name)

From: (your name)

Subject: Progress Report

Below, I discuss the status of my progress with my inquiry into disciplinarity project.

### **Introduction**

Provide a brief recap of your project to the reader. That is, inform the reader of the discipline you're investigating and list both your direct and indirect questions.

### **Research Methods**

My research methods include interviewing, surveying, site observation, and document analyses.

#### Interview(s)

Thoroughly describe the status of this method. Feel free to draw from your planning documents (copy/paste). Indicate whom you will interview or have interviewed, along with the date, time, and place of the interview. (Reference your interview questions in an appendix.) If the interview is complete, indicate how long the interview lasted and if you took notes and/or you used a recording device. If you have not yet scheduled the interview, discuss the reasons for not having done so.

Describe your level of confidence regarding your ability to have this research method completed by the date you established in your project plan.

#### Survey(s)

Thoroughly describe the status of this method. Feel free to draw from your planning documents (copy/paste). Indicate whom you will survey or have surveyed, along with the date, time, and place of the survey. (Reference your survey document in an appendix.) If

the survey is complete, indicate how many you collected and describe your method for distributing and collecting them. If you have not yet scheduled the survey, discuss the reasons for not having done so.

Describe your level of confidence regarding your ability to have this research method completed by the date you established in your project plan.

#### Document Analyses

Thoroughly describe the status of this method. Briefly describe the documents you will analyze or have analyzed and indicate how they function within the discipline. If possible, include copies of the documents in an appendix.

Describe your level of confidence regarding your ability to have this research method completed by the date you established in your project plan.

#### Site Observation(s)

Thoroughly describe the status of this method. Feel free to draw from your planning documents (copy/paste). Indicate the site you will observe or have observed, along with the date, time, and place of the observation. If the site observation is complete, briefly describe the method you used for the observation. If you have not yet scheduled the site observation(s), indicate the reasons for not having done so.

Describe your level of confidence regarding your ability to have this research method

completed by the date you established in your project plan.

### **Conclusion**

Generally, describe your level of confidence regarding your ability to complete your project on time. If you have experienced difficulties, briefly recap them. If you anticipate difficulties, also discuss these. Indicate if you have completed tasks prior to deadlines you established in your project plan, if you have completed them on time, or if you have fallen behind. Reference your Gantt chart in an appendix. You may need to revise your Gantt chart. If you do, include both the original project plan, as well as the revised one.

## **Deliverable 5: Inquiry-based Research Report**

After interpreting your data, you are ready to begin the process of writing your inquiry-based research report. Review the research report section on pages xx-xx in Chapter 9 to help you get started.

### **Components**

#### **Prewriting**

##### **Selecting Coded Data**

##### **Plotting**

##### **Skeleton Outline**

#### **Draft**

**Peer Review**

**Paper**

Plotting your data: The first step is to decide which areas of analysis to use. We suggest you use the following strategy to aid your decision process, because it enables you to see where you have the richest and most significant groupings of data, as well as where the data may be somewhat thin.

Instructions: In the top column, write all the areas of analysis you used in your data coding (the number of columns on this form is not indicative of the number you may have, nor is the length indicative of what you'll have when you've finished). Then, copy and paste data from your data collection files, according to how you've coded it.

For example:

<b>Ethos</b>	<b>Relationships</b>	<b>Knowledge/Power</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Customs</b>
XXXXXXXXXXXXX	XXXXXXXXXX	XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX	XXXXX	XXXXXXXXXXXXX
XXXXXXXXXX		XXX		XXXXX
	XXXXXXXXXXXXX		XXXXXXXXXX	
XXXXXXXXXX	XXXXXXXXXXXXX	XXXXXXXXXX		XXX

It's likely that you will have more areas than you can reasonably discuss in your research paper. Therefore, you'll need to decide which to use. An important consideration is the density of the data you have for a particular area. You can also consider if some data could be moved to different areas and if this would benefit your purpose.

An equally significant consideration is how the areas above correspond to your indirect questions of inquiry. Complete the following table to assess this.

Example:

Indirect Research Question	Areas that Address the Question
1. XXXX XX XXXXXX XX XXXX XXXX?	Relationships; ethos
2. Xx XXXXXXXX XXXXX XXXX?	Ethos; knowledge/power
3. XXXXXXXX XXXXXX XXX XXXXX XXXXXX XXX?	Ethos; status

The prime categories for inclusion, as you see, become immediately clear with this demonstration.

It is possible that your research tools produced data outside of your initial areas and indirect question of inquiry. If you become interested in pursuing this unplanned area, you can reformulate the indirect research questions to include this.

Skeleton Outline of research report: To organize your conceptualization of the argument you'll make in the research paper, sketch an outline. Use the format below:

State your direct research question.	The answer will be your research paper’s thesis.
State an indirect research question.	The answer will be a major claim that supports the thesis.
Areas and data encompassed in the indirect research question.....	become reasons and evidence that support the claim.

--and so forth for each indirect question of inquiry.

First draft of research report: Remember that the purpose of your inquiry-based research report is to construct an argument. Your *thesis* is the answer to your direct research question, while the claims that support this thesis are the answers to your indirect research questions. Support for your claims is then drawn from your data collection (interviews, surveys, site observations, and document analysis).

You will incorporate the three rhetorical appeals of *ethos*, *logos*, and *pathos*. Bear in mind that you create an *ethos* for yourself through your writing, which says something about you as a student, a peer, and a researcher. For example, you probably want to appear thoughtful, thorough, intelligent, and trustworthy. The *logos* you promote will depend on the strength of your analysis and argument. Last, *pathos* will be evident in your effectiveness in having your audience feel that they would come to the same conclusions as you have if they studied the context for themselves.

Much of the information in the introduction, literature review/background, and procedure/methodology sections can be boiler-plated (cut/pasted) from the research

proposal. You may want to elaborate on it, though, since you now have a greater understanding of the project than you did when you wrote the research proposal.

### **Title of Research Paper**

(Make this title specific to your research.)

#### **Introduction**

Describe your field of inquiry (your discipline): What does the discipline study? What college is it a part of? How many full-time faculty does it employ? How many graduates does it produce, on average, per year? Where on campus is it located? In other words, you want to create a sense of identity for the discipline with your audience.

Your position and investment with the discipline: Why did you choose the discipline (exigence/dissonance)? What is your relationship to the context (student, prospective student)? What did you think you might learn that would be interesting or beneficial (statement of purpose)? Why did you choose this research methodology for your inquiry? What were your questions of inquiry and why were they appropriate to your inquiry?

#### **Literature Review/Background**

Boilerplate (copy/paste) this section from your research proposal. Do, however, revise and elaborate based on your more complete understanding of the project material now.

**Procedure/Methodology**

Data methods selection: Discuss the types of data you needed to collect and why these were appropriate to your field and focus of inquiry. In other words, you must argue why these research methods were good choices.

Data collection: Discuss your four sources of data:

- Interviews: number conducted, interviewees (their names or pseudonyms, their position in the discipline, and why you chose them), place where interviews were conducted, length of interviews and a general discussion of the questions asked (include a list of interview questions in an appendix, along with completed permission forms)
- Survey: design (attach the survey in an appendix); how, when, and where the survey was distributed and collected, how many were distributed versus how many were collected; and the population surveyed
- Site observations: description of the sites, length of observations, where you were physically located, and description of people at the site
- Documents: names and description of documents, general description about how they're used in the discipline and who uses them, and why you chose them (include a copy of them in an appendix)

Interpreting data: Discuss how you interpreted your data.

**Results/Discussion**

Organize this section according to your areas of analysis. Therefore, with each section,

you'll discuss results garnered through a variety of research methods. Keep in mind that this section constitutes the heart of your argument, for it is here that you will answer your direct research question. So, even though this section will have a strong narrative quality, you must, nevertheless, not forget your purpose to persuasively argue that your direct research question is answered with the indirect questions, which are answered and supported with your research data.

### **Conclusion**

Don't merely summarize here. Rather, discuss your analysis/argument relative to what it says about the discipline as a discourse community. You can also bring in additional areas of analysis that might not have fit easily into the results/discussion section above.

Discuss your awareness of the limitations of your research and thus your claims and briefly address what you think remains to be explored. Last, speculate about the outcomes of this research. Who might benefit from it and how or why might they benefit?

### **Appendices**

The page following the conclusion will have only a title, Appendices, and no more.

Center this title at the top of the page. Following the title page, arrange each appendix in the same order you referenced them in the body of the research paper. Preface each appendix with its own title page, e.g., Appendix A, where the centered title is located in the middle of the page.

**Peer Review – Research Report**

My Name:

Name of Writer:

1. Introduction

Do you get a profile of the discipline being studied? For example, do you learn what college it is a part of? How many full-time faculty it employs? How many graduates it produces, on average, per year? Where on campus it is located?

As a reader, are you satisfied with the profile the writer has established for her/his discipline? For example, is there too much description or too little? Would you like to see the writer change this part? How?

Do you understand the writer's position and investment with the project, for example, why they chose the discipline they did (exigence/dissonance)? What their relationship to the context is (student, prospective student)? What they think they might learn that would be interesting or beneficial (statement of purpose)? What their questions of inquiry are?

As a reader, are you satisfied with the writer's explanation of their position and investment with the discipline? For example, is there too much description or too little? Would you like to see the writer change this part? How?

## 2. Literature Review/Background

Read this section so that you get a full sense of the research paper. Does the writer appear to be authoritative and accurate? What suggestions do you have for the writer?

## 3. Procedure/Methodology

Does the writer discuss the types of data they needed to collect and why these were appropriate to their field and topic of study? Does the writer present an effective argument as to why these research methods were good choices? What suggestions do you have?

Does the writer effectively discuss the four sources of data by addressing the following:

- Interviews: number conducted, interviewees (their names or pseudonyms, their position in the discipline, and why you chose them), place where interviews were conducted, length of interviews and a general discussion of the questions asked (could include a list of interview questions in an appendix, as well as completed permission forms)
- Survey: design (could attach the survey in an appendix); how, when, and where the survey was distributed and collected, how many were distributed versus how many were collected; and the surveyed population.
- Site observations: description of the sites, length of observations, where you were physically located, and description of people at the site.
- Documents: names and description of documents, general description about how they're used in the discipline and who uses them, and why you chose them (could

include a copy of them in an appendix)

What suggestions do you have for the writer's discussion of data?

Do you understand how the writer coded the data? What is unclear? What might need to be added?

### 3. Results/Discussion

Remember, the writer must construct an argument. The *thesis* should answer their direct question of inquiry, while the claims that support this thesis should be the answers to their indirect questions of inquiry. Support for their claims should be their data (interviews, surveys, site observations, and document analysis).

Based on the above paragraph, does the writer construct an effective argument using the guidelines above? What could be done to make the argument stronger, more believable, and/or more interesting?

### 4. Conclusion

This section should not merely summarize the research report. Does the writer discuss their discipline as a discourse community? Is this discussion persuasive and appealing?

What suggestions do you have for the writer?

Does the writer's discussion of the limitations of the research and thus the claims seem genuine and plausible? Is what the writer suggests for future exploration seem, in your

opinion, realistic? Are you convinced that the ramifications to the named group(s) are what the writer claims? What changes can you recommend here?

### 5. Appendices

Are the appendices title pages formatted correctly? Are the appendices in the same order as they are referenced within the research paper? Is the title for each appendix the same in the research paper reference as it is for its corresponding title page?

This research paper incorporates the three rhetorical appeals of *ethos*, *logos*, and *pathos*. Remember, the writer creates an *ethos* for her/himself through their writing, which says something about them as a student, a peer, and a researcher. For example, do they appear thoughtful, thorough, intelligent, trustworthy, unsure, unimaginative, dull, boring, indifferent, etc., while the *logos* they promote depends on the strength of their analysis and argument. Last, *pathos* will be evident in the writer's effectiveness in having their audience (you) feel that they would come to the same conclusions as the writer, if they studied the context for themselves.

Based on the above, comment on the writer's *ethos*, the strength of the writer's *logos*, and the effectiveness of the writer's use of *pathos*.

Plans for revision of Research Report: When you receive the peer review for your Research Report, study it carefully and attempt to understand the peer reviewers' observations and assessments. Ultimately, as the researchers of your own project, you

must judge which, if any, of the observations and assessments you will use to revise the paper.

Now, write a brief memo to your professor, describing the revisions you plan to make. Use the following format:

Date: (current date)  
To: (your professor)  
From: (your name)  
Subject: Plans for Revision – Inquiry Based Research Report

Discuss your plans for revision of your research report.

## **Deliverable 6: Inquiry-based Research Report Portfolio**

When you have completed your research report, your professor may want you to collect all your work in a portfolio. Rather than just submitting the end product—in this case, the research report—a portfolio allows you to showcase all the hard work you have done to get to this point. In other words, it demonstrates the process of inquiry you have engaged. Your instructor might give you more specific guidelines, but you'll likely want to include the following: planning guides, interview transcripts, surveys, document analyses, site observations, data coding, drafts, and peer reviews.

## **Deliverable 7: Presentation**

Chapter 9 discussed presentations as a good way to disseminate your research to an audience. Your professor will determine whether the presentation will be formal or informal and will require the use of visual aids such as a PowerPoint presentation.

### **Components**

**Outline of presentation**

**Presentation**

## **Deliverable 8: Brochure**

As a final way to present your inquiry-based research, you'll produce a brochure for high school students who are considering potential college majors. To accomplish this, you'll need to draw upon the knowledge you made through your inquiry process and consider the most effective ways to present it to this new audience.

### **Components**

**Brochure Planning Guide**

**Peer review**

**Plans for revision**

**Brochure**

## Brochures

### *What is a Brochure?*

Think about the last time you visited a hotel lobby. Chances are there was a display rack full of brochures enticing you to visit this historical site, that water park, and this art museum. Perhaps the last time you visited the student union you found brochures about various academic departments, places to eat on campus, and information about how to get involved in student government. Brochures are a good way to present a detailed overview of places, products, services, activities, and practices in a small amount of space.

As you know from your experiences, brochures are made from a single sheet of paper and folded to create panels, usually six or eight. They come in a variety of shapes and sizes and usually include visuals to attract readers' attention and facilitate their understanding. Depending on the rhetorical context, brochures might be used to create an image and promote awareness such as a brochure for a resort in Jamaica which includes pictures of sunny beaches, children playing in the sand, and a couple dining at an elegant restaurant. Or, brochures might be used to persuade readers and instruct them on how to do something. For example, a brochure about vegetarians might tell readers the benefits of not eating meat, explain how to become a practicing vegetarian, and include pictures of foods appropriate to eat.

Before you get started on your own brochure, collect several from around campus and your community. Consider the rhetorical situation: Who is the audience for these brochures? What are their different purposes? Take some time to observe their layout: Where are the visuals placed? How much white space is used? Where is the most important information found? What appeals to you and what does not? Then look closely at the text: What information is included? Is there anything that might be left out? Use your observations to help storyboard, or plan, your own brochure.

After you have examined several brochures for their effectiveness, use the Brochure Planning Guide below to get you started.

### **Brochure planning guide**

The Story: What is the brochure about?

1. What is the topic or message of your brochure?
2. What is the theme you want to present? (Think of the theme as a complete sentence that captures the essence of the total story of the brochure.)
3. How can the content explain why this theme is true?
4. What are the logical steps you want your reader to take? How should they discover the story? (The story should unfold through the panels of the brochure.)

The Audience: Who do you want to pick up and read the brochure?

1. What are the characteristics of this audience?
2. How will those characteristics influence your choices of wording, visuals, and design?

Objectives: What do you want the brochure to accomplish?

1. First, think of learning objectives. For example, after reading the brochure, most high school students will be able to (1) list (2) describe (3) understand, and so on.
2. How will the content illustrate the points of the learning objectives?
3. Think about emotional objectives: what do you want your reader to feel? How can words and visuals convey these emotions?
4. Consider behavioral objectives or the action or behavior that you want your reader to do. State these. For example, high school students (1) will come and visit (2) will request (3) will tell others about, and so on.

## Design Considerations

After considering the story, audience, and objectives of your brochure, keep these planning guidelines in mind as you begin to plan, write, and storyboard your brochure

### 1. Design Principles

Consider the design elements of the brochure:

- How will the brochure be displayed? This will determine the size of paper and the number of times the paper will be folded. Very often, only the top third of the brochure is visible to the audience. Consider carefully how this space is used.
- What kind of paper will you use? Consider color and texture.
- Will you use color or black and white ink?
- What type of font is appropriate and what sizes? Use no more than three types of fonts, where one font conveys the message while the other two function as design accents.
- Will you use bolding and italics? Use these only to clarify your message.
- Include a generous amount of white space (space where there is no text or visuals). This will help to make your material more manageable and appealing to your readers' eye. Too much text can be overwhelming.
- How many graphics will you include and what kinds?
  - One large visual is better than several little ones.
  - Think carefully about what people in the visual are doing.
  - Make sure the visuals clearly illustrate the theme.
  - Make the visuals simple and easy to understand.

### 2. Cover to cover

Consider the placement of information relative to each panel. Be sure to sequence your information in a clear and logical order that leads your reader from the front

panel to the back panel. Many word processing programs now offer brochure templates to help with the design process.

The *front panel* is the most important part of the brochure. Its purpose is to motivate your audience to pick up and open your brochure. It should include:

- The issue or field of inquiry. Choose the title carefully. For example, the word “Guide” in the title tells the reader that the brochure will help them reach a goal
- A graphic that appeals to your readers’ interest and is related to your issue
- Your name or contact information (you might decide instead to include this on your back page)

The inside or *body panels* convey your information. Remember to follow a clear order and make the text easy enough to read.

- Use clear headings and subheadings
- Use graphics to vary the page layout and interest your reader
- Repeat a word from the front panel title in each of the other content titles

The *back panel*, just like a conclusion to a paper, is the last part your audience will read. It should include:

- A conclusion that summarizes your brochure’s content
- Your name and contact information (if you decided not to include this on your front page)

### 3. Language/Style

- Adapt your language choice to your reader.
- Be sure the text is short and engaging.
- Use direct, active language
- Address only the essential information. Don’t worry about small details.
- Keep the information flowing smoothly.

**Peer response for Brochure**

1. Can you determine within 5-10 seconds the subject of the brochure?
2. Can you determine within 5-10 seconds the intended audience of the brochure?
3. Can you determine within 5-10 seconds the theme of the brochure?
4. Does the front header and design get your attention or generate interest?
5. Do there appear to be good reasons to pick up the brochure and read it?
6. What does the top 1/3 of your front panel convey to the audience? (cover up the bottom 2/3 of the panel)

Plans for Revision of the Brochure: When you receive the peer review for your first brochure draft, study it carefully and attempt to understand the peer reviewers' observations and assessments. Ultimately, as the inquirer of your own project, you must judge which, if any, of the observations and assessments you will use to revise your interview questions.

Now, write a brief memo to your professor, describing the revisions you plan to make to your brochure. Use the following format:

Date: (current date)  
To: (your professor)  
From: (your name)  
Subject: Plans for Revision – Brochure

Discuss your plans for revision of your brochure.

When you have completed your brochure, you'll share them with the class. Each one of you will review the brochures and recommend a grade. Your instructor will let you know how many you'll evaluate.

<b>Student Evaluations of Brochures</b>	
Your Name: _____ Brochure Number: _____	
<b>As a scanner:</b> (glance over the brochure to see if you like what you see and if you can get a sense of what the brochure is about)	
Visual Appeal  <input type="checkbox"/> Extremely appealing <input type="checkbox"/> Very appealing <input type="checkbox"/> Appealing <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat appealing <input type="checkbox"/> Unappealing	Intuitive Title & Headings (you know what the writer is going to cover)  <input type="checkbox"/> Extremely intuitive <input type="checkbox"/> Very intuitive <input type="checkbox"/> Intuitive <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat intuitive <input type="checkbox"/> Unappealing
<b>As a critical reader:</b> (read and study the brochure carefully)  <i>Illuminate:</i> to enlighten spiritually or intellectually; to make clear: elucidate  <i>Gratuitous:</i> not involving a return benefit, compensation, or consideration; costing nothing: free; not called for by the circumstances: unwarranted	
Are there too many or too few visuals?  <input type="checkbox"/> Too many <input type="checkbox"/> Too few <input type="checkbox"/> There are neither too few nor too many  Are the visuals appropriate?  <input type="checkbox"/> Extremely appropriate <input type="checkbox"/> Very appropriate <input type="checkbox"/> Appropriate <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat appropriate <input type="checkbox"/> Inappropriate  How well is white space used?  <input type="checkbox"/> Very well <input type="checkbox"/> Well	Do some visuals seem to be used just to fill up space?  <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No  Do the visuals illuminate the text or do they seem gratuitous?  <input type="checkbox"/> Very illuminating <input type="checkbox"/> Illuminating <input type="checkbox"/> Mostly illuminating <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat gratuitous <input type="checkbox"/> Gratuitous  Is there good use of cueing devices for the reader (headings, bullets, paragraphing)?  <input type="checkbox"/> Very good <input type="checkbox"/> Good

- Okay
- Not so well
- Badly

- Okay
- Not so good
- Bad

Your Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Brochure Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Does each paragraph/section relate to the title?

- Directly relates
- Somewhat relates
- Not related

Do all of the sentences in a paragraph/section relate to the section topic?

- Directly relates
- Somewhat relates
- Not related

Are there grammatical, punctuation and/or typographical errors?

- 2 or fewer
- 3-4
- 5-6
- 7-8
- 9 or more

Do you get the sense that a real student wrote this or does it seem to have been written by an employee of the university?

- Definitely a real student
- Probably a real student
- Could be a real student
- Probably not a real student
- Definitely not a real student

Does the writer have credibility with you, i.e., do you feel inclined to trust them?

- Yes, and I would take other advice from them
- Yes, I trust what they've written
- Yes, they are generally trustworthy
- No, I trust only a little of what they've written
- No, I don't at all trust what they've written

Do you "like" this writer?

- Yes
- No
- No opinion

**Comments:**

**I recommend a total grade of:**