

## Research and Writing

By Don Sutherland

Each semester, my class attends one or two sessions at the Library to familiarize my students with various business-related research resources. Typically, fewer than a quarter of my students have had prior exposure to a number of the most important databases on which they can find credible corporate information, industry research reports, and other related materials.

Ahead of today's session, I e-mailed my students a reminder. I focused on the larger context served by research and provided a video link to children's author Lauren Tarshis' sketch of the writing process (research, asking questions, gathering sources, getting organized, creating an outline, and writing). That basic process is sufficiently simple, yet flexible, to serve a wide range of writing needs.

Excerpts from that e-mail follow:

**In this course, research is an investment in developing an effective course paper. Students will apply course concepts to a real-world company in the paper. But research is far more important than satisfying the requirements of a single course.**

**"Research is creating new knowledge," explained Neil Armstrong, the first person to walk on the Moon. The knowledge that is created or unlocked from the research process empowers leaders, managers, any person who possesses it, and society in general.**

**Shortly after the United States had secured its independence from Great Britain, George Washington credited research with giving the infant nation a bright future. In a letter he composed while stationed in Newburgh, New York in June 1783, Washington wrote:**

*The researches of the human Mind after social happiness have been carried to a great extent, the treasures of knowledge acquired by the labours of Philosophers, Sages and Legislators, through a long succession of years, are laid open for our use and their collected wisdom may be happily applied in the establishment of our forms of Government. The free cultivation of letters, the unbounded extension of Commerce, the progressive Refinement of manners, the growing liberality of sentiment, and, above all, the pure and benign light of Revelation, have had a meliorating influence on Mankind and encreased the blessings of Society. At this Auspicious period the United States came into existence as a Nation, and if their Citizens should not be completely free & happy, the fault will be entirely their own.*

**Research is indispensable to the writing process. Regardless of whether one is dealing with a course paper, professional report, or work of fiction, the basic process involved is largely the same. Only the purpose, sources of information, and questions/issues explored differ. For an illustration of the basic writing process, I've included a link to a video in which children's author Lauren Tarshis explains the six-step process behind her best-selling series of narrative nonfiction books.**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t4hDmPnKv3g>