EVST 399 / SOAN 300

Individual Activity: Gathering Scientific Evidence

Overview of this Activity:

A. Choose a topic that’s of interest to you, on which you might wish to do your term project.

B. Using internet and library research resources, find 10 sources of valid scientific evidence on your topic, using 7-10 search strategies from the guide you were given in class. Popular magazines, chat sites, newspapers, and miscellaneous internet rants are not acceptable sources. Focus your efforts on books, peer-reviewed journal articles, and the like.

C. For each source, provide the following:
   1. A brief description of the search strategy you used.
   2. A full academic citation for the source (see #4 below).
   3. A brief description of the source you found using the strategy (see #4 below).
   4. How you determined that this was a credible source.
   5. Identify whether the evidence found is reported in the primary, secondary, or tertiary literature and how you determined this (see #3 below).

Steps / Instructions:

1. You will be completing this activity on your own using the library resources available at the university of Redlands. Library personnel are available to provide you with some guidance on finding scientific evidence using tools available on the internet and on the Redlands library’s website.

2. After being introduced to these resources, do some informal general web research on your topic.

3. Use a literature search to try to find scientific evidence about your topic. As this kind of evidence can be difficult to obtain, you may need to get assistance from library personnel. Any source that reliably reports on evidence is acceptable, but primary literature is preferable.
   a. Primary literature (preferred for this activity): The source chronicles original research aimed at using data to reach conclusions. The source appears in a peer-reviewed journal and reports on original scientific findings.
   b. Secondary literature (acceptable for this activity): The source summarizes the results of a variety of primary literature articles, reaching broader scientific conclusions based on this literature review. The source appears in a peer-reviewed journal.
   c. Tertiary literature (less acceptable for this activity): The source reports on published studies. The source appears in a reputable science magazine, website (e.g., EPA, NOAA) or science news website.
   d. Not a good source (not acceptable for this activity): The source comes from an unknown and/or questionable website. The source lacks any citation of or reference to actual scientific studies. The source contains only untested hypotheses.

4. Other details:
   a. For C2: Provide a full citation for each source, using the style appropriate to your intellectual discipline (e.g.: Sociology uses ASA or Chicago author-date; Anthropology uses AAA; Psychology uses APA; Environmental Studies uses CSE, ACS, and sometimes Chicago author-date; Policy uses ASPA; etc). There is a guide with details on our Moodle site, on the “Other Resources” page: http://learn.redlands.edu/mod/page/view.php?id=250389. The links there indicate how to cite web pages in each style.
   b. For C3: Provide a brief-but-clear description of what discoveries this source reports. Identify the nature of the evidence provided by this source (e.g., what data was collected and how was it analyzed) and what is says about your topic.