

CALISTHENICS

*Daily exercises
to help you get your brain in shape
for the APR Examination*

#5. Research Methods

Let's think about some **specific methods of research**.

Each day for the next several days:

1. Find something in the news that involves an organization outside your own field -- a small business, a large corporation, a government entity, or a nonprofit. It can be a challenge, a problem, a solution, an event -- whatever is making news.
2. Put yourself in the shoes of a public relations person for the organization
3. List half a dozen audiences you should be considering.
4. Select two audiences which seem to be the most significant.

Think about what you -- in your public relations capacity for the organization -- might want from those two audiences. Consider end results such as “be aware of, favor, oppose, endorse, buy, discard . . .” or others appropriate to the situation.

NOW, consider what a **content analysis** of some kind might contribute to your work with one of those audiences. Write it up-- notes are sufficient:

Method: Content analysis-- is it going to be formal or informal? Consult your handout.

Source: What print or broadcast materials (or e-mails? News groups?) are you going to analyze?

Rationale: Why? What do you want to learn? How will you use the information?

THEN, consider how you might use **focus groups** to learn what you want to know, from one of your audiences. Write up your idea – notes are sufficient – with:

Source : Who are the participants? How many? How will you choose them?

Rationale: A one-sentence statement of why you are going to do this, what you want to determine.

AND THEN, think about where you might want to use a **survey** of some kind.

Method: What kind of survey-- mail, telephone, intercept, e-mail, fax-back, other? Formal or informal? How large-- how many people? How long – how many questions or how much time?

Source: Who are the people?

Rationale: A one-sentence statement of why you are going to do this, what you want to determine.

Compare your work with a colleague, or more than one colleague. See if they agree about the value and the process. You will be building brain muscle all the time. Soon you will be able to raise the bar on your mental hurdles.