



**Chapter Council Presents
Sharing Roundtables
MLA Annual Meeting
San Antonio, TX
Monday, May 16, 2005**

Table 24: Research Methods

Facilitator: Rita Smith

Recorder: Judy Kammerer

Additional Participants: Jill Foust, Elizabeth LaRue, Chris Miller, David W. Brown, Laura Hickerson, Kathy Davies

Summary of Topics Discussed and Ideas Shared:

Resources: Sometimes MLA offers Continuing Education courses dealing with research methods. Annual conferences often offer sessions dealing with research. “Research 101, Parts 1 and 2,” are being offered at this conference. Local and regional chapters may offer programs related to research. The Research Section of MLA publishes an online journal called “Hypothesis.” Evidence-Based Librarianship courses cover research methods.

Research Ideas: Find out what classes are more popular (have the largest attendance) with medical resident students over time. Find out how “facts” stated in Google are supported (are people finding good or bad information?). Compare quality of articles found on Medline versus Google. MLA Sections and Chapters sometimes put lists of their research projects online (can generate new ideas). Another way to generate a research topic is to start with a question, and then ask yourself what would be useful to learn out of that.

Grants and Awards: The Southern Chapter offers a research project grant annually. Awards are sometimes offered at the local chapter level for research papers and posters.

MLA Support – MLA wants feedback on what we want help with. Tell Rita your needs so she can forward them to MLA’s Research Section.

Statistics – A basic understanding of statistics is vital. Take a university class or audit a course in statistics. Try to get your organization to pay for it.

Topics Suggested for CE – There seems to be a void in the area of the practical application of collected data (once we have it, what do we do with it?). We need a guide on what to do with the data we have gathered. That would make a great topic for a CE course or workshop. Another suggestion for a course is to have an editor tell us how they evaluate manuscripts, what they’re looking for.

Read-Read-Read: A landmark book in the study of qualitative methods, “Basics of Qualitative Research,” by Strauss and Corbin, was recommended by Elizabeth LaRue. JMLA had a recent article on pre-testing and post-testing. The Journal of Evidence-Based Nursing publishes articles and guidelines related to research methods. A good way to make yourself read about a subject is to join or start an MLA Journal Club.

Tips: Work with a statistician. MLA Research Section and some local chapters offer mentors (ask for help from experienced librarians).

Suggestions: Create a bibliography of articles on how to do research. Tie in demographics to basic tests and results. Do a longitudinal study. Track how questions change over the progress of your outreach project, and track the differences.