

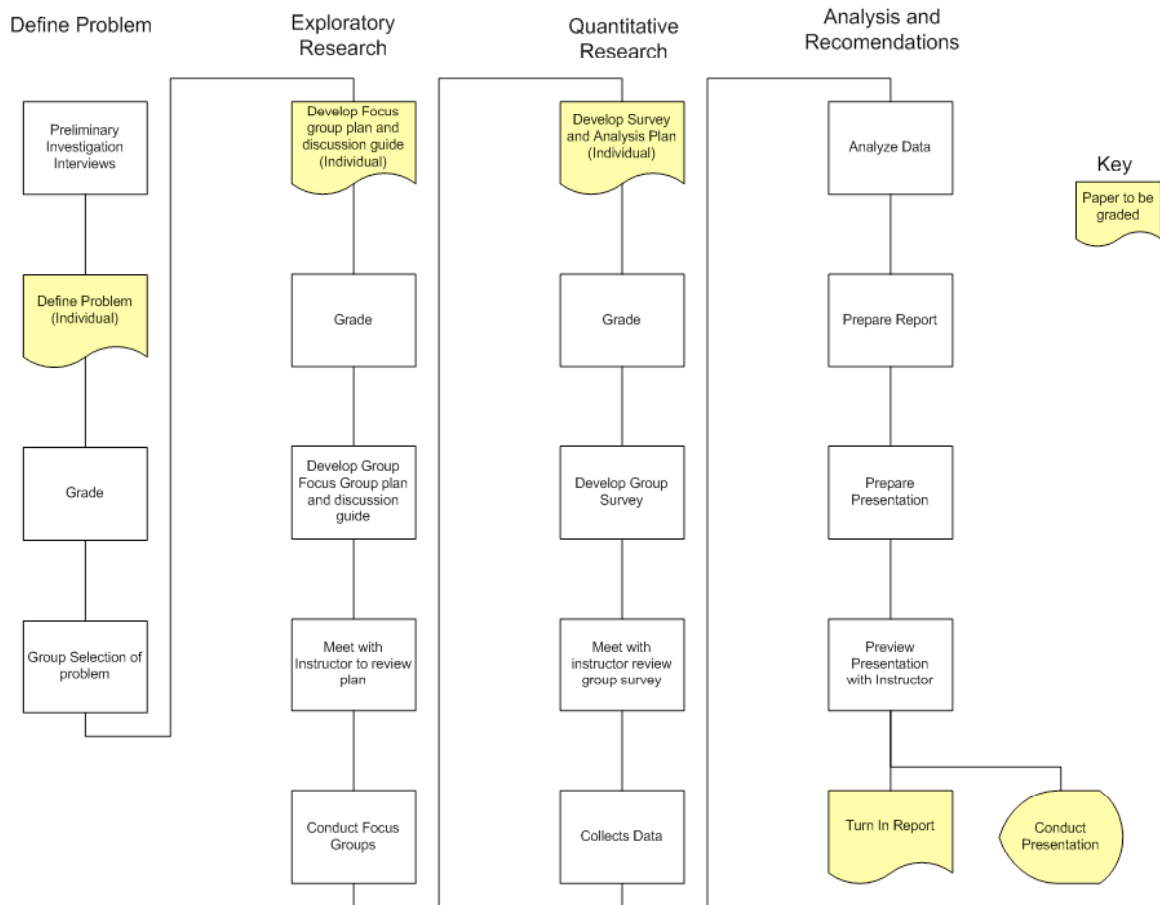
Project Overview

In this research project we will start at the beginning (defining the problem) and follow through to a final presentation of our finding. This will most likely begin with some interviews to clarify the problem and include both exploratory research such as focus groups and confirmatory research such as survey research.

The anticipated sequence for conducting the exploratory and confirmatory research will be:

1. Individual Plan– Critically think about what information is required at this stage and develop a plan for collecting that information
2. Individual Feedback – Your individual plans will be critiqued, graded and returned.
3. Group Plan – As a group you will develop a unified plan for gathering the information which your groups feels is required. This group plan will be a synthesis of your individual plans and my feedback.
4. Group Feedback – Before conducting the research, we will meet to review your group plan to ensure that all critical elements are covered. This is a consultative meeting only (no grade).
5. Group Execute – As a group, execute your data collection plan.
6. Group Report – Report the findings of the data collection (incorporated in final report and presentation).

The flow chart below provides an overview of the entire project.



Part A: Identifying and Presenting a Problem

The purpose of this first part is to understand how to start a research project and to become familiar with thinking about sources of information that would help you solve your research problem. Our project centers around the needs of Andrew Rentschler in launching a gifting program for First-Years, Sophomores and Juniors (seniors will continue with the current *Senior Class Gift* program).

Andrew Rentschler will attend our class Jan 29 to discuss the project from his perspective.

For this part of the project:

1. Gathering additional insights
 - ❖ In your teams, identify one person to interview for each member of the team.
 - ❖ As a group develop a short prioritized list of open-ended questions you would like ask each of this people to better understand to potential scope of the topic and the range of potential outcomes. The goal is to expand your vision as much as possible at this stage.
 - ❖ Send to me (e-mail) the following
 - Name of the person that you want to interview,
 - Why they are a good source of information, no more than a paragraph.
 - Your list of questions for that person.
 - ❖ In teams of at least 2, but preferable the whole team, conduct your interviews (see *Conducting an Interview.doc*)
2. Your first goal is to gain insights and intuitions about what issues are important to the project, and about what marketing problems might be worth studying. In other words, develop a good research questions.
3. For this part, define four marketing research problems that would be beneficial to study. For each problem explain the problem in clear terms, and this should be a marketing decision or question about an important outcome.
 - Decision oriented studies, for example research to help make a very specific decision about a price, product, promotion, or distribution issue. Your research project goal is to provide some clear value to the decision making process. Decisions could include items such as what should the gift be, F&M based or community based, or what mix, etc.
 - Outcome studies, where you focus on an outcome of interest, such as customer satisfaction, brand loyalty, brand awareness, and so on. Your goal here would be to conduct research that helps you identify factors and decisions affect the outcome, how much these factors affect the outcome, and so on. Important outcomes could include items, such as what factors are most related to giving and involvement may be studied.
4. Explain why this question or decision is important to address, and to the extent possible, tell me about the variables that are in your problem. Typically your variables will be your decision alternatives and your evaluation criteria, which are outcomes. We'll talk about this more during class, but this is harder than it looks! Your problem statement should be stated as unambiguously as possible, and as I grade your papers I will try hard to think about whether I can interpret your problems and variables in more than one way (indicating ambiguity). I will try to assess whether your reasoning seems good in terms of stating why the problem is worth pursuing with research, and whether the variables seem like the "right variables" to study in terms of your problem.

5. List the sources of information that might be available in terms of getting background for the problem. I will be judging the quantity and quality of the information sources you list, and specifically whether you have made a really good argument about what information is expected and how it relates to helping you with your problem. So identify information sources as clearly as possible and explain why the information would be helpful. Sources might be articles and reports available online or at the library, company reports, and so on.
6. For this part, your individual paper should present four problems, and each problem should have three parts: 1) a problem definition, including a description of variables, 2) why the problem is worth studying, and 3) a list and discussion of information sources you might use to study the problem. As an attachment, include the notes from the interviews where you were the interviewer and where you were the scribe.