Name:
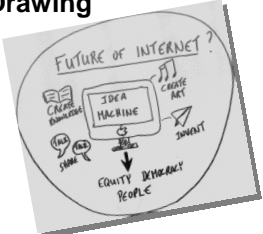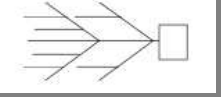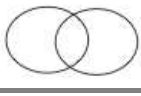
It's easy to get off-track when taking research notes. You may do a lot of work, filling pages and pages with information, only to realize that you don't have what you need, and you really don't understand the topic any better than you did before you started! ***Remember, the purpose of doing research is to develop a deep understanding of the topic, and to help you formulate and defend your own ideas.***

As you do your assignment, constantly check to see if your notes are:

Relevant	❖ Gather data that helps you answer your research questions
	
	❖ Gather supporting evidence for your own ideas about the topic. This may include:
	    o Factual information
	    o Others' observations about the topic
	    o Experts' opinions about the topic
	
	❖ Record your own thoughts about the information:
	    o Ideas for further exploration
	    o Responses to the facts and opinions you have gathered
	    o Questions you have about the information

Focused	❖ Look for the key ideas from your information sources
	
	❖ Keep checking the information you are gathering:
	    o Does it help you answer your research questions?
	    o Are you staying on topic?
	    o Is it interesting, but not really needed for this task?
	    o Is it repetitive?

Concise	❖ Use point form, not complete sentences ❖ Don't record unneeded words (e.g., the, this) ❖ Be brief: use abbreviations, symbols ❖ Omit unneeded examples
Organized	❖ Keep all of your notes together in a research folder ❖ Use the best note-making technique to suit your research task ❖ Use the best note-making organizer to suit each information source

Accurate	❖ Use quality, up-to-date information sources. Critically assess the quality of your sources
	
	❖ Verify suspicious information by checking with another source. This might include information that is:
	    o Outdated
	    o Biased, exaggerated
	    o An unsupported opinion
	
	❖ Be careful to record information correctly
	
	❖ When paraphrasing, keep the author's intended meaning
	
	❖ When quoting, copy directly and exactly from the source

Honest	❖ Use your own words and express your own ideas ❖ Cite all sources accurately: words, ideas, images, media files ❖ Keep track of your information sources as you take notes: know what information you got from which source ❖ Always give credit for others' ideas you have paraphrased ❖ Always give credit for quotes

Different strategies for recording information and ideas in your research notes:

Strategy	How does it work?	When is this most useful?
Summarizing	Take concise point-form notes to record facts, ideas, details, and supporting arguments. Record your references accurately.	▪ Most useful when gathering facts and figures about your topic ▪ Good for gathering evidence to support your ideas Be sure that you are concise when using this strategy – don't write down everything you read, only what is relevant to your research.
Paraphrasing Johnson concludes that students do better research when given higher order questions. Doug Johnson. *Designing Research Assignments that Students (and Teachers) Love.*	Take an author's idea and rephrase it in your own words, being careful to keep the author's intended meaning. Record your references accurately.	▪ Very powerful way to show support for your ideas by summarizing the thoughts of a recognized expert ▪ Good way of summarizing alternate viewpoints
Quoting "I think that we need to integrate into our teaching and learning experiences, a value for our students' information work." David Warlick. Right and Wrong on the Information Highway. 2 cents worth blog post, Dec. 2, 2007	Copy the quote directly from your source. Be careful to copy it exactly as it appears. In the case of an interview, transcribe the person's words exactly. Record your references accurately.	▪ Very powerful way to show support for your ideas by introducing the thoughts of a recognized expert ▪ Use to capture a particularly eloquently-phrased idea, that backs up one of your key points ▪ Good way of capturing firsthand information from a primary source (i.e., interview)
Drawing	As you reflect on new ideas from your research, make a sketch to sort, classify, or visualize their meaning.	▪ Sketching out ideas sometimes helps you make sense of them, and see relationships you may have missed ▪ Helps to generate ideas for communicating your findings with presentation software
Using a Graphic Organizer Fishbone Cause and Effect Venn Diagram	Select a graphic organizer that suits your information need (i.e., use a Venn diagram to sort similarities and differences). Enter your points in the organizer, to help you make connections and comparisons visually. Use a printed organizer, or use a template or create your own from graphic organizer software (i.e., Smart Ideas)	▪ Graphic organizers are powerful learning tools at all stages of research, from brainstorming topics to making sense of your research and structuring your thinking ▪ Use a graphic organizer to make sense of all of the information you have gathered – make comparisons, see things from differing perspectives, draw conclusions, test ideas and make judgements that you might not otherwise have seen