Transcript for Periodical Classification Video

Welcome to the Mundt Library at Dakota State University. We are here to help you with all of your information needs whether it be research for a class or personal interest in a topic. If you have any questions, feel free to ask a librarian.

In this video you will learn about the differences found in periodicals. The learning objectives that will be addressed include: learning the characteristics of popular, general interest, technical / trade, and scholarly periodicals and being able to categorize articles along the popular to scholarly continuum.

Periodicals are publications that are released on a regular basis. Periodicals are written on a multitude of topics for various audiences. They can be classified within four categories: popular, general interest, technical / trade, and scholarly. The following characteristics will aid you as you classify periodicals into the categories: audience, purpose, format, graphics, sources, authors, language, publishers, and advertisements. A detailed chart discussing these characteristics in relation to the four categories can be found at the following website [website link to categories chart]. It will be a helpful reference to you as you classify periodicals.

The first characteristic to consider when deciding where to classify a periodical is audience. When approaching a periodical you must decide if it is written for a professional or general audience. If it is for a professional audience, it falls under scholarly and technical / trade. If it is for a general audience, it falls under popular and general interest. Sometimes a professor will simply require this level of classification. They may not require the detail that will be discussed next. They just want to be sure you are using material for a professional audience.

After deciding a work is for a professional audience, the next characteristic to consider is purpose. A scholarly periodical reports on original research of interest to people in the field. The articles in technical trade periodicals often provide techniques and case studies that help people in the field do their job better. These sources may also contain short pieces of interest to those in the field as well as job listings. These are the major considerations when looking at scholarly and technical / trade publications.

If you decide a work is for a general audience, purpose will also tell you whether it is popular or general interest. Popular periodicals are for entertainment. They do not require any background knowledge on the topic. General interest periodicals provide more substantial information. It may be helpful to have an interest in the topic being discussed.

It is often easier to classify a periodical when you have a physical copy of the item. That way you can see characteristics such as ads, color glossy paper, the table of contents, and so on. However, you will not physically access most of the articles you use for your research. You will find them online using the library’s periodical databases. With the article out of the context of the periodical, you may lose many of the clues that are helpful when categorizing. Some items to look for that will aid you when you are in an
electronic database include: in the abstract look for words such as research and study this may mean the work is scholarly; look at the number of pages, works that are less than a page will be popular, while scholarly works can be 20 pages or more; look at the source, is it a well known popular periodical or does it have the word Journal in the title, this may mean that the work is scholarly but not always; look to the author, is the author a professional and how many authors does the article have, scholarly works often have more than one author; finally look for a bibliography, professional works will often have lengthy bibliographies.

As practice consider the following articles and decide whether they are scholarly, technical trade, general interest, or popular.

It is important to know how to categorize the resources found in your research. Not only because it is required for an assignment, but also as you become more involved in your discipline and conduct more in-depth research, you must become familiar with the professional literature in your field. A research paper that cites only popular sources will be shallow and not contain much critical thought. It is in your best interest to become familiar with professional sources not only for your school work, but also for your career. You will need to keep up on the latest trends in your field and professional sources are a place they can be found. If you have any questions about how an article should be classified, feel free to ask a librarian for assistance.

In this video you learned about the various classifications into which periodicals can be placed and were introduced to characteristics that will help you classify these periodicals.

**Answers to Quiz Questions**

- How would you classify the article "A Network of Support"? [Link to article for classification]
  - Scholarly. This article is for a professional audience and reports on original research.
- How would you classify the article "What's Milwaukee Without the Fonz"? [Link to article for classification]
  - Popular. This article is for a general audience and is meant to entertain.
- How would you classify the article "How to get Your Brand on 'Oprah'"? [Link to article for classification]
  - Technical / Trade. This article is for a professional audience and describes a method of improving your job.
- How would you classify the article "Relax - It's Just TV"? [Link to article for classification]
  - General Interest. This article is for a general audience with some interest in the topic.
- How would you classify the article "In Perfect Harmony"? [Link to article for classification]
  - Scholarly. This article is for a professional audience and reports on original research.