THE FOUR SWEEPS PLUS ONE

(HANDOUT #6)

SWEEP ONE: Check to make sure the draft is logical and easy to understand—and, has the message you want to convey.

SWEEP TWO: Look at your chapters and paragraphs. Are they clear and in the right order? If the draft is long, think about subtitles in the chapters to help hold the reader’s interest.

SWEEP THREE: If you use graphics, such as pictures in a memoir, do the graphics add to the context and understanding of what you are writing? Don’t just put graphics in because you like them. Be careful about “silly” pictures on the cover, particularly if what you have written is serious.

SWEEP FOUR: Is the draft grammatically correct? Are there spelling errors? Is the paper concise and free of word garbage? How about the style of your writing—does it flow and is it easy to follow? Here you might pay special attention to word choice and sentence structure.

PLUS ONE: Give the paper up. Time permitting, try and have someone look at the paper before you hand it in. Ask the person to brutalize the draft—you want to know everything that is not clear to him or her. Better to be embarrassed at this first level, than be embarrassed as the draft goes up the chain of command.

Consider hiring a writing coach to go over the draft.