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Writing Effective Annotated Bibliographies Using Blackboard's Discussion Board [Library]

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Writing Effective Annotated Bibliographies Using Blackboard's Discussion Board

Derek Stadler

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Assignment Description

Learning outcomes:

- Students will cite the contributing work of others in their own information production.
- Students will interact and critically evaluate contributions made by their peers.
- Students will contribute to scholarly conversation in a guided discussion.

Abstract:

This assignment is the midterm for the one-credit course LRC103, a library instruction course that teaches analytical thinking, problem-solving, and information literacy skills necessary for academic research and digital citizenship. It is worth fifteen points of the final grade and should take students a week to complete. Students are non-majors. The course begins with an introduction to library databases and then guides students to develop a research question. At the time the midterm is given, students will have developed a unique research question and were introduced to the database *Opposing Viewpoints in Context*, which gives them the opportunity to search for contradictory views.

This assignment was peer reviewed and revised in the “Learning Matters: The Pedagogy of the Digital Ability” CTL seminar in 2017-2018. In the seminar, my work was reviewed by each of the participants as well as the leaders. I used their feedback to revise the assignment. The seminar not only helped me develop the assignment, it allowed me to receive feedback from across the disciplines. The assignment adheres to Scholarship as Conversation, one of the six frames outlined in the *Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education*. Students develop their information literate abilities by:

1. citing the contributing work of others in their own information production,
2. contributing to scholarly conversation in a guided discussion,
3. and critically evaluating contributions made by their peers.

In this assignment, students advance the Digital Communication Ability as outlined in LaGuardia Community College’s communication ability rubric, through digital collaboration and interaction in BlackBoard educational technology. Students use technology to both critique writing and communicate in a digital environment. This digital communication, employing collaborative exchange and interactive elements to enhance digital composition, also promotes digital literacy. As defined, digital literacy is more than simply digital skills using technology.

The assignment built on students’ earlier work/academic experiences, both prior to taking the course and within the course, and prepared them for future assignments. As an assignment to create an annotated bibliography based on their thesis and

research, the midterm mirrors work in other classes, such as an English or Health Sciences course. Within the course, the assignment is the climax of the preceding research. First, students reviewed background information using an online encyclopedia and then broke down their topic in a concept map. Concept maps, a graphical tool for organizing and representing knowledge, were a major component of the course. Concept maps helped students break down a topic or main idea into related issues or concepts, and then into details or examples. From here, students developed a research question and then set out to uncover scholarly research available. Lastly, they formulated their own argument in a thesis statement, and were asked to find articles in support of it and opposed to it.

Exemplary work was fifteen points, demonstrating consistently effective use of digital capacities in critique of students' assignments. For admirable work (13-14 points), the student displayed mostly effective use of digital capacities. For acceptable work (11-12 points), the student displayed somewhat effective use of digital capacities. For attempted work (10 points or under), the student demonstrated minimal or no use of digital capacities. Most/Majority of the students met expectations. Results indicated student success in the assignment as thirty percent demonstrating exemplary skills and the remainder admirable. No student received a grade of acceptable or attempted.

Students were successful finding both supportive and opposing viewpoints, summarizing the author's argument and providing an accurate citation. In reflection, one student suggested the course should be taken early in a student's time at the college. On the other hand, students found following directions as the most challenging part of the assignment. In particular, students did not understand that they needed to reply to their peer's post to provide feedback, and then reply to their own post to write their reflection. In turn, I revised the assignment to be very specific. Another challenge was an inability to be critical of their peer's work if they felt it was unsatisfactory.

Assignment

A. Write an Annotated Bibliography:

1. Select one of the topics below, or one of your choosing, and develop an argument:
Racism, Immigration, Assimilation, Affordable housing, Sugary beverages
2. Using the Opposing Viewpoints in Context database, find two articles in support of your thesis or argument, and another that presents an opposing viewpoint.
3. Prepare an annotated bibliography (a list of resources, each with a reference citation in Modern Language Association (MLA) style and a summary or evaluation) for all three articles.

B. Analyze an Annotated Bibliography:

1. In Blackboard, create a thread to the Midterm discussion and:
 - upload your thesis statement or argument
 - upload your annotated bibliography to the discussion board
 - since digital space unlike print allows for hyperlinks to electronic resources, it is proper etiquette to provide a direct link to each article
 - Instructions:
 - a. On the Opposing Viewpoints in Context article, click on the Bookmark option in the header
 - b. Copy the URL from the Bookmark dialogue box
 - c. In Blackboard, highlight the article title and select the 'Insert/Edit Link' icon
 - d. Paste the Bookmark link into the Link Path
 - e. In the Target dropdown list, select Open in New Window (_blank)
 - f. Click Insert
2. Review three other student Midterm discussion threads and reply to their posts, providing insight into the following:
 - In each article summary, does the student effectively communicate a claim and evidence?
 - Is the citation correct?
 - Do you think the supporting articles support the student's thesis?
 - Which article do you find the strongest, and why?
 - Did you find the supporting or opposing claim stronger? Why or why not?
3. Lastly, write a short paragraph reflection in response to the feedback you received from students and post it to your discussion post:

- How did your classmates' suggestions help you understand the assignment better?
- What actions would you take to improve your assignment based on what you read?

Note: For class pedagogy and lessons, visit [my assignment page](#).

Assignment Rubric

Summary of Points

15 Points (Exemplary)

- In BlackBoard, the student posted an annotated bibliography with three complete and correct citations as well as summaries that provide a short description of the author's argument and any examples that they use.
- The student demonstrated consistently effective use of digital capacities in their critique of three other students' assignments.
- The student provided a complete reflection of the feedback they received from other students.

13-14 Points (Admirable)

- In BlackBoard, the student posted an annotated bibliography with three mostly complete and correct citations as well as summaries that provide a short description of the author's argument and any examples that they use.
- The student demonstrated mostly effective use of digital capacities in their critique of three other students' assignments.
- The student provided a mostly complete reflection of the feedback they received from other students.

11-12 Points (Acceptable)

- In BlackBoard, the student posted an annotated bibliography with three somewhat complete and correct citations as well as summaries that provide a short description of the author's argument and any examples that they use.
- The student demonstrated somewhat effective use of digital capacities in their critique of three other students' assignments.
- The student provided a somewhat complete reflection of the feedback they received from other students.

10 Points or Under (Attempted)

- In BlackBoard, the student posted a mostly incomplete annotated bibliography as well as summaries that didn't provide a short description of the author's argument and examples that they used.
- The student demonstrated minimal or no use of digital capacities in their critique of three other students' assignments.
- The student provided an incomplete reflection of the feedback they received from other students.

Grade Worksheet

Student Name _____

Criteria	Points	Exemplary	Admirable	Acceptable	Attempted
1- Thesis Statement and Annotated Bibliography	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Thesis statement is narrow and can be argued - Annotated bibliography has three complete and correct citations, providing a short description of the author's argument and any examples they use 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Thesis statement could be more narrow - Annotated bibliography has three mostly complete and correct citations, providing a short description of the author's argument and any examples they use 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Thesis statement is somewhat broad - Annotated bibliography has three somewhat complete and correct citations, providing a short description of the author's argument and any examples they use 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Thesis statement is too general to be argued - Annotated bibliography has three mostly incomplete and incorrect citations, providing a short description of the author's argument and any examples they use
2- Critique of Peer Work	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Three complete critiques of peers - Consistently effective use of digital capacities in their critique of three other students' assignments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Three mostly complete critiques of peers - Mostly effective use of digital capacities in their critique of three other students' assignments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Three somewhat complete critiques of peers - Somewhat effective use of digital capacities in their critique of three other students' assignments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Three mostly incomplete critiques of peers - Minimal or no use of digital capacities in their critique of three other students' assignments
3- Reflection of Feedback	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Complete reflection of feedback received 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mostly complete reflection of feedback received 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Somewhat complete reflection of feedback received 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mostly incomplete reflection of feedback received

Criteria 1: _____ Criteria 2: _____ Criteria 3: _____ Final Score: _____