Assessing the Authentic Learning Assessment Project

Report for the Last IL Grant Assessment Project, 2007-2008

♦ Who worked on this project?

Librarian/College: __Lynn Kanne / Seattle Central Community College_____
Person/Department/Course: __Shelley Douma / Humanities / English 102 & CSP100 (Epidemic!)_

♦ Outcomes – What did you want the student to be able to do?
What did students need to be able to do in order to be successful?

- Define the research topic or research question for an annotated bibliography
- Use multiple types of sources
- Evaluate sources for accuracy, relevancy and bias
- Organize and synthesize information
- Format citations accurately using MLA citation style

♦ Curriculum – What did the student need to know?
What's the ground/content that needed to be covered?

- How to use reference works to gather background information and narrow a topic
- The characteristics, strengths, and issues for different types of sources (books, periodicals, open web, databases etc.) & the major strategies for finding each of them
- Strategies for evaluating different kinds of sources
- The purpose and basics of creating MLA style citations and where to find help

♦ Pedagogy – What were the learning activities?
What was the setting and activities for the students to gain/develop these abilities?

Students attended a library workshop during one class session. I used an audience response style pretest to identify which areas needed the most attention. (Students responses indicated that they were mostly comfortable with using the library's resources and they were very clear about the expectations for academic journals, but they were less familiar with encyclopedias than other sources as a starting point. Half the students couldn't identify a common periodical database and, understandably they had difficulty with search strategy.)

Students received a research guide that identified relevant resources for the CSP and evaluation criteria for all types of sources. After the "pretest," students engaged in the following activities:

- Sharing research topics & discussing them briefly
- Exploring the LC list and then browsing reference section
- Bringing back examples of relevant reference books and debriefing this process with the group
- Reviewing the database options as a large group and trying keyword searches using student topics. Students tried out the databases individually.

The session concluded with a question about what students still felt they wanted to learn more about. Most students still wanted to learn about finding books using the library catalog and UW library catalog.

Students also spent about three class sessions in a "citation workshop" where they received an overview of citation style and then practiced citing different types of sources that they brought to class. Students practiced

citing articles in pairs and shared their work with the class where they did troubleshooting and compared answers.

♦ **Assessment – How did the students demonstrate the learning?**
What assessment did you design for students? (Attach any assessment tools you used)

Students were assigned to create annotated bibliographies to their research topics (see box below). Students to selected, focused and described a topic and then collected a list of varied and reliable sources related to it. They cited and annotated these sources.

The instructor and librarian adapted Cascadia's English 102 rubric (posted in the LMDC wiki) to evaluate the assignment. Students received the rubric (see below) as along with the assignment.

Annotated Bibliography Assignment

Your task: to create an annotated bibliography that follows proper MLA format and is connected to your research topic.

Due Dates:
On May 7, bring two of your sources with you to class.
On May 8, bring the two sources from the 7th and two other sources with you to class.
On May 9, bring two copies of five completed, typed entries to class.
The full peer review for the Annotated Bibliography is May 14. Bring two typed copies to class.
The final draft of the Annotated Bibliography is due on May 16 at the beginning of class.

Helpful hints and guidelines. Read all of these carefully:
- **Look at the example and description in your Lester text.**
- **Include a paragraph at the beginning of the bibliography that describes your research topic**. The paragraph doesn't have to be long but should clearly articulate the questions you are trying to answer with the research you're presenting. The paragraph should be double-spaced and should come after the title and before the first source.
- You should have twelve **reliable** sources in your bibliography.
- You should use a mix of types of sources. Don't use all books, journal articles or websites. Include at least three scholarly journal articles and two books. **You should have at least three types of sources in your annotated bibliography.**
- Find sources that examine your topic in a variety of ways and from different perspectives.
- If you use websites, make sure that you follow the guidelines listed in the book to make sure they're reliable.
- **You do not have to end up using all of the sources that are in your annotated bibliography in your final research paper, but they should have something to do with your topic.**
- Come up with your own annotations. I'm aware that ProQuest gives summaries of articles. Create your own. That's the point! Using short quotes from the article is a good idea, but make sure to put them in quotation marks. **Don't plagiarize your annotations. If you don't know what plagiarism is, check your book or ask. If you plagiarize even one entry, you will fail the assignment.**
- Your annotations should be 4-5 sentences. Consider including an evaluation statement. Also think about establishing the relationship between the source and your paper or the other sources in your bibliography.
- Use the index in our book to find the proper bibliographic model for each source. Also use the handout from the library. Follow the models exactly—every period, comma, use of italics, and <.
- **The whole annotated bibliography is double-spaced and alphabetized. Don't add extra spaces between entries.**
- You should give your annotated bibliography a real title. Try something like this: Ma Rainey's Blues and Feminism: An Annotated Bibliography.
- This assignment will take a good chunk of time, but is worth it if you do it right. Don't wait until the last weekend or you'll end up with a headache AND you won't get much out of doing the assignment!

If you have questions, come to Shelley's office hours or ask for an appointment. I won't format your entries for you, but am happy to point you in the right direction if you need a hand. **It's best to ask early!**

♦ **Criteria – How did you (instructor and librarian) know the student had done this well?** How did you judge/evaluate the performance?

We used a rubric to evaluate student performance on 6 different aspects of this assignment.

	Scant/Entry level	Emerging/Developing	Competent/Satisfactory	Substantially developed
Target Dimensions	Need for improvement outweighs apparent strengths. May show evidence of the outcome.	Strengths and need for improvement are about equal.	Shows skill in this outcome. Improvement still possible.	Applies outcome in multiple contexts. Many strengths are present.
Defines the topic and/or research question	• Finds information in a general subject area rather than defining or articulating a topic or question • Does not identify key concepts within the topic or question • Unable to or minimally determines the extent and nature of information needed	• Finds information about a broad topic rather than defining a specific topic or question • Identifies minimal key concepts within the topic or question • Able to determine the extent and nature of some of the information needed	• Finds information about and defines a specific research topic or question • Identifies many key concepts within the topic or question • Able to determine the extent and nature of most of the information needed	• Selects, defines, and clearly articulates a well thought out research topic or question • Identifies many key concepts and specifically addresses the topic/problem through subtopics/ sub-questions/multiple perspectives • Shows strong ability to determine the extent and nature of the information needed to adequately address their question/topic
Uses multiple types of sources	Uses only one type or format of information	Uses at least two types or formats of information	Uses multiple types or formats of information; demonstrates awareness of the function of different types of information	Uses many types or formats of information appropriately; demonstrates awareness that types of information have different functions in research
Evaluates sources for accuracy, relevancy, and bias	Does not articulate and/or apply evaluation criteria to information and sources • Does not assess audience and purpose or point of view of information sources • Does not appraise unique characteristics (significance, contradictions, etc.) or context of information and sources	Minimally articulates and/or applies evaluation criteria to some sources of information • Minimally assesses audience and purpose or point of view of information sources • Minimally appraises unique characteristics (significance, contradictions, etc.) or context of information and sources	• Articulates and applies evaluation criteria to many sources of information • Assesses and begins to articulate audience and purpose or point of view of information sources • Appraises and begins to articulate unique characteristics (significance, contradictions, etc.) or context of information and sources	• Clearly articulates and applies evaluation criteria to most/all sources of information • Assesses and clearly articulates audience, purpose, and point of view of information sources • Appraises and clearly articulates unique characteristics (significance, contradictions, etc.) or context of information and sources
Organizes, synthesizes and incorporates information into knowledge base	• Does not or insufficiently summarizes main ideas and/or information • Does not or insufficiently establishes interrelationships among ideas and/or does not compare new and prior knowledge	• Minimally summarizes main ideas and/or information • Establishes some interrelationships among ideas and/or does little comparison of new and prior knowledge	• Summarizes main ideas and/or information in context and with detail • Establishes interrelationships among ideas and/or does some comparison of new and prior knowledge	• Accurately summarizes main ideas and/or information as well as their sub-topics/sub-questions/multiple perspectives • Establishes interrelationships among ideas and/or accurately compares new and prior knowledge to construct new concepts, ideas or insights
Uses information ethically and responsibly	Demonstrates little or no knowledge of legal or ethical standards for appropriate and responsible information use	Demonstrates some knowledge of legal or ethical standards for appropriate and responsible information use	Demonstrates some knowledge of legal or ethical standards for appropriate and responsible information use	Consistently demonstrates knowledge of legal or ethical standards for appropriate and responsible information use
Applies MLA Citation Format	Many missing elements or little MLA format applied	Required information is included. Demonstrates some attention to proper format	Required information is included with few errors. MLA format is always followed carefully	All citations are included in correct MLA format with minor errors

Adapted from Leslie Bussert's CCC English 102 - Information Literacy Skills & Processes - *Guidelines for rating Eng 102 Assignments*[1]

◆ **Data – What data did you collect? How did the students perform?**

Please include the data (even if you have to mail it to us) if at all possible. We want the richest field of data possible to look at.

We used the form below to collect data – the form is completed with aggregated data for the class. LK=Lynn Kanne, librarian; SD=Shelley Douma, English instructor. A total of 14 assignments were reviewed.

Last name:	1 - Scant, Entry level		2 - Emerging, Developing		3 - Competent, Satisfactory		4 - Substantially developed	
	LK	SD	LK	SD	LK	SD	LK	SD
Defines the topic and/or research question	2	1	4	2	8	9	0	0
Uses multiple types of sources	0	0	6	3	8	9	0	0
Evaluates sources for accuracy, relevancy, and bias	1	1	7	4	7	7	0	0
Organizes, synthesizes and incorporates information into knowledge base	4	1	4	3	6	8	0	0
Uses information ethically and responsibly	1	1	2	1	11	10	0	0
Format (including MLA citations)	2	2	2	1	9	9	0	0

◆ **Best Practices – What would you recommend out of this project as a Best Practice you would pass on to other librarians or discipline faculty?**

- Spend more time developing a succinct rubric that both faculty and librarian agree on – this will allow you to use a grading strategy that is stricter & more easily justified – the rubric needs to be more student friendly so that students pay closer attention to it – it also needs to be more specific and replace the "none, some, few, all" type of gradation
- The rubric should include fewer categories – we can and teach to more categories but the rubric should address what is *most* important for the particular assignment
- Asking students to write a topic focus helped improve the list of sources required (this was new to the assignment)
- This type of assignment is very useful for "midstream assessment" on student selection of sources – it helps ensure that they gather a variety of sources before they start writing
- Students need help thinking about sources in terms of type – they do not always distinguish between them

◆ **Key learning – What's your observation or reflection on this project? What did you or the faculty member learn from this project?**

- Working more closely together than usual was a positive experience for both – librarians need to see the work students are producing in order to improve on our instruction
- The conversation between faculty and librarian can help improve the assignment and the instruction that supports it – the data is only one resource that comes out of this process
- Although we generally agreed most of the time, the librarian had higher standard for each category and placed many students lower on the rubric than the teaching faculty. We agreed that this was probably a

function of the teaching faculty having read many student papers and knowing what progress means for them
- It would have been ideal to spend more time planning the project before the class began; the instructor could not devote as much time as needed because she was busy planning the CSP
- From the instructor: "The folks who struggle, who don't have a real research question or don't understand how to put together an argument, didn't get as much out of [this assignment] as the others. Maybe that could be something to address. It's something all of us struggle with."