

Research Assignment Stipend Final Report

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Course: ANTH 2382: Human Nature
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Introduction I have long had an annotated bibliography assignment in the class but students have consistently struggled. Specifically, they often have a combination of these two inter-related problems: 1) failure to find appropriate sources; and 2) tell the difference between appropriate and inappropriate (non-peer reviewed) sources. I enlisted Julia Anderson to help. She ran three class sessions.

Description of the information literacy assignment or activities:

The assignment—an annotated bibliography—develops a critically important aspect information literacy: the ability to correctly identify relevant, peer-reviewed scientific information. One of the knock-on effects of the information age is that our students are bombarded with information that has been packages and repackaged with little formal attribution. This is especially problematic for this assignment because the students choose their own topic relevant to understanding human nature. Following the ACRL framework on information literacy, we will focus on students developing understandings that:

- Authority is constructed and contextual
- Information creation is a process

The instructions:

For this assessment you will choose your own topic of current research relevant to understanding human nature. You may choose a topic covered in lectures, although you may want to zoom in on a particular aspect. You may also identify other topics that interest you but are not covered in lectures. If you choose outside the range of lecture topics, please secure the approval of the instructor.

The annotated bibliography requires that you select 4 papers on your topic. They must be from the peer-reviewed literature and be primary sources, not reviews. If you are unsure whether your chosen source qualifies, please email the PDF to the instructor and she will let you know. Confine your sources to work published since 2000. You are to summarize and critically evaluate your chosen papers. The description and evaluation of each paper will be between 200 and 400 words long. Citations must be in APA style.

Method of assessment:

Annotated bibliographies were graded according to the rubric included in the appendix of this document.

Results and impact on student learning

The quality of the work produced by the students was markedly improved over previous semesters. Source selection was more thoughtful, and analysis and critique more comprehensive. Additionally,

when I talked to the class about the sessions run by the Julia, several students expressed the opinion that they had been skeptical about the value of the classes. They had thought that they were competent at library usage and that the class sessions would be a waste of their time, but actually found that the sessions were very useful. One student said "I didn't know how much I didn't know."

Summary and next steps

I am going to attempt to replicate the sessions Julia ran when I next teach the class. I am not confident that I will run them as well as she did, so I will circle back to her as I prepare for those sessions, and after I have done them, check back in with her for any follow up advice she might have.

Appendix

Rubric:

Appropriately Chosen Sources: 20%

1. Appropriate sources
2. Largely appropriate sources
3. Largely inappropriate sources
4. Completely inappropriate sources

Citation Format: 10%

1. Correct, complete citations
2. Mostly correct, mostly complete citations
3. Mostly incorrect, mostly incomplete citations
4. Absent or completely uninformative citations

Summary: 30%

1. Clear, concise and complete summary
2. Incomplete, but largely clear and concise summary
3. Incomplete, unclear or inaccurate summary
4. Absent or uninformative summary

Synthesis and Critique: 30%

1. Comprehensive synthesis and critique making explicit connections to other papers or arguments
2. Somewhat comprehensive synthesis and critique that makes vague connections to other papers or arguments
3. Failure to either synthesize or critique
4. Failure to both synthesize and critique

Language: 10%

1. Grammatically sound, clear, and well-written
2. Grammatically flawed, misspellings and typos
3. Incomplete sentences