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## A Full Class Annotated Bibliography: In-Class Community Building & Applied Social Composing Practice

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Community Building & Applied Social  
Composing Practice  
*Zoe McDonald*

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# A Full-Class Annotated Bibliography: In-Class Community Building & Applied Social Composing Practice

*Zoe McDonald*

## Overview

This activity transforms a familiar annotated bibliography into a full class activity to give students hands-on knowledge of two central components of composing: writing as a social process (Adler-Kassner and Wardle) and “authority is constructed and contextual” (ACRL). As Tressie McMillan Cottom observes, “writing is always a brutally social process that is rude enough to masquerade as a solitary one” (Cottom 226). Rather than assume annotated bibliographies are exclusively individual activities, this variation provides students with both collaborators and an audience.

Raquel Corona, Kami Day, and Michele Eodice point out how college students often dread group assignments due to group member’s different goals, and uneven divisions of labor. Students have good reasons to stick to what they know in online search strategies, too. Information literacy scholar Alison Head finds students often take on familiar strategies to limit information overload, decreasing their opportunities to develop critical and empathetic thinking processes. To address these challenges, this activity emphasizes student collaborations with each other throughout the process of creating, and reflecting upon, an annotated bibliography.

This easy-to-adapt activity works well to introduce students to research-based assignments and class discussions. I’ve used this activity with different prompts before students create their individual annotated bibliographies on their own research topics, and as a

standalone activity to inform class discussion. This prompt's focus on holistic college student health can work well as preparation for longer assignments investigating health care access, popular misperceptions, and the history of specific epidemics.

### Time Commitment

1-3 class sessions depending on modifications

### Materials

This activity requires a learning management platform (e.g. Google Docs, Canvas, or Blackboard), as well as computers with Internet access, and research materials such as college or university library databases.

Two additional helpful resources are a class library guide with links to useful health-related resources, and an in-class workshop with a teaching and learning librarian to model the collaborative research and annotation process.

### Activity Process

- In the class period before this activity, publish the annotated bibliography prompt, and roles. For an example of a prompt focused on holistic health, see the Appendix.
- To introduce this assignment, read the annotated bibliography prompt, and role descriptions out loud.
- *Asynchronous online classes:* create a short video explaining this assignment and informing students how they should be in contact with their group members throughout this assignment. Group discussion boards and multiple due dates work well.

- Create an assignment requiring each student to find two different sources to propose for their group's contribution before the next class period. Ask students to arrive prepared to share links to their sources and briefly explain their research processes and justify why their group should post one of their sources.
- During the class period of this activity, break the class into groups of four to five students.
- *Recommended:* Model how you would complete this assignment through a collaboration with a librarian. Together, choose among four sources. Once both of you agree on a source, demonstrate writing an annotation and citation. Post the annotation and citation on the full class discussion board as an example for students.
- Provide students time to collaborate with their groups to decide on a single source to share with the full class. At least 15 minutes is recommended.
- Then, provide students time to collaborate with their groups with each student completing one of the four roles named in the Appendix. For a variation of this assignment, students in each group can collaborate through writing their group's entry without the focus of the specific roles. At least 30 minutes of class time is recommended.
- In the following class periods, use this collaborative research experience to inform class discussions about research processes and health-related findings.

## Learning Outcomes

Students engaging in this activity will:

- Gain an understanding of the purpose of an annotated bibliography as a research tool to document multiple sources
- Practice useful strategies for annotating sources
- Engage accurate information and opportunities related to college student health and wellbeing
- Think critically about the social dynamics involved in evaluating sources for an in-class audience
- Evaluate the credibility and relevance of sources within different online media environments
- Reflect on the ways health and well-being are shaped by multiple factors such as gender, race, age, and class

### Learning Accommodations

- Students have opportunities to take on different roles within this assignment to promote engagement and critical thinking.
- This activity works well for asynchronous online classes when students communicate with each other on discussion boards. For in person classes, students can communicate orally. The instructor can display the full class annotated bibliography discussion board in process on a projector for students without personal computers.

### Works Cited

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## Appendix: Assignment Prompt and Student Roles

### *Prompt*

This annotated bibliography takes an expansive approach to health and wellbeing to share what college students should know about living healthy lives. Which local resources are available for the members of this class to learn more about health and wellbeing? Think about health care access, mental health, and disease prevention. Which resources should the members of this class know about? Think about on-campus offices, clubs, advocacy efforts, and public events. Pursue creative avenues for your sources such as the university library, student newspapers, social media, and club directories. Each source needs to be both informative and practical. In other words, each source should provide credible and recent information on a significant topic impacting college students. The source also needs to offer opportunities for yourself and other students in this class, such as a support groups, learning support, or low-cost medical supplies.

### *Student Roles:*

Only one student per group performs roles I-III. More than one student in each group can perform role IV, writing a comment on another group's annotation.

Role 1: Write and post the MLA citation, link, and annotation for the source your group wants to share. The annotation should be at least four sentences long and include all the following information.

1. the source's medium (poem, academic article, blog, etc.),
2. a short summary of the source,
3. the source's credibility,



4. opportunities for college students from this source, and
5. how this source is valuable for promoting college student health.

Role II. In a reply to your group's source annotation, write a paragraph describing how this source is a meaningful contribution to the class knowledge. This will likely be a more detailed answer than the final sentence of the annotation.

Role III. In another reply to your group's source annotation, write a paragraph describing the research process of some of your group members. Explain: Where did your group members look and why? Which keywords did some of your group members use? How did you decide which source to add? Why does your group think this source is credible and practical? Be specific.

Role IV. In a reply to a different group's source, write a long paragraph that compares the information from your group's chosen source and the source of a different group. Consider describing the value of different forms of evidence and the limitations of specific sources.

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