

CORE 100: Cornerstone
Annotated Bibliography Assessment
Mary Wilson, Associate Professor/Librarian
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Background:

The annotated bibliography is the assignment freshmen students complete after a one-hour library research session (taught by Library Faculty) in the Cornerstone class. In this session, several topics are covered: the use of Boolean logic and keywords in searching; scholarly versus popular periodicals; how to find a book in VANPAC, the library catalog; the use of CARS to evaluate a web site.

For the bibliography, students either choose or are given a topic by their Cornerstone professor to search. This assignment is meant to include citations and annotations for four types of sources: a book, a magazine, a scholarly journal, and a website. From the Library Faculty's point of view, the bibliography should demonstrate the following student learning outcomes:

- Students are able to use good keywords in searching
- Students are able to distinguish among the four sources, particularly between a scholarly journal and a magazine
- Students are able to not only describe but also analyze a website using the CARS Checklist of Information Quality (a tool developed by a former VU faculty member)
<http://www.vanguard.edu/Library/EvaluatingWebSitesUsingCARS/tabid/1828/Default.aspx>

Method:

A rubric has been developed to aid in this assessment (Appendix 2 and 3)

Completed bibliography assignments from six Cornerstone faculty from the years 2005, 2006, and 2007 have been collected, a total of 160 papers. Before the assessment, it was discovered that some faculty did not assign students to indicate the keywords they used in searching. Therefore, the group of 160 papers were divided into two stacks: those with keywords (72 papers) and those without keywords (88 papers). For those papers without keywords, the rubric was modified to eliminate the portion designed to assess keyword choice.

Twenty papers were chosen randomly from each stack. The 20 papers were divided into three stacks (KA, KB, KC for those with keywords, WA, WB, WC for those without keywords). Each paper was assigned a distinct number (KA1, KA2, KB1, KB2, etc.)

Three Library Faculty participated in the assessment on March 1, 2010: Alison English, Elena Nipper, and Mary Wilson. Each of the readers had two stacks to read for those papers with and without keywords (Elena read KA and KC, Mary read KC and KB, Alison read KB and KA, and the same for WA, WB, WC) with separate rubric sheets also numbered to coincide with the bibliography number.

Prior to reading, the readers scored three practice bibliographies and discussed the scores to ensure they had the same understanding of what they were looking for.

After reading, if the total scores for any bibliography differed by 2 or more (if Alison had given a total score of 6 and Elena of 8, for instance) the person who had not read papers in that stack scored the bibliography in question also.

For the results, the scores for the bibliographies were averaged, either dividing by 2 or 3, depending upon the number of readers.

Results:

	Keyword Choice (5 pts)	Scholarly vs. Popular Sources (5 pts)	CARS to Evaluate Website (5 pts)
With Keywords	3.33	3.23	1.94
Without Keywords	NA	3.54	1.58

It was striking to the readers that the CARS assessment score, which is essentially critical thinking in evaluating a website, was low for both groups, an average of 1.94 out of 5 points for those papers with keywords and 1.58 out of 5 points for those without keywords. The majority of students described a website without evaluating it or assessing it any way, even though this had been discussed in the library research instruction, using a website as an example, and example bibliographies and annotations were given on the library website

Several possibilities, among others, may account for this score:

- The Cornerstone faculty member giving the assignment did not stress evaluation.
- Students did not understand CARS or understand that Library Faculty were placing such an emphasis on it
- Students got the assignment and simply did not follow directions
- Students' critical thinking skills are low

Action Plan:

- Concentrate more on the CARS in the instruction. We have already done this with the one Cornerstone class taught by Barbi Rouse this March. Elena Nipper involved the class more fully, placing them into groups and giving each group a website to evaluate and report to the class, making clear that when they complete the bibliography, the annotations should include the CARS evaluation. She has reported that the session went well and that students participated fully.
- Standardize the assignment with the same language among the 12 or 13 Cornerstone faculty to ensure all papers have keyword choice included in the bibliography assignment,. We have begun discussing this with Barbi Rouse, who provides leadership for Cornerstone faculty.

- Continue the same emphasis on scholarly versus popular periodicals in the instruction, but in the standardized assignment make clearer to students that they are to distinguish between those two either in the annotations or with a heading.
- Review the sample annotated bibliographies on the library website and see if any annotations need to be revised.
<http://www.vanguard.edu/Library/CornerstoneClassExamples/tabid/1827/Default.aspx>
- Discuss among the five librarians how we might make that short hour of instruction more effective, by enhancing student participation and leaving out the more extraneous things we say.
- Review the rubric to see how it might be made a more effective tool for us.
- Carry on with assessment in succeeding years, and make sure we get copies of the completed bibliographies from all or at least a large number of Cornerstone faculty in the future. This time we evaluated about 25% of the papers, and that seems like an appropriate number for future evaluations.

Appendix 1: CORNERSTONE CLASS HANDOUT 2009-2010

Library Web page <http://www.vanguard.edu/library> Good links to know about:

- Library Hours
- Connect from Off Campus
- Citing Sources (APA, MLA, etc.)

BESS—the pillars of good research

- **Boolean Operators**—AND narrows a search; OR expands a search; NOT narrows a search. Get in the habit of typing AND, OR, NOT in ALL CAPITAL LETTERS.

hybrid **OR** electric stress **AND** anxiety saturn **NOT** car

- **Evaluation**—What do you want to find in the end? How do you know you've found what you need? Is the information you've found appropriate for your literature review or research?
CARS: Credibility, Accuracy, Reasonableness, Support
- **Spelling**—Watch for multiple spellings of words and misspellings.
- **Synonyms**—words or phrases that mean the same thing; ask yourself what word academics would use for a concept, as opposed to what words the average person on the street would use

gerontology **OR** aging humor **OR** jokes **OR** laughter

Before you leave class today, 1) use VANPAC to find a book on your subject, pull it off the shelf, and bring it back to the lab, 2) use a database to find one scholarly journal article, and show the librarian you know what you're doing, and 3) use Google to find a really good web site.

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS CLASSIFICATION OUTLINE

- A -- GENERAL WORKS
- B -- PHILOSOPHY. PSYCHOLOGY (BF). RELIGION (BS-BIBLICAL STUDIES)
- C -- AUXILIARY SCIENCES OF HISTORY
- D -- HISTORY: GENERAL AND OLD WORLD (England, France, Russia, etc.)
- E -- HISTORY: AMERICA (US)
- F -- HISTORY: AMERICA (LOCAL)
- G -- GEOGRAPHY. ANTHROPOLOGY (GN). RECREATION, PHYSICAL EDUCATION (GV)
- H -- SOCIAL SCIENCE (BUSINESS—H-HG; SOCIOLOGY—HM-HQ)
- J -- POLITICAL SCIENCE
- K -- LAW
- L -- EDUCATION
- M -- MUSIC AND BOOKS ON MUSIC
- N -- FINE ARTS
- P -- LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE (PR British, PS US), COMMUNICATION, FILM STUDIES (PN)
- Q -- SCIENCE
- R -- MEDICINE
- S -- AGRICULTURE
- T -- TECHNOLOGY
- U -- MILITARY SCIENCE
- V -- NAVAL SCIENCE
- Z -- BIBLIOGRAPHY. LIBRARY SCIENCE. INFORMATION RESOURCES (GENERAL)

Appendix 2: Cornerstone Annotated Bibliography Rubric – Without Keywords					
	5	4	3	2	1
Types of sources (1 book, 1 journal, 1 magazine, 1 web page)	The student has included 4 types of sources, and from the annotation, he/she demonstrates an understanding of the differences between those sources, particularly between scholarly and popular periodicals.	The student has included 4 types of sources, but the annotations make no distinction between scholarly/popular periodicals.	The student has included 4 types of sources, but it is clear from the annotations that the student does not make any distinction between a book, periodicals, and a web site.	The student has included 4 citations, but only 3 types of sources; no scholarly journal is cited.	The student has included 1 or 2 types of sources, and clearly does not understand either the assignment or the difference in sources.
CARS evaluation of a web page	The student has thoroughly evaluated the web page using credibility, accuracy, reasonableness and support as keywords in the annotation, or mentions CARS in the annotation.	The student has evaluated the web page well, using all the concepts, though not the keywords, in CARS in evaluating it.	The student has made a good attempt at evaluating the web page, but he/she has omitted 1 or 2 of the components of CARS	The student has attempted to evaluate the web page but has made no mention of CARS.	The student has described the web page but has not evaluated or critiqued it.
Maximum score	10	8	6	4	2
Student's score					

Assessor's Initials _____

Appendix 3: Cornerstone Annotated Bibliography Rubric – With Keywords

Objectives	5	4	3	2	1
Keywords used in searching the topic	The student has considered the topic in depth and has chosen a number (5-7) of sophisticated keywords that demonstrate analysis and careful thought	The student has chosen only a few (1-2) keywords, but those are of high quality and match the topic well.	The student has given the topic some thought and has chosen several (3-5) adequate keywords	The student has chosen several (3-5) keywords, but the words are elementary and denote little thought given to the assignment	The student has chosen a minimum number (1-2) of the most obvious and least complex keywords. It is clear that almost no thought was given to the topic.
Types of sources (1 book, 1 journal, 1 magazine, 1 web page)	The student has included 4 types of sources, and from the annotation, he/she demonstrates an understanding of the differences between those sources, particularly between scholarly and popular periodicals.	The student has included 4 types of sources, but the annotations make no distinction between scholarly/popular periodicals.	The student has included 4 types of sources, but it is clear from the annotations that the student does not make any distinction between a book, periodicals, and a web site.	The student has included 4 citations, but only 3 types of sources; no scholarly journal is cited.	The student has included 1 or 2 types of sources, and clearly does not understand either the assignment or the difference in sources.
CARS evaluation of a web page	The student has thoroughly evaluated the web page using credibility, accuracy, reasonableness and support as keywords in the annotation, or mentions CARS in the annotation.	The student has evaluated the web page well, using all the concepts, though not the keywords, in CARS in evaluating it.	The student has made a good attempt at evaluating the web page, but he/she has omitted 1 or 2 of the components of CARS	The student has attempted to evaluate the web page but has made no mention of CARS.	The student has described the web page but has not evaluated or critiqued it.
Maximum score	15	12	9	6	3
Student's score					

Assessor's Initials _____