

Annotated bibliographies can help maximise benefit of literature research skills exercises

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Objectives

1. Transition to instructors' expectations of university essays
2. Induction into discipline culture
 - Refining and adapting existing skills
3. Provision of feedback
 - Timely and effective for students
 - Time-effective for staff
4. Reduction of procrastination
 - Conclusion from student evaluation

The Tool

Annotated bibliography

- (Traditionally) summary of content of resource
- Plus:
 - Justification of selection/relevance of references
 - A. Specific to criteria, if topic is instructor-defined
 - B. Relevant to argument/thesis if student-defined
 - Reflections on how helped further research
 - Full citation in required style

Our Project

English:

- On-going application in some courses
 - Transition to university's expectations & induction into discipline
- High-achieving students also experience bewilderment and period of adjustment to expectations
 - Retrospective survey of Honours and PhD students
 - Valued their experience of annotated bibliography

Tool can be applied across disciplines?

→ Trial in Genetics

Implementation in Genetics

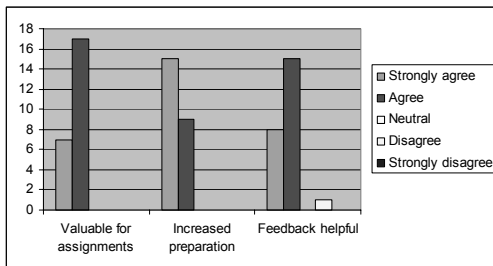
- Two small cohorts
 - 24 students total
 - Subset of second year class (unique component)
- Existing written and oral assessment
- “Value-add” to existing assessment exercises?
 - Trial annotated bibliography

i. Annotated bibliography	7%
ii. Oral presentation	29%
iii. Written essay	64%

Genetics Literature Research Exercise

- Week 1: General discussion of assignment
 Specific discussion of annotated bibliography
- Draft annotated reference list
 - Way of me giving you feedback early on
 - You're required to critically reflect on your reading and research
- Week 3: Submit annotated bibliography
- Week 4: Returned with feedback and mark (7%)
 → evaluation survey
- Week 7/8: Oral presentations (29%)
- Break 2: Submit essay (64%)

Positive Student Perceptions



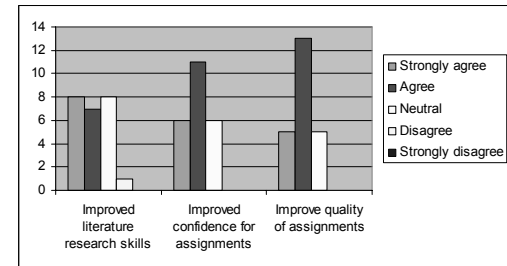
Most valuable aspect of annotated bibliography?

- “Forced me to get started, which would have been hard to do otherwise”
- “Forced me to get organised sooner (when I had the time) rather than later (when I didn't)”

Most valuable aspect of feedback?

- “Commendation of the original research article made me feel very confident using it”
- “Indication of how suitable articles are and aspects missing from research”

Some Ambivalent Perceptions



What do you think would most help you improve your literature research skills?

- “More practice”
- “Instruction in using search engines”
- “Workshop on using keywords to search”

Discussion

- Generally very positive response
- Negative responses very rare
- Literature supports integrated assessment tasks increasing perceived relevance and thus engagement
- Feedback from lecturer seems integral
- “forcing me to start early”
 - 10 / 24 students made this comment in open-ended question
 - Response unprompted by specific questions
- Timely identification ‘at risk’ students

Conclusions

- “forcing me to start early” seems to be reason for perceived value
- Annotated bibliographies can enhance student experience of assessments involving literature research
- Does it help students develop research skills?