


Beyond the Research Paper

DEVELOPING ALTERNATIVES TO TEACH LIBRARY RESEARCH



MIDDLE TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

Introductions




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Session Learning Outcome

- Faculty will be introduced to a variety of library assignments in order to better integrate library research into their classes.



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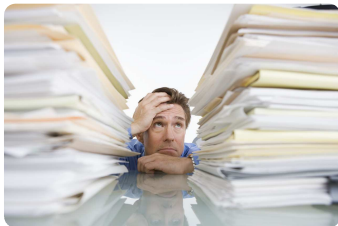
Overview



1. Considerations for Developing Research Assignments
2. Alternatives to the Research Paper
3. Avoiding Common Pitfalls

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Considering the Research Paper



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Word Association Exercise

RESEARCH PAPER

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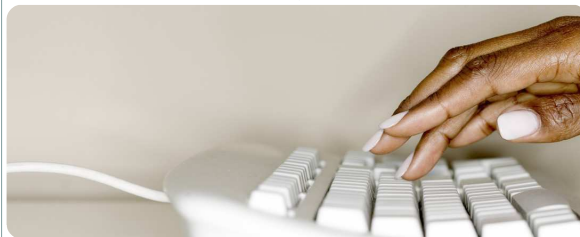
Discussion



1. Why the research paper?
2. What works?
3. What doesn't work?

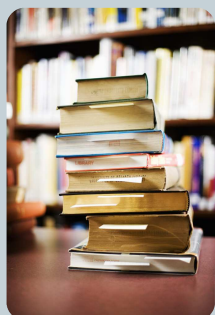
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Alternative Assignments



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Traditional Library Assignments

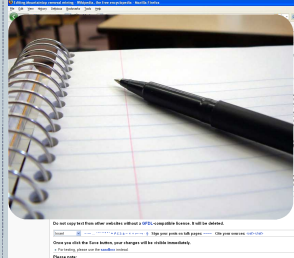


- Research Papers
- Article/Book Reviews
- Annotated Bibliography
- Literature Review
- Research Proposals

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Creative Library Assignments


- Original creative works
- Wikipedia articles
- Research diaries



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... Creative Library Assignments

- Peer-reviewing
- Compare and contrast
- Primary and secondary sources
- Research guides
- Bad studies



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Learning Outcomes Exercise

AUDIENCE RESPONSE

Identify the best assignment for each learning outcome

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Become familiar with professional literature in my field

1. Review an issue of a journal
2. Mimic the peer-review process
3. Perform an original song
4. Write a 15 pg research paper

0% 0% 0% 0%

Review an issue... Mimic the peer... Perform an orig... Write a 15pg...

Pozzebon, Vance, and West (2009)

Demonstrate an understanding of current thinking/scholarship on a topic

1. Write a book review
2. Write a lit review
3. Write a "how I researched this topic" diary
4. Write a 20 pg research paper

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Write a book r... Write a lit re... Write a "how I... Write a 20 pg...

Pozzebon, Vance, and West (2009)

Demonstrate effective search skills and the ability to think critically about information sources

1. Peer-review one another's writing
2. Review a bad study
3. Compile an annotated bib
4. Write a 25 pg research paper

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Peer-review one another... Review a bad study... Compile an annotated bib... Write a 25 pg research...

Pozzebon, Vance, and West (2009)

Understand the peer review process for academic journals

1. Scrutinize a Wikipedia article for errors
2. Review a journal article
3. Compare author guidelines for several journals
4. Write a 30 pg research paper

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Scrutinize a Wikipedia ar... Review a journal article... Compare author guidelines... Write a 30 pg research...

Pozzebon, Vance, and West (2009)

Demonstrate the ability to develop an argument, support it with quality sources and communicate it with effective writing

1. Write a literature review
2. Review a bad study or article
3. Critique a Wikipedia article
4. Write a 35 pg research paper

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Write a literature review... Review a bad study or ar... Critique a Wikipedia article... Write a 35 pg research...

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Avoiding Common Pitfalls

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Avoiding Common Pitfalls

- Some assignment strategies seem like a good idea but aren't
- Poorly designed research assignments are frustrating and inhibit learning
- The options outlined below won't be relevant in all cases, but hopefully some elements will help



Topic Selection and Development

- Students usually need help developing and narrowing topics
- The assignment's guidelines for topic selection shouldn't be too broad **or** too specific, e.g.
 - Too broad: "Write a term paper about school psychology"
 - Too specific: "Examine predictive bias for second grade reading outcomes from measures of early literacy skills in kindergarten with respect to English-language learners and ethnic subgroups"

Topic Selection and Development

- Assignment guidelines should explain how the topic should be treated and developed, e.g.
 - Compare and contrast _____ with _____
 - What is the role of _____ in relation to _____
- Directions like 'Discuss' and 'Write about' are vague
- Topic focus should be appropriate for paper's length
- Topics continue to develop throughout the research and writing process.
- Check-up on students after research has begun to discuss sources and topic development
- Showing progress can even be a part of the grade

Types of Sources



Types of Sources

- The assignments guidelines can help guide students to types of sources that would be most helpful for the topic and research purpose.
- Students usually need instruction on how to use different types of sources and where to find them in the library.



Types of Sources

- The library has most types of sources both in print and electronically
- Students need clear instructions about what types of sources to use and how to analyze the information
- Students often need to be shown how to combine information from different types of sources, e.g.
 - Reference book, monograph, peer-reviewed journal, statistic
 - Primary source, image, web site, peer-reviewed journal
 - Directory, business & company information, trade journal
- Prohibiting use of certain resources or certain formats adds an extra layer of complexity

Wrap-up & Conclusions

- Consider student learning outcomes when developing library research assignments
- Use creative assignments to sequence learning
- Be wary of common pitfalls



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Assessment Exercise

- Write down one thing you will take away from this session and put into practice with your classes



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Assessment Exercise Responses

- Author a Wikipedia article – great idea!
- Incorporating the use of “bad studies” in my research course.
- Consider using a book review or annotated bibliography in intro class.
- Peer review of student papers. I expect quality to rise w/ scrutiny by peers!
- “Peer review: students develop programs that address challenges to individuals and/or families. Having other students evaluate those programs would be a significant proportion of their grade for the assignment.”
- I’ll use the research diaries & guides to put into practice.

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Assessment Exercise Responses (cont.)

- Research diaries/journals or blogs – incorporate as tool to learn to find resources.
- A creative exercise is to have students do an annotated bibliography of the selected readings at the end of the chapter. This would tie into some critical thinking and searching but also knowledge acquisition. And will deepen their knowledge of the particular chapter.
- I would like to break free from the research paper and introduce some of the other assignment options (based on specific outcomes) into my teaching.
- Begin a research project involving a research journal, supplement an annotated bibliography, then give a choice of writing a research paper, Wikipedia entry, or creative entry with analysis.

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