

Engaging in Civic Action

As you are aware there are many issues and challenges in the communities from which we come. Families cannot meet the needs of their children. Elderly are lonely. People are homeless. Climate change impacts our lives. Parts of our community are in decay. Schools fail to prepare students for the world ahead.

One person can make a difference. Sometimes that difference is unassuming such as tutoring a high school student in chemistry. Or it can be more public such as being an AmeriCorps volunteer. It can be local such as developing discussion groups in the dorm on recognizing the signs of abuse perpetrated by a significant other. It can be small such as volunteering one day a week to bring your music talents to senior citizen. It can be large such as helping with the clean-up from hurricane Katrina.

The project for Teaching in and Learning From Underserved Communities aims to have you consider an issue or challenge that your community is dealing with and one that you are interested in. In considering this issue or challenge you will decide how to take some kind of action in order to make a difference. There are two tracks this can follow once you have an issue or challenge in mind. Track 1 is to locate an organization or community outreach program that deals with the issue or challenge in which you can plan to volunteer. Track 2 is to develop an initiative to help and ameliorate the challenge or issue. Which one to select is up to you.

Each of these tracks will allow you to become more deeply aware of the complexity of the challenge or issue of interest. You will also become more knowledgeable about the issue or challenge. You will interact with at least one person familiar with the issue or challenge. You will gain an understanding of how to provide your time or skills to make a difference.

The following pages articulate the parts of each track. See course calendar for due dates

Track 1 Volunteer Project pp. 2-16

Track 2 Action Initiative pp. 17-31

Track 1 – Volunteer Project

Some preamble on civic engagement goes here

Broad category of types of volunteers

- Business and Corporate – for those of you who go to college and work, your employer may have opportunities as part of its community outreach.
- Children and Youth – providing your time and talent to a social issue or community outreach project.
- Family Volunteering – work with your family members on a social issue or community outreach project
- Social Entrepreneurship - “Social entrepreneurs are individuals with innovative solutions to society’s most pressing social problems” (ASHOKA, n.d.)
- Students in Service – taking advantage of service learning opportunities. Developing a service learning opportunity for NCC students.

This project will evolve throughout the course. Each part builds (progressive focusing) to the final document. By the time you get ready to create the Volunteer Project you will have $\frac{3}{4}$ of the project completed.

ASHOKA. (n.d.). What is a social entrepreneur? Retrieved December 19, 2008, from http://www.ashoka.org/social_entrepreneur

Part 1

What’s the plan?

To prepare for Part I you will need to think about a community issue you have interest in. Select a community agency or outreach effort that works on this issue.

To think about possible issues and opportunities you may want to explore these links:

USA Freedom Corps <http://www.usafreedomcorps.gov/>

Volunteer for Prosperity (international) <http://www.volunteersforprosperity.gov/servenet.org> <http://servenet.org/>

Community Volunteer Center <http://www.volunteerillinois.org/>

Volunteer Opportunities – Du Page County <http://www.co.dupage.il.us/volunteer/>

Phase I will include the following

1. Background on the agency
2. Volunteer responsibilities
3. Agency Responsibilities
4. Your possible role as a volunteer
5. Contact information
6. Developing questions
7. Documentation

Part I Template

Background on the agency	What is the mission of the agency? Who does this agency primarily serve? How is the agency funded? How is the agency evaluated?
Volunteer responsibilities	State the range of opportunities that volunteers are able to do to help meet the mission.
Agency Responsibilities	State what training or guidance is provided to volunteers before donating your time and/or talents.
Your possible role as a volunteer	What is it about the opportunities presented at the agency that interest you? How does this fit your talents? How does this fit the time you have to give?
Contact information	Provide the name, e-mail, and phone number for a contact person at this agency who can talk to you about the work of this group.
Developing questions	At minimum what are four questions you would ask of agency or outreach project?
Documentation	Attach web information on the background of this agency. Attach a blank copy of the volunteer application.

Evaluation of Part I
Track 1
Overview

	Yes	No
Mission articulated	_____	_____
Clearly states the range of what volunteer can do	_____	_____
Clearly state what the agency's responsibilities are to prepare volunteers	_____	_____
Clearly stated fit to the volunteer opportunity of this agency	_____	_____
Reflection in depth on personal strengths, talents, or expertise	_____	_____
Contact information provided	_____	_____
Lists four or more questions to explore with an Representative of the community agency or outreach program	_____	_____
Appended documentation	_____	_____

Part II

What's really going on?

To prepare for Part II you need to locate and gain access to the person at the agency or community outreach project who knows about the work of this group.

In the process of locating the right person you may have the opportunity to network with other people in this area. This is an opportunity to connect or reconnect with those who may benefit you in the future.

Develop a series of questions you want answered related to

1. The purpose(s) of the group
2. The intent and expectation of volunteers.
3. Resources programs provided by the group
4. Process of evaluating their outreach efforts
5. Other information

Here are a few suggested questions (USA Freedom Corps, n.d.)

- What does your organization do?
- Who do you serve? (People in a certain geographic area, age group, etc.)
- What outcomes have your efforts produced?
- Do you have a specific philosophy guiding your work?
- How many volunteers are in your group? What are their responsibilities?
- Is there a designated volunteer coordinator who would be your point of contact?
- What is the time commitment?
- Do they provide assistance with travel, parking or other incidental expenses?
- Can you speak with others who have volunteered with the organization in the past?
- What opportunities are there for family members to accompany you/participate?

Process of Interviewing

This process has some steps you must take to be successful

1. Locate the key person. You may need to check the web site for contact information, or call the group, explain what you need so they can help you find the right person.
2. Gain access – Making the appointment.
 - a. Be clear with him/her about why you want to meet and what you hope to gain by meeting with him/her.
 - b. Think about a reasonable time frame for the meeting – 30 minutes, 60 minutes
3. Meet this person on his/her turf...go to them. Dress appropriately.
 - a. Have your main questions prepared ahead of time. It is possible he/she may want to see your main questions ahead of time.
4. Follow-up
 - a. Send a thank-you within a day of the interview – preferably a handwritten one...yes, even in the age of e-mail
 - b. As you begin to make sense of what this person has shared with you, write/call and let them know what you have come to understand...this will allow you to cultivate and maintain a relationship with this person.

Write-up

Writing a Summary/Analysis of the Interviews

1. State what you hoped to achieve during the interview. What were the channels you needed to go through to gain access to this person?
2. Briefly share the background of the person you interviewed and his/her role in the agency or community outreach project.
3. List the issues you wanted to talk about and the questions you asked.
4. What did you find out? Write about the facts uncovered, insights gained, and your reflective reaction.
5. State the benefits of meeting this person and others who may have helped you network to the individual you interviewed.

Evaluation of Part II
Track 1
Interview write-up

The write-up clearly presents a coherent foundation around which the interview was organized.	5	3	1/0	The write-up lacks a foundation.
Paper makes a strong, well-supported explanation of what was gained from the interview	5	3	1/0	The paper focuses on description rather than analysis.
Interpretation includes appropriate discussion of the role of contexts in the development of the organization	5	3	1/0	Argument for an interpretation is made sporadically or not well-supported.
Examples are explained in detail, and the path from interview to inference is clear and easy to follow.	5	3	1/0	Examples may lack details or their connection to your interpretation may be sometimes unclear.
Snippets of interview data are used effectively to illustrate and support assertions.	5	3	1/0	Snippets missing or relevance questioned
The writer demonstrates a good grasp of standard writing conventions (e.g., spelling, punctuation, capitalization, grammar, syntax, usage, paragraphing) and uses conventions effectively to enhance readability (tabs, page numbers). Errors are so few that just minor touch-ups would get this piece ready to share.		3	1/0	
Headings structured follows MLA or APA format. Heading titles are meaningful.		3	1/0	

Part III

What is known about your topic?

In Part III you will be exploring the issue, challenge or problem that is being addressed by a community agency or outreach program. You need to find sources that will help you find develop an understanding of

1. the background of this issue/challenge (what is its history?)
2. what needs to happen so that the issue/challenge is effectively addressed
3. who is working on this issue/challenge

Guidelines for Annotated Bibliographies

Why should I write an annotated bibliography?

To learn about your topic: Writing an annotated bibliography is excellent preparation for a research project. Just collecting sources for a bibliography is useful, but when you have to write annotations for each source, you must read each source more carefully. You begin to read more critically instead of just collecting information. At the professional level, annotated bibliographies allow you to see what has been done in the literature and where your own research or scholarship can fit. To help you formulate a thesis: every good research paper is an argument. The purpose of research is to state and support a thesis; a very important part of research is developing a thesis that is debatable, interesting, and current. Writing an annotated bibliography can help you gain a good perspective on what is being said about your topic. By reading and responding to a variety of sources on a topic, you'll start to see what the issues are, what people are arguing about, and you'll then be able to develop your own point of view, entering the conversation with your project.

To help other researchers: Scholarly annotated bibliographies are sometimes published. They provide a comprehensive overview of everything important that has been and is being said about that topic. You may not ever get your annotated bibliography published, but as a researcher, you might want to look for one that has been published about your topic.

What is an annotated bibliography?

Definitions: A **bibliography** is a list of sources (books, journals, websites, periodicals, etc.) used for researching a topic. Bibliographies are sometimes called "references" or "works cited" depending on the style format you are using. A bibliography usually just includes the bibliographic information (i.e., the author, title, publisher, etc.).

An **annotation** is a summary and brief evaluation of the value of an individual source.

So, an **annotated bibliography** includes a summary and/or evaluation of each of the sources (alphabetically listed). Depending on your project or the assignment, your annotations may do one or more of the following:

Summarize: Some annotations merely summarize the source. What are the main arguments? What is the point of this book or article? What topics are covered? If someone asked what this

article/book is about, what would you say? The length of your annotations will determine how detailed your summary is.

Assess: After summarizing a source, it may be helpful to evaluate it. Is it a useful source? How does it compare with other sources in your bibliography? Is the information reliable? Is it this source biased or objective? What is the goal of this source?

Reflect: Once you've summarized and assessed a source, you need to ask how it fits into your research. Was this source helpful to you? How does it help you shape your argument? How can you use this source in your research project? Has it changed how you think about your topic?

Format: The format of an annotated bibliography can vary, so ask for specific guidelines and request a sample from your professors. (See sample bibliography, attached.)

The bibliographic information: Bibliographic information of the source (the title, author, publisher, date, etc.) is written in either APA or MLA format.

The annotations: Annotations for each source are written in paragraph form. The lengths of the annotations can vary from several sentences to a page, depending on your aims. A few sentences of general summary followed by several sentences of how the work fits into your project serves you well when you begin to draft.

Paraphrase: Write it in Your Own Words: Paraphrasing is one way to use a text in your own writing without directly quoting source material. Anytime you are taking information from a source that is not your own, you need to specify where you got that information.

A paraphrase is...

- Your own version of essential information and ideas expressed by someone else, presented in a new form.
- One way (when accompanied by accurate documentation) to borrow from a source.
- A more detailed restatement than a summary, which focuses on a single main idea.

Paraphrasing is a valuable skill because...

- It is better than quoting information from an unremarkable passage.
- It helps you control the temptation to quote too much.
- The mental process required for successful paraphrasing helps you grasp the full meaning of the original.

6 Steps to Effective Paraphrasing

1. Reread the original passage until you understand its full meaning.
2. Set the original aside, and write out your paraphrase.
3. Jot down a few words below your paraphrase to remind you later how you envision using this material. At the top, write a key word to indicate the subject.

4. Check your rendition with the original to make sure that your version accurately expresses all the essential information in a new form.
5. Use quotation marks to identify any unique term or phrase you borrowed exactly from the source (and then cite in parentheses).
6. Record the source (including the page) so that you can credit it easily if you decide to use the material in your paper.

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Sample Annotated Bibliography on Charter Schools

General Mm/Thesis of Paper: Based on four criteria--equality, evaluation, efficiency, and excellence—I'll argue that school vouchers do not suffice as a viable option to America's failing schools, because privatizing education through such programs fails to solve problems already existing in public schools; instead, they further aggravate the problems.

House, Ernest R. Schools for Sale. New York: Teachers College Press, 1998.

House's book is directed at policymakers and the general public concerned about educational issues in America. The author believes that educational policy is in part decided on by policymakers who connect it with national economic concerns, and many times educational policies fail because of this. The book is a critique of American educational policy over the past 20 years and how education and economic progress have come to be associated by policymakers. Additionally, privatization of education and school vouchers are argued as not being feasible, at least from the author's perspective. This is biased source, but a good source in the sense that it deals specifically with economic and educational policies and makes a case against free market policies for improving America's schools. The evidence provided by the author in this book will be quite useful and specific when discussing the economic aspect of privatization and school vouchers.

Kemerer, Frank R. "The Legal Status of Privatization and Vouchers." Levin 39-71.

Levin, Henry M., ed. "Studying Privatization in Education." Privatizing Education. Boulder:Westview Press, 2001.

This is a book for those interested in the privatization of education and for those studying the field and demand research. The book is about the privatization of education, who the stakeholders are in the privatization, how the poor play into the school vouchers issue, and how school vouchers should be evaluated. Different chapters of the book are written by certain authors with respect to the many questions being raised about whether the marketplace can offer better schooling. There appears to be a wide variety of perspectives on the issue of privatization within the book, and it is a good source to determine who the stakeholders are and who benefits from privatization.

Lowe, Robert. "The Perils of School Vouchers," Rethinking Schools — An Agenda for Change. Ed. David Levine, et al. New York: The New York Press, 1995.

This is an article from the book that focuses on education reform and more specifically school vouchers. The book is intended for the general public and for those who are concerned about educational reform issues. The article is a critique of school vouchers and the author believes vouchers will not bring excellence or equity to America's schools. Some history surrounding voucher programs and arguments against school vouchers are provided. This is a biased article that provides good information on why vouchers do not lead to equality and excellence, but in fact, quite the opposite.

Myers, David E. "Criteria for Evaluating School Voucher Studies." Levin 303-316.

Natriello, Gary. "Vouchers, Privatization, and the Poor." Levin 263-277.

Schneider, Mark. "Information and Choice in Educational Privatization." Levin 72-102.

Weil, Danny. School Vouchers and Privatization. Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, Inc., 2002.

This reference handbook (from a series of Contemporary Education Issues examines the privatization of education and, more specifically, private choice, school vouchers, and other private reform efforts. Intended for those interested in the issue of privatization and school vouchers, the book also advances further research by exploring the controversies, arguments, history, research, and conclusions surrounding the privatization of education. A context surrounding arguments for or against privatization of education and associated reform efforts is provided, and there appears to be no bias in the format. Well's text provides a strong source that presents both sides of the issue and offers considerable scope for thinking through the issue more generally. In particular, evidence from the reference handbook is most helpful.

Yglesias, Matthew. "The Verdict on Vouchers," American Prospect. February, 2004: 51-53.

This is a news article for the general public and for those interested in school voucher studies about whether vouchers are worth the effort. The article describes a study funded by the right and completed by a Harvard professor that tried to prove whether or not school vouchers were successful in certain areas in which they had been implemented. The study does not conclusively prove that school vouchers are successful and test scores did not add up to expected levels. The author appears to be biased against scientific methods to debate school vouchers, but rather in favor of having an ideological debate over the role of public institutions in civic life. The overall conclusion from the study and from the author's opinion is that privatization of schools through the market does not improve academic achievement. This is a good source because it discusses an actual study and contains some recent evidence of school vouchers' effectiveness, or lack thereof

Annotated Bibliography
Tracks 1 and 2
Evaluation Sheet

Components	Excellent 8-10 points	Good 5-7 points	Incomplete/ Unacceptable 4-1 points
Statement of organization interest and/or context provided _____ Five points	Present 5 points Not present 0 points		
Selection of sources _____ points	(a) Balance of sources. (b) Range of sources (i.e., variety, articles, papers etc. and variety of authors).	(a) Sources somewhat balanced. (b) Some range of sources and authors.	(a) Sources not balanced only focused on one type. (b) Too many from similar source (e.g., used articles published in one journal or) or author. (c) number of entries makes it difficult to tell
Focus of annotated bibliography _____ points	The fit between the context/topic and the readings is excellent.	Relevance is adequate and literature generally fits the context/topic.	(a) Relevance to research topic/context is unclear. (b) Readings don't make sense in terms of the context/topic. (c) number of entries makes it difficult to tell
Presentation of annotated bibliography _____ points	(a) Points addressed succinctly. (b) eight annotations.	(a) Most follow suggested format and present key points with the addition of other information. (b) seven to five annotations	(a) Articles not summarized using guidelines. (b) Excessive details given. (c) four – 1 annotations
Citations _____ points	MLA or APA style format correctly applied.	Few consistent errors in citations (MLA or APA).	MLA or APA not carefully followed.
Grammar syntax, and Mechanics _____ Points (four points possible)	(a) Proofread for spelling (b) Proofread for mechanics, grammar and syntax (c) Pages numbered (d) Document assembled and stapled		

Action Project

What action will I take to contribute my time or skills to the community?

It has been said that

People volunteer for a wide variety of reasons, especially wanting to help others. But it's also OK to want some benefits for yourself from volunteering.

Some people are uncomfortable with the notion that a volunteer "benefits" from doing volunteer work. There is a long tradition of seeing volunteering as a form of charity, based on altruism and selflessness. The best volunteering does involve the desire to serve others, but this does not exclude other motivations, as well.

Instead of considering volunteering as something you do **for** people who are not as fortunate as yourself, begin to think of it as an **exchange** (Ellis, 2008).

This part of the project puts things together and provides an opportunity for you to more clearly state the actions you will take to help with an issue/challenge.

What to include in the Volunteer project

Use the following to guide the development of your service project and to write up the full report.

- Description of the issue/challenge that you are addressing (information will come from or be inspired by Parts I, II and/or III)
- What you learned about the issue/challenge (may come from Part 2 and Part 3)
- Description of the community organization or outreach program and their efforts in tackling the issue/challenge
- Describe your plan of action to participate (see next page for the areas to include in this section)
- Follow-up plans (How are you going to know that what you have done is effective?).

Description of your volunteer experience

Describe your plan of action to meet the intent of your target strategy and/or activity

- Describe in detail what you will do.
- State why this is of interest to you.
- State the constraints you may have that prevent you from participating
- State the benefits to you for participating
- State what resources are available to help you prepare to participate
- State what resources you may need in order to participate

Ellis, S. (2008). Why volunteer? Retrieved December 19, 2008, from <http://www.energizeinc.com/art/awhy.html>.

Action Project
Track 1
Evaluation

Ideas and Content ____/30
 Development Process ____36
 Organization and Conventions (Form) ____/19
 Total ____/85

	10	5	2/0
Ideas and Content	This paper is clear and focused. Purpose clearly stated.	Basic content present to assist the reader in understanding.	The paper has no clear stated purpose. To extract meaning from the text, the reader must make inferences based on sketchy or missing details.
	Sources effectively used to explore/explain/provide understanding of the issue or challenge	Sources used to explore/explain/provide understanding of the issue or challenge	Use of sources unconnected from the issue or challenge Use of sources limited
	Followed an outline/plan that hit major areas of the action project to fully describe the genesis of the action, process of development, and reflection.	Majority of areas addressed in the paper	Missing key areas in the paper
	12	8	e/0
Plan of action	Plan clearly articulated	Plan stated	Plan not stated clearly or missing.
	Presents procedures for carrying out the plan in easy-to-follow steps that are detailed.	Presents procedures where most of the steps are understandable; some lack of detail.	Presents procedures for carrying out the plan where the steps are not understandable; most are confusing and lack detail
	Efforts on the effectiveness of the efficacy of the action taken well thought through.	Efforts on the effectiveness sufficient to provide evidence on the efficacy of the action takes	Efforts on the effectiveness not effective in providing evidence

	3	2	1/0
Organization	The organization enhances and highlights the central idea or theme. The order and structure of information is compelling and moves the reader through the text.	The organizational structure is strong enough to move the reader through the text without too much confusion.	The writing lacks a clear sense of direction. Ideas, details, or events seem strung together in a loose or random fashion; there is no identifiable internal structure.
Conventions	The writer demonstrates a good grasp of standard writing conventions (e.g., spelling, punctuation, capitalization, grammar, usage, paragraphing) and uses conventions effectively to enhance readability. Errors are so few that just minor touch-ups would get this piece ready to share.	The writer shows reasonable control over a limited range of standard writing conventions. Conventions are sometimes handled well and enhance readability; at other times, errors are distracting and impair readability.	Errors in spelling, punctuation, capitalization, usage and grammar and/or paragraphing repeatedly distract the reader and make the text difficult to read.
	Headings structured follows MLA/APA format. Heading titles are meaningful. Headings are used to announce important sections of the document.	A majority of the headings follow MLA/APA style. Heading titles are present. Headings announce most of the important sections of the paper.	Headings do not follow MLA/APA style. Headings are not used or sparsely used.
	Citations in the paper follow MLA/APA style.	A majority of the citations in the paper follow MLA/APA style.	Majority of citations do not follow MLA/APA style. Citations missing.
	Reference list in APA style.	A majority of the reference list is in APA style.	A majority of the reference list does not follow APA style.
	Paper assembled with a cover page, meaningfully titled, pages numbered, and fastened. Maximum of four points		

Track 2 –Action Initiative

Used to create an initiative to address an issue, challenge, or problem

“Organizers and leaders of civic engagement often face issues and challenges that require well-developed plans and problem-solving approaches. Action planning allows organizers to focus their purpose and goals, as well as produce written plans and documentation that can be used to persuade others, garner resources, and move forward” (Acting up, n.d.).

This is your opportunity to create an initiative. This project will evolve throughout the course. Each part builds (progressive focusing) to the final document. By the time you get ready to create the Action Initiative you will have ¾ of the project completed.

Part 1

What's the plan?

To prepare for Part I you will need to think about a community issue you have interest in. Find information on how your community may currently be addressing this issue.

To think about possible issues and opportunities you may want to explore these links:

USA Freedom Corps <http://www.usafreedomcorps.gov/>

Volunteer for Prosperity (international) <http://www.volunteersforprosperity.gov/>

servenet.org <http://servenet.org/>

Community Volunteer Center <http://www.volunteerillinois.org/>

Volunteer Opportunities – Du Page County <http://www.co.dupage.il.us/volunteer/>

Phase I will include the following

1. Background on the issue
2. Community action
3. Your possible role as a volunteer
4. Contact information
5. Developing questions
6. Documentation

Phase I Template

Background on the issue	What is the issue? How does it impact your community?
Community action	State the range of community response to this issue? How may neighbor communities address this issue or challenge?
Individuals acting	Who is working on this issue or challenge in your community? Describe some of his/her efforts.
Your possible role in taking action	What is it about the issue or challenge that interest you? How does this fit your talents? How does this fit the time you have to give?
Contact information	Provide the name, e-mail, and phone number for a contact person at this

	agency who can talk to you about the work of this group.
Developing questions	At minimum what are four questions you would ask.
Documentation	Attach web information on the background of this person and any action initiatives he/she has launched.

Evaluation of Part I
Track 2
Overview

	Yes	No
Mission articulated	_____	_____
Clearly states the range of what volunteer can do	_____	_____
Clearly state what the agency's responsibilities are to prepare volunteers	_____	_____
Clearly stated fit to the volunteer opportunity of this agency	_____	_____
Reflection in depth on personal strengths, talents, or expertise	_____	_____
Contact information provided	_____	_____
Lists four or more questions to explore with an Representative of the community agency or outreach program	_____	_____
Appended documentation	_____	_____

Part II

What's really going on?

To prepare for Part II you need to locate and gain access to a person in the community who knows about the issue or challenge you are interested in.

In the process of locating the right person you may have the opportunity to network with other people in this area. This is an opportunity to connect or reconnect with those who may benefit you in the future.

Develop a series of questions you want answered related to

1. The purpose(s) of the group
2. The intent and expectation of volunteers.
3. Resources programs provided by the group
4. Process of evaluating their outreach efforts
5. Other information

Here are a few suggested questions

- What can you tell me about _____?
- Who is affected by _____/
- What efforts to date have been tried?
- Which have been the most successful?

Process of Interviewing

This process has some steps you must take to be successful

1. Locate the key person. You may need to check the web site for contact information, or call the group, explain what you need so they can help you find the right person.
2. Gain access – Making the appointment.
 - c. Be clear with him/her about why you want to meet and what you hope to gain by meeting with him/her.
 - d. Think about a reasonable time frame for the meeting – 30 minutes, 60 minutes
3. Meet this person on his/her turf...go to them. Dress appropriately.
 - b. Have your main questions prepared ahead of time. It is possible he/she may want to see your main questions ahead of time.
4. Follow-up
 - c. Send a thank-you within a day of the interview – preferably a handwritten one...yes, even in the age of e-mail
 - d. As you begin to make sense of what this person has shared with you, write/call and let them know what you have come to understand...this will allow you to cultivate and maintain a relationship with this person.

Write-up

Writing a Summary/Analysis of the Interviews

1. State what you hoped to achieve during the interview. What were the channels you needed to go through to gain access to this person?

2. Briefly share the background of the person you interviewed and his/her role in the agency or community outreach project.
3. List the issues you wanted to talk about and the questions you asked.
4. What did you find out? Write about the facts uncovered, insights gained, and your reflective reaction.
5. State the benefits of meeting this person and others who may have helped you network to the individual you interviewed.

Evaluation of Part II
Track 1 and 2
Interview write-up

The write-up clearly presents a coherent foundation around which the interview was organized.	5	3	1/0	The write-up lacks a foundation.
Paper makes a strong, well-supported explanation of what was gained from the interview	5	3	1/0	The paper focuses on description rather than analysis.
Interpretation includes appropriate discussion of the role of contexts in the development of the organization	5	3	1/0	Argument for an interpretation is made sporadically or not well-supported.
Examples are explained in detail, and the path from interview to inference is clear and easy to follow.	5	3	1/0	Examples may lack details or their connection to your interpretation may be sometimes unclear.
Snippets of interview data are used effectively to illustrate and support assertions.	5	3	1/0	Snippets missing or relevance questioned
The writer demonstrates a good grasp of standard writing conventions (e.g., spelling, punctuation, capitalization, grammar, syntax, usage, paragraphing) and uses conventions effectively to enhance readability (tabs, page numbers). Errors are so few that just minor touch-ups would get this piece ready to share.		3	1/0	
Headings structured follows MLA or APA format. Heading titles are meaningful.		3	1/0	

Part III

What is known about your issue or challenge?

In Part III you will be exploring the issue, challenge or problem that you wish to address. You need to find sources that will help you find develop an understanding of

1. the background of this issue/challenge (what is its history?)
2. what needs to happen so that the issue/challenge is effectively addressed
3. who is working on this issue/challenge

Guidelines for Annotated Bibliographies

Why should I write an annotated bibliography?

To learn about your topic: Writing an annotated bibliography is excellent preparation for a research project. Just collecting sources for a bibliography is useful, but when you have to write annotations for each source, you must read each source more carefully. You begin to read more critically instead of just collecting information. At the professional level, annotated bibliographies allow you to see what has been done in the literature and where your own research or scholarship can fit. To help you formulate a thesis: every good research paper is an argument. The purpose of research is to state and support a thesis; a very important part of research is developing a thesis that is debatable, interesting, and current. Writing an annotated bibliography can help you gain a good perspective on what is being said about your topic. By reading and responding to a variety of sources on a topic, you'll start to see what the issues are, what people are arguing about, and you'll then be able to develop your own point of view, entering the conversation with your project.

To help other researchers: Scholarly annotated bibliographies are sometimes published. They provide a comprehensive overview of everything important that has been and is being said about that topic. You may not ever get your annotated bibliography published, but as a researcher, you might want to look for one that has been published about your topic.

What is an annotated bibliography?

Definitions: A **bibliography** is a list of sources (books, journals, websites, periodicals, etc.) used for researching a topic. Bibliographies are sometimes called "references" or "works cited" depending on the style format you are using. A bibliography usually just includes the bibliographic information (i.e., the author, title, publisher, etc.).

An **annotation** is a summary and brief evaluation of the value of an individual source.

So, an **annotated bibliography** includes a summary and/or evaluation of each of the sources (alphabetically listed). Depending on your project or the assignment, your annotations may do one or more of the following:

Summarize: Some annotations merely summarize the source. What are the main arguments? What is the point of this book or article? What topics are covered? If someone asked what this

article/book is about, what would you say? The length of your annotations will determine how detailed your summary is.

Assess: After summarizing a source, it may be helpful to evaluate it. Is it a useful source? How does it compare with other sources in your bibliography? Is the information reliable? Is it this source biased or objective? What is the goal of this source?

Reflect: Once you've summarized and assessed a source, you need to ask how it fits into your research. Was this source helpful to you? How does it help you shape your argument? How can you use this source in your research project? Has it changed how you think about your topic?

Format: The format of an annotated bibliography can vary, so ask for specific guidelines and request a sample from your professors. (See sample bibliography, attached.)

The bibliographic information: Bibliographic information of the source (the title, author, publisher, date, etc.) is written in either APA or MLA format.

The annotations: Annotations for each source are written in paragraph form. The lengths of the annotations can vary from several sentences to a page, depending on your aims. A few sentences of general summary followed by several sentences of how the work fits into your project serves you well when you begin to draft.

Paraphrase: Write it in Your Own Words: Paraphrasing is one way to use a text in your own writing without directly quoting source material. Anytime you are taking information from a source that is not your own, you need to specify where you got that information.

A paraphrase is...

- Your own version of essential information and ideas expressed by someone else, presented in a new form.
- One way (when accompanied by accurate documentation) to borrow from a source.
- A more detailed restatement than a summary, which focuses on a single main idea.

Paraphrasing is a valuable skill because...

- It is better than quoting information from an unremarkable passage.
- It helps you control the temptation to quote too much.
- The mental process required for successful paraphrasing helps you grasp the full meaning of the original.

6 Steps to Effective Paraphrasing

1. Reread the original passage until you understand its full meaning.
2. Set the original aside, and write out your paraphrase.
3. Jot down a few words below your paraphrase to remind you later how you envision using this material. At the top, write a key word to indicate the subject.

4. Check your rendition with the original to make sure that your version accurately expresses all the essential information in a new form.
5. Use quotation marks to identify any unique term or phrase you borrowed exactly from the source (and then cite in parentheses).
6. Record the source (including the page) so that you can credit it easily if you decide to use the material in your paper.

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Sample Annotated Bibliography on Charter Schools

General Mm/Thesis of Paper: Based on four criteria--equality, evaluation, efficiency, and excellence—I'll argue that school vouchers do not suffice as a viable option to America's failing schools, because privatizing education through such programs fails to solve problems already existing in public schools; instead, they further aggravate the problems.

House, Ernest R. Schools for Sale. New York: Teachers College Press, 1998.

House's book is directed at policymakers and the general public concerned about educational issues in America. The author believes that educational policy is in part decided on by policymakers who connect it with national economic concerns, and many times educational policies fail because of this. The book is a critique of American educational policy over the past 20 years and how education and economic progress have come to be associated by policymakers. Additionally, privatization of education and school vouchers are argued as not being feasible, at least from the author's perspective. This is a biased source, but a good source in the sense that it deals specifically with economic and educational policies and makes a case against free market policies for improving America's schools. The evidence provided by the author in this book will be quite useful and specific when discussing the economic aspect of privatization and school vouchers.

Kemerer, Frank R. "The Legal Status of Privatization and Vouchers." Levin 39-71.

Levin, Henry M., ed. "Studying Privatization in Education." Privatizing Education. Boulder: Westview Press, 2001.

This is a book for those interested in the privatization of education and for those studying the field and demand research. The book is about the privatization of education, who the stakeholders are in the privatization, how the poor play into the school vouchers issue, and how school vouchers should be evaluated. Different chapters of the book are written by certain authors with respect to the many questions being raised about whether the marketplace can offer better schooling. There appears to be a wide variety of perspectives on the issue of privatization within the book, and it is a good source to determine who the stakeholders are and who benefits from privatization.

Lowe, Robert. "The Perils of School Vouchers," Rethinking Schools — An Agenda for Change. Ed. David Levine, et al. New York: The New York Press, 1995.

This is an article from the book that focuses on education reform and more specifically school vouchers. The book is intended for the general public and for those who are concerned about educational reform issues. The article is a critique of school vouchers and the author believes vouchers will not bring excellence or equity to America's schools. Some history surrounding voucher programs and arguments against school vouchers are provided. This is a biased article that provides good information on why vouchers do not lead to equality and excellence, but in fact, quite the opposite.

Myers, David E. "Criteria for Evaluating School Voucher Studies." Levin 303-316.

Natriello, Gary. "Vouchers, Privatization, and the Poor." Levin 263-277.

Schneider, Mark. "Information and Choice in Educational Privatization." Levin 72-102.

Weil, Danny. School Vouchers and Privatization. Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, Inc., 2002.

This reference handbook (from a series of Contemporary Education Issues examines the privatization of education and, more specifically, private choice, school vouchers, and other private reform efforts. Intended for those interested in the issue of privatization and school vouchers, the book also advances further research by exploring the controversies, arguments, history, research, and conclusions surrounding the privatization of education. A context surrounding arguments for or against privatization of education and associated reform efforts is provided, and there appears to be no bias in the format. Well's text provides a strong source that presents both sides of the issue and offers considerable scope for thinking through the issue more generally. In particular, evidence from the reference handbook is most helpful.

Yglesias, Matthew. "The Verdict on Vouchers," American Prospect. February, 2004: 51-53.

This is a news article for the general public and for those interested in school voucher studies about whether vouchers are worth the effort. The article describes a study funded by the right and completed by a Harvard professor that tried to prove whether or not school vouchers were successful in certain areas in which they had been implemented. The study does not conclusively prove that school vouchers are successful and test scores did not add up to expected levels. The author appears to be biased against scientific methods to debate school vouchers, but rather in favor of having an ideological debate over the role of public institutions in civic life. The overall conclusion from the study and from the author's opinion is that privatization of schools through the market does not improve academic achievement. This is a good source because it discusses an actual study and contains some recent evidence of school vouchers' effectiveness, or lack thereof

Annotated Bibliography
Tracks 1 and 2
Evaluation Sheet

Components	Excellent 8-10 points	Good 5-7 points	Incomplete/ Unacceptable 4-1 points
Statement of organization interest and/or context provided _____ Five points	<i>Present 5 points</i> <i>Not present 0 points</i>		
Selection of sources _____ points	(a) Balance of sources. (b) Range of sources (i.e., variety, articles, papers etc. and variety of authors).	(c) Sources somewhat balanced. (d) Some range of sources and authors.	(a) Sources not balanced only focused on one type. (b) Too many from similar source (e.g., used articles published in one journal or) or author. (c) number of entries makes it difficult to tell
Focus of annotated bibliography _____ points	The fit between the context/topic and the readings is excellent.	Relevance is adequate and literature generally fits the context/topic.	(a) Relevance to research topic/context is unclear. (b) Readings don't make sense in terms of the context/topic. (c) number of entries makes it difficult to tell
Presentation of annotated bibliography _____ points	(a) Points addressed succinctly. (b) eight annotations.	(a) Most follow suggested format and present key points with the addition of other information. (b) seven to five annotations	(a) Articles not summarized using guidelines. (b) Excessive details given. (c) four – 1 annotations
Citations _____ points	MLA or APA style format correctly applied.	Few consistent errors in citations (MLA or APA).	MLA or APA not carefully followed.
Grammar syntax, and Mechanics _____ Points (four points possible)	(d) Proofread for spelling (e) Proofread for mechanics, grammar and syntax (f) Pages numbered (d) Document assembled and stapled		

Action Initiative

What action will I take to contribute my idea to the community?

Now that you

Your original action plan will have several parts

- Identifying the issue or challenge
- Evaluating the challenge
- Creating a mission statement
- Creating goals
- Constructing action steps

Mission Statement

Criteria for an effective mission statement (Acting up, n.d.)

- ◆ Focuses sharply and is short
- ◆ Speaks clearly and is easily understood
- ◆ Defines why we do what we do
- ◆ Does not prescribe means
- ◆ Has a sufficiently broad tone
- ◆ Provides direction for doing the right things
- ◆ Addresses our opportunities
- ◆ Matches our competence
- ◆ Inspires our commitment
- ◆ Says what, in the end, we want to be remembered for

Goals

- a. These should be specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and time-bound (SMART).

Issues and Background

Action Steps

- a. Need
- b. Constraints
- c. Resources Available
- d. Resources Needed
- e. State who will be responsible for coordinating the action you are proposing
- f. State the time frame necessary
- g. State what the outcomes from the action will be

Acting up: Action plan development. (n.d.). Retrieved December 19, 2008, from Idealist on Campus

<http://www.idealists.org/if/ioc/en/StaticFile/Viewer/default?url=/ioc/learn/curriculum/index.html>

Action Initiative**Track 2****Evaluation**

Ideas and Content ____/30 Development Process ____36 Organization and Conventions (Form) ____/19 Total ____/85

	10	5	2/0
Ideas and Content	This paper is clear and focused. Purpose clearly stated.	Basic content present to assist the reader in understanding.	The paper has no clear stated purpose. To extract meaning from the text, the reader must make inferences based on sketchy or missing details.
	Sources effectively used to explore/explain/provide understanding the issue or challenge	Sources used to explore/explain/provide understanding of the issue or challenge	Use of sources unconnected from the issue or challenge Use of sources limited
	Followed an outline/plan that hit major areas of the action project to fully describe the genesis of the action, process of development, and reflection.	Majority of areas addressed in the paper	Missing key areas in the paper
	12	8	e/0
Plan of action	Plan clearly articulated	Plan stated	Plan not stated clearly or missing.
	Presents procedures for carrying out the plan in easy-to-follow steps that are detailed.	Presents procedures where most of the steps are understandable; some lack of detail.	Presents procedures for carrying out the plan where the steps are not understandable; most are confusing and lack detail
	Efforts on the effectiveness of the efficacy of the action taken well thought through.	Efforts on the effectiveness sufficient to provide evidence on the efficacy of the action takes	Efforts on the effectiveness not effective in providing evidence

	3	2	1/0
Organization	The organization enhances and highlights the central idea or theme. The order and structure of information is compelling and moves the reader through the text.	The organizational structure is strong enough to move the reader through the text without too much confusion.	The writing lacks a clear sense of direction. Ideas, details, or events seem strung together in a loose or random fashion; there is no identifiable internal structure.
Conventions	The writer demonstrates a good grasp of standard writing conventions (e.g., spelling, punctuation, capitalization, grammar, usage, paragraphing) and uses conventions effectively to enhance readability. Errors are so few that just minor touch-ups would get this piece ready to share.	The writer shows reasonable control over a limited range of standard writing conventions. Conventions are sometimes handled well and enhance readability; at other times, errors are distracting and impair readability.	Errors in spelling, punctuation, capitalization, usage and grammar and/or paragraphing repeatedly distract the reader and make the text difficult to read.
	Headings structured follows MLA/APA format. Heading titles are meaningful. Headings are used to announce important sections of the document.	A majority of the headings follow MLA/APA style. Heading titles are present. Headings announce most of the important sections of the paper.	Headings do not follow MLA/APA style. Headings are not used or sparsely used.
	Citations in the paper follow MLA/APA style.	A majority of the citations in the paper follow MLA/APA style.	Majority of citations do not follow MLA/APA style. Citations missing.
	Reference list in APA style.	A majority of the reference list is in APA style.	A majority of the reference list does not follow APA style.
	Paper assembled with a cover page, meaningfully titled, pages numbered, and fastened. Maximum of four points		