

Lesson Plan: Recognizing and joining the scholarly conversation

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Rhetoric 105: 1st year composition course
Rhetoric Library Guide: <http://guides.library.illinois.edu/rhetoric>

Description:

This activity was developed for a first-year writing class and is focused on understanding and identifying the concept of the scholarly conversation. Using the course assignment as a jumping off point, the library instruction will introduce evaluative criteria that can be applied to sources located via a variety of venues, from web pages to databases to blogs. Working as teams, students evaluate a specific source, determining the conversation in which the author is engaging and whether or not that particular conversation is likely to contribute value to an academic paper focused on that topic.

This activity can be adapted to subject-specific courses at varying levels. The important element that must carry over is the focus on the scholarly conversation. Discussions with instructors can determine the relevancy of this particular focus.

Objectives:

- Students will be able to recognize the value of information on the same topic from a variety of academic and popular perspectives in order to contextualize the scope of the scholarly conversation.
- Students will be able to apply evaluative criteria to resources in order to determine the appropriateness of each for their research task.

Activities:

(10-15 minutes)

The class assignment expectations (as stated by the instructor) will be reviewed to provide students with a context for the instruction that is about to take place.

- Relevant sections of the assignment may be read.
- Students are asked if there are any questions and the classroom instructor addresses them.

The *Is my source scholarly?* document (table side) is briefly reviewed. Particular attention is paid to the “Author” category in order to assist students in developing a context for understanding the author of the conversations in the activity that follows.

- Relevance to the conversation topic is emphasized.
- Correlations to personal conversations are stressed.

Students are directed to the “Class Activity” tab in the Rhetoric Library Guide.

- The class is divided into groups or pairs and each group or pair reviews one resource. As a group they are to determine both the credibility and the value of the conversation taking place in that resource. They must focus on the questions posed on the screen.
 - What does this resource add to the conversation surrounding this topic?

- Would you engage with this resource as part of scholarly research? Why or why not?
- Each group/pair shares with the class their evaluation of the resource, answering the questions regarding conversation.
 - Groups are expected to address specific points they discovered about the resource based on criteria in the *Is my source scholarly?* document. (authors, publishers, purpose)
 - All students should look at the page each group/pair is reviewing.

Assessment:

- Assessment takes place as each group/pair presents the results of their source review. Did they appropriately apply evaluation criteria? Were there elements of the evaluation criteria that were confusing to them?

ACRL Information Literacy Framework:

- Relevant Frame: *Scholarship as conversation*
 - Learners who are developing their information literate abilities identify barriers to entering scholarly conversation via various venues; critically evaluate contributions made by others in participatory information environments.