Annotated Bibliography: In-Class Scaffolding Exercises

Read a short article

Give students a short article to read—something from the LA Times or another newspaper works well. It needs to be something that can be read and understood quickly. Here is an example: “Starbucks Shells out Bread for Bakery: La Boulange Will Help Improve Food Offerings” http://library.calstate.edu/northridge/articles/record?id=FETCH-proquest_dll_26784735711

Have the students read the article individually, and then give them a few minutes to write a brief annotation. Tell them whether the annotation should be a summary, a critique, or both.

Choose one:
• Have each student read their annotation aloud to the class.
• Or put students in groups and ask each group to pick the best annotation from their group, which they will read aloud.
• Or have the students turn in their annotations anonymously, and decide as a group which annotation is the clearest or easiest to understand.

Talk about why one annotation was more effective than another.

As a group, create the MLA or APA citation for this article on the white board, chalk board, or data projector screen. It’s okay to have EasyBib or another tool bibliography tool open; your goal is to help students see how easy it is to create a good citation.

Once students complete this exercise, remind them that when they work on their annotated bibliography for a grade, they are doing the same thing. Steps they should take:

1. Read the source.
2. If it’s not good, find another source and repeat until you find a good source.
3. Write a short annotation.
4. Prepare the citation.

Watch a short video

Another idea is to watch a short video and have students write an annotation. Or have them think of a TV show or movie they have recently watched, and write a short description for a friend. Then they will realize that it can be useful and even fun to create an annotation.