ENG 210-27 March 2021

**Some notes, post-conferences**

Be sure you have a debatable yes/no non-trivial question to answer. Using the three-part topic development process, be sure that the second question(s) is of the sort:

because I want to find out whether, or if or how important, not just what (e.g., not “What are the effects of the Internet on learning?”) or how (e.g. How does social media affect relationships?) (see *Who Says?*, Chapter 4). Remember that often your question needs to be in the form of is X a *significant* problem/improvement/development. This will also mean that the argument needs to be two-sided—maybe it’s not significant, or it’s an improvement but there are drawbacks.

Keep refining your topic as you do more research (6 annotated sources + mini essay). Consider letting the research define your topic: perhaps you started with something you’d prefer doing, and you are finding too much or too little on it, but you notice another thread in the research that keeps coming up.

The sources are going to help “answer” your question(s)—it’s not just what you think the answer is, so you may have to take a guess at that answer for your mini-essay.

* For annotations, you must write your summary of the source in your own words, as practice for the process of the actual paper, rather than cutting and pasting.
* Don’t use book reviews as sources—use those to find and cite from the book itself (and don’t forget inter-library loan). Also, get the original research, not a newspaper article or blog post about someone’s research.
* Watch dates on sources—don’t use a 1999 source to describe the state of Internet use (but do use it for historical perspective).
* Good sources are often those with data—how many people have suffered or benefitted from this?
* If there is a DOI (Digital Object Identifier) number, include that instead of the Web URL. Typically, this will be for books or academic journals that are *not* online-only, such as the one I published. Always look for a PDF and cite that (so there are page numbers) with a DOI if you can find the DOI (if not, just add (ProQuest) or whatever database you used). Some academic journals such as *CyberPsychology, Behavior & Social Networking* are online-only, and are not actually printed. You should still use the DOI, but you could also say Retrieved from <http://www.liebertpub.com/overview/cyberpsychology-behavior-brand-social-networking/10/>
* Several people found what are called “open source” journals. Examples include Gale Database, Sage Journals, Science Direct, NIH and Sciendo. These should still have a journal title, so you don’t say Sage Journals, but they will have their own URL (http://www.sagejournals.com or whatever)
* If there is a URL, turn off the blue underlining before you print it.
* The format I showed on the group source and the next assignment was for a book only; see the links in the proposal assignment or on the Schedule page for APA formats for other sources, and for a sample paper with a full Works Cited (References) list, as well as my JVL paper.
* Give year, no date for scholarly journals. Give volume and issue e.g. *25*(3) after the Journal name. No publisher (e.g. Sage or Taylor & Francis in my paper’s case) for academic journals. For all sources, make sure you have either a publication *(The New York Times*) or a publisher (World Health Organization).
* Always proofread and correct assignments; use an appropriate tone (e.g. “children,” not “kids”). *From now on, third-person only* (except for your journals). That often means language such as: This paper will argue that … .

On the research as you go along, aim for a topic area that can answer a question that solves a problem—something that matters to people (Chapter 4/the “So what?” question). Make sure that you are not just doing a “data dump”—providing a bunch of research just to get to the page requirement (10+).

Consider the background of your topic, including the situation before the Internet existed, e.g. What kind of a problem was bullying? How has cyberbullying changed that? Is it getting better or worse (remember my chart or the Hype Curve of issues vs time):

Issue

Time

Is this more of an issue for certain demographic groups (ages, genders, professions, ethnicities)? Also consider the same problem in different places or cultures—is this mainly an issue in the U.S.? In other words, how does this issue change over time and in space?

Don’t forget your research journal, noting steps along the way, such as how the conference went.