

Sample Annotated Bibliography

Some of your courses will require you to write an annotated bibliography. An annotated bibliography is a working list of references—books, journal articles, online documents, etc.—that you will use for an essay, research paper, or project.

Although there are no strict formatting guidelines for the annotated bibliography itself, each reference should be cited in APA format. After each citation, provide a summary of the source, indicating how it will inform your essay, research paper, or project. Many pertinent ideas and supporting details come from analyzing and summarizing your sources.

An annotated bibliography helps you get a head start on your assignment, and it encourages you to focus your topic as you assess each source, choosing the key ideas and sources that are most valuable for your assignment. Also, you can keep track of your sources as well as the correct formatting for each reference.

Note: Many of the references listed here are older sources. Please be aware that some Ashford classes may require that students use sources that were published within the last five years.

Provided below is a sample annotated bibliography.

Annotated Bibliography

Aslanian, C. B. (2001). *Adult students today*. New York, NY: The College Board.

Exceptional resource for statistics on adult learners and their motivation for returning to school. The author presents a study spanning 20 years that illustrates extensive demographics including average age, income, travel distance, cost, ethnicity, gender, religion, and field of study.

Brookfield, S. (n.d.). *Adult learning: An overview*. Retrieved from

<http://www.nl.edu/ace/Resources/Documents/AdultLearning.html>

Excellent and thorough article covering four major research areas: self-directed learning, critical reflection, experiential learning, and learning to learn. The author refutes current definitions of adult learning and motivation and proposes instead that culture, ethnicity, and personality have greater significance than are espoused in current descriptions of

adult learners. This article is interesting to consider because it diametrically opposes the existing and widely accepted views on the subject.

Donaldson, J. F., Graham, S. W., Martindill, W., & Bradley, S. (2000). Adult undergraduate students: How do they define their experiences and their success? *Journal of Continuing Higher Education, 48*(2), 2–11. Retrieved from the ERIC database.

A small study confirming current thinking that adults return to school for primarily external reasons, e.g., a major life event or career advancement. The research further illustrates that actual success in learning comes from an internal locus of control that includes life experience, maturity, motivation, and self-monitoring.

Marienau, C. (1999). Self-assessment at work: Outcome of adult learners' reflections on practice. *Adult Education Quarterly, 49*(3), 135. Retrieved from the ProQuest Central database.

A qualitative study of adults in graduate programs and their use of self-assessment and experiential learning from the perspectives of performance at work and personal development. This article is enlightening, for it explores the benefits to the adult learner of self-assessment and introspection. The concept of purposefulness and the need for the adult learner to connect learning with concrete experience are discussed.

Merriam, S. B., & Caffarella, R. S. (2001). *Adult learning theories, principles and applications*. San Francisco, CA: Wiley.

This is a textbook used for the training of instructors of adult students. The text contains several excellent and pertinent chapters devoted to the self-determination of the adult student and the need for programs to be designed that allow adults to use their problem-solving skills.

Moore, B. L. (1999). *Adult student learners*. Retrieved from

http://www.sa.psu.edu/sara/pulse/adults_65.shtml

This website contains a survey of adult learners' perceptions of their educational experience at Penn State. The study contains a large survey sample and generally confirms the findings of other studies at major universities. The important information gleaned is that the emphasis on adult learner programs at traditional universities is a much higher priority due to the increasing population of adult students.

Sheldon, K. M., & Houser, M. L. (2001). General motivation for college measure. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 80, 152–165. Retrieved from the OVID database.

This source is a psychosocial instrument designed to measure adult students' general motivation for attending college. This instrument is appropriate to my research topic because it profiles adult students and rates motivation in terms of both intrinsic and extrinsic factors. It supports the findings in my other sources and adds another component: the pursuit of happiness.