



## ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHIES

### INTRODUCTION

An annotated bibliography is a list of citations to books, articles, and other documents. Each citation provides complete bibliographic information.

- For journal articles the citation includes: author(s), date, title of article, title of journal, volume, issue, and pages.
- For books the citation includes: author(s), date, book title, edition, place of publication and publisher.

The citation is followed by a brief paragraph of about 100-200 words. This paragraph, which is the annotation, may be descriptive or critical. The annotation paragraph may include some or all of the following:

- Authority or qualifications of the author
- Scope and main purpose of the work
- Intended audience
- Reading level
- Biases
- Accuracy
- Quality of the work
- Usefulness or relevance of the work
- Relationship to other studies/works

### DESCRIPTIVE/SUMMARY ANNOTATIONS

#### Definition

The form for a descriptive (also called summary) annotation should be that of a paragraph. It should consist of an opening sentence, one or more sentences for the body of the annotation and a concluding or closing sentence. The citation precedes the descriptive/summary annotation and requires complete bibliographic information for the item being annotated.

#### Example

**Citation:** McLagan, P. (1991). The dark side of quality. *Training* 28(11), 31-33.

**Descriptive/Summary Annotation:** The author explains that while total quality is a good thing for America and the companies that embrace it, there are three potentially large problems that, if not recognized and addressed, can cause the demise of the effort in the organization. The three major pitfalls to avoid are described in detail and include (1) an obsession with processes, (2) an inability to “think outside the box,” and (3) an obsession with teams. It is also noted that these do not necessarily occur in an organization, but they should be watched for and dealt with. The author suggests that total quality can be a beneficial strategy if handled correctly.

## CRITICAL ANNOTATIONS

### Definition

A critical annotation describes a work, but it also includes an evaluation or judgment which in effect tells the reader whether the work is worth reading. In addition to summarizing the content of the work, a critical annotation will also discuss aspects of the work which reflect its quality. The author's qualification, unless they are extremely well known, should be stated. The relationship of the author's writing to others in the same field should be considered. The critical annotation should compare or contrast approaches to the topic and conclusions. The concluding summary statement should include your overall judgment of the value of the work. The citation precedes the summary annotation and requires complete bibliographic information for the item being annotated.

### Example

**Citation:** McLagan, P. (1991). The dark side of quality. *Training* 28(11), 31-33.

**Critical Annotation:** Patricia McLagan, an employee training consultant, contributing author to Training, and noted authority in Human Resource Development, explains that while total quality is a good thing for America and the companies that embrace it, potentially large problems can arise from the process that could lead to its demise. In a clear and concise way, she describes three such pitfalls, but cites relatively few real company examples. McLagan provides well thought out descriptions of the problems, which include (1) an obsession with processes, (2) an inability to "think outside the box," and (3) an obsession with teams. She concludes the article with a discussion that is somewhat unrelated and broader in scope than the balance of the article. McLagan states her points well but leaves the reader wondering how the problems she uncovers can be effectively solved.

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

For additional help writing an annotated bibliography see the following resources:

### OhioLINK Books:

- [On Compiling an Annotated Bibliography by James L. Harner, 2000](#)
- [Compiling the Annotated Bibliography: A Guide by Michael J. Eula & Janet Madden, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. 2001](#)

### Websites:

- [How to Write Annotated Bibliographies](#), University of Newfoundland Libraries
- [How to Prepare an Annotated Bibliography](#), Cornell University Libraries