**Part B: Listening to the Conversation**

You have picked an issue and focus question for your research. It is now time to “listen to the conversation” about your issue. You will be keeping track of what at least 4 different people have to say so that you can understand the currents of discussion about the issue.

**Step 1: Find 4 sources that represent different aspects of the whole conversation.**

For this project, you will need to read, annotate, and evaluate sources from at least 4 distinct voices in the current conversation about your topic. Try to be representative by including different viewpoints and angles on the issue.

**Step 2: Read and annotate your sources.**

Annotate your sources for two things:

* Record main ideas in the margins of the text or on a separate sheet of paper.
* Identify and analyze important quotes.
  + Identify quotes that are particularly insightful or well-phrased.
  + Evaluate the strength or logic of ideas.

**Step 3: Create a record and evaluation of each of your sources (aka an annotated bibliography).**

It is important to keep track of sources as you research. Copy the correctly-formatted MLA citation for each source into a Google document.

If your source does not include a MLA-formatted citation, use this tool to help you create one: **http://www.easybib.com.**

Follow each citation with a short paragraph about the source. The paragraph(s) should include the following information:

1. **Summary**: Provide an overview of the purpose or points of the source. Focus on the broad topic, subtopics, and purpose of the source.
2. **Evaluation:** What is the importance of this source? Is it credible? Does it have any bias? How does it compare and contrast with other sources?

**Check off your annotations & annotated bibliography off when complete.**

Sample Annotated Bibliography

Research Question: Does a student’s participation in sports, particularly swimming, help or hurt the student’s academic achievements?

Graham, Perry, and Margaret Lee Kozol. “Teenage Startling Statistics.” The Journal of

Secondary Education 58 (Winter 2000): 764-89. Print.

This article lists information concerning students’ extracurricular activities, test scores, grades, college acceptance, and scholarship rates, etc. Since the article is from a journal, it is likely a credible source, and the formal, business-like tone and focus on data add to that impression. The data is drawn from national surveys and the College Board. Most of the text is concerned with teens dropping out of high school and/or not succeeding in college, which is not relevant to my research question. The charts and statistics, however, seem applicable. The most helpful chart is one that shows graduation rates, GPAs, and extracurricular involvement. Students with extracurricular involvement have higher graduation rates and GPAs than students not involved in extracurricular activities.

McKay, Jefferson, and Hillary Jones. Sports and Studies: Connections and Correlations for

Championship Students. Farmington, NM: Barowski Books, 1997. Print.

The authors of this book, a former track star and a sports journalist, argue that a student’s involvement with sports helps motivate him/her to do well in school. The student athlete learns discipline, goal-setting, and motivational techniques. He/she often also receives pressure/support from the coach to do well in school. The book appears very biased toward sports and almost seems like a motivational book. I have only skimmed two chapters, but, so far, it doesn’t appear very scientific but relies more on a couple of coaches’ opinions and student-athlete success stories. The authors also include a lot of photos of various athletes. The text doesn’t provide as many statistics or studies as some of my other sources, but it does provide some strong quotes and reasoning.

St. Rosemary Educational Institution. “Does Sports Affect Academic Average?”

Schoolworkhelper.net. St. Rosemary Educational Institution, 2013. Web. 11 June 2013.

This article, likely written by a high school or college group of students, shows a survey of 62 students who were asked how much time they spent in sports, and if the students felt that the sports affected their grades. The hypothesis was that such a large time commitment outside of class must negatively impact grades, but the conclusion was that perhaps sports did not affect grades. The study is not the best in that there is nothing to compare the grades to and the survey question is not precisely worded. Furthermore, the article is a little sketchy since no author is provided. But the graph of student responses is useful because students-athletes’ opinions on the sports-academics connection is worthwhile, even if it’s just based on one survey.

Yee, Kiasha. “The Downside of Teen Over-Involvement.” Teen Studies 41:3 (1999): 1120-21.

This article reveals the psychological problems that stress and too many commitments can lead to for teenagers today. There are no credentials given to the author, and the article is very short and doesn’t provide a lot of explanation, so it doesn’t seem as scholarly as some of my other sources. The article does provide a few anecdotes and also a few quotes from doctors.