

## Discussing Assigned Readings Online in Educ 428

2015-2 -- L. Kanevsky

You will be responding to readings and discussing each other's responses to them online with members of your Colour Groups between this class and June 13<sup>th</sup>. You'll use Marginalia to annotate and discuss each other's responses. We will revisit the content of the readings in face-to-face activities when we gather on campus. It is essential that you post your responses and comment on your classmates' responses by the **Monday** before our meeting, or sooner, so you and members of your group have at least that much time to discuss your response online. Your comments on others posts must be completed by midnight of the **Thursday** before our class. You can begin reading and responding as soon as you like. Many of the readings are long and take a significant amount of time to write-up and insert in the Moodle.

Guidelines for the three parts of the process we'll use to discuss the readings online are provided below.

1. Writing your response
2. Posting your response on the course website ("the Moodle")
3. Discussing all responses posted members of your group

Any questions you have should be posted on our Moodle in the discussion forum titled "Questions and suggestions regarding assignments" (in the Course Resources block). Dr. Kanevsky will answer them there.

The deadlines for posting your response and discussing those of your classmates are:

Post your responses to the assigned readings by:	Discuss group members' responses by:	For class on:
Monday, June 8	Thursday, June 11	Saturday, June 13
Monday, June 29	Thursday, July 2	Saturday, July 4
Monday, July 20	Thursday, July 23	Saturday, July 25

### 1. Writing your response

Prepare your response in your word processor and save it. Copy and paste the saved file in to the discussion forum on the Moodle after it's complete. Check the format in the Moodle forum and make corrections.

Your response to each reading will have 1 summary, 4 highlights with reflections, and 1 lingering question with its significance to you. Use headings to label each section.

- A. Your Summary** of the content of the chapter or article
- Begin with the heading "Summary"
  - Your summary should be 4-10 sentences long
  - It should summarize the major points or themes addressed in the reading
  - It should be an objective synthesis of the ideas--no opinions or reflection
  - Leave a few blank lines after your summary and the heading for the next section to spread out the text on the screen
  - Note: I've been told this is the most difficult part of this task, and the most time-consuming. I know it was when I did it.

**B. Four highlights with your reflection on each one**

- Begin the second section of your response with the heading “Highlights and Reflections”
- Begins with the highlight in regular text (no italics). Each highlight is a quote copied from the text of the assigned reading that caught your attention. It should be long enough to be meaningful when taken out of the context of the article. They are usually a few sentences long; no more than a paragraph.
- End each quote with the page number it came from in parentheses.
- Follow each highlight with 3 or 4 blank lines.
- Your reflection should be deep and rich. It should describe why and how the quote provoked you? Why is it important to you? What does it make you wonder? How did it make you feel and why? How does the highlight reflect or conflict with your beliefs, knowledge and/or experiences? Does it have implications for your practice? It could be that you strongly agree or disagree with it; it could be inconsistent with what you believe or have read elsewhere; it could be that you’d never thought about the idea in that way before and it intrigues you....whatever it was that ‘hooked’ you as you read the article or chapter.
- Your reflection should be 4 to 6 sentences long and *in italics*.
- Follow your reflection with 3 or 4 blank lines before beginning your next highlight.

**C. One lingering question with its professional and/or personal significance**

- Begin the final section with the heading “Lingering Question and Its Significance for Me”
- A lingering question is a question that arose for you as you read the article/chapter. It might have been addressed in the reading but you are not satisfied; it still lingers in your mind. Pose that question—only one question.
- Leave at least one blank line between the question and its significance to you.
- The significance of your question may relate to your work and/or your personal experience. Why is this question or the issue it raises important to you? What implications does it have for you, for students, schools, society, civilization? The scope of the significance is up to you.
- The “significance” should be between 4 and 6 sentences long and should be in italics.

## 2. Posting your response

Transfer your entire response from your word-processing program to the discussion forum on the Moodle. Save it on your computer before attempting to copy and paste it in to the discussion forum... just in case cyber gremlins attack and destroy the version you are trying to post.

Now go to the Moodle.

Locate the Discussion that is provided for the reading you are responding to. Each reading appears in its own 'block' on the Moodle.

Click on the link to the Discussion.

Read the brief text there.

Click on "Add a new discussion topic"

This is what you should see but the boxes will be empty. I've typed a bit of text in this example so you'll be able to see where the information goes.

Go back to the response you prepared in your word processor and copy the entire thing.

Jump back to the "new topic" window in the discussion forum. Paste the text of your response in to the "Message" box, below all of the formatting icons. If you prepared it in Word, use the paste button especially for this purpose. It's in the bottom row of formatting icons. Hover over each icon and text describing its purpose will appear.

When you have finished entering your response, click on the "Post to Forum" button.

You will be taken back to the table that lists the posts to this Discussion. You should see your response at or near the top of the list with the name you gave it and your name.

Click on the name of your response under Discussion to see what your post looks like. It is very likely you are going to want to work on the format a bit. To do that, click on "Edit" at the bottom right corner of your response. This will take you back to a window that looks very much like the image above. Now click the square button to the left of the word "Paragraph" and two more rows of formatting options (icons) will appear. Most of the formatting icons behave like those in your word processor. As mentioned before, each will tell you its purpose if you hover over it with your cursor. Try some of them and then press the "Save Changes" button. Check it to see if you're happy with it and it meets the formatting requirements of this assignment.

Once again you will be back at the list of Discussion Forums. You have 30 minutes to edit or delete your response from the moment you initially post it. After the 30 minutes expires, the “Edit” and “Delete” options at the bottom of your entry will disappear. You can contact Dr. Kanevsky if you want to make further changes after that happens and she will try to help you.

### 3. Discussing the responses posted by each member of your group

The last step in this process is to discuss the responses posted by members of your group. You will be using **Marginalia** annotations (comments) to do this. Annotations allow you to comment on specific parts of the response rather than replying to the whole thing. Please make at least four discussion comments on every response posted by a member of your group.

Here’s how to annotate:

Click on the name of a response in the list of Discussions. You’ll only be able to see those posted by members of your group.

Does the Marginalia bar say “Shared Annotations”? If not, set it so it does.

Read your classmate’s entire response. You may discuss any part of it. Each of your **discussion comments** should contain the same sorts of things as your reflections on your highlights but they are shorter [2-4 sentences]. You can include questions directed to any member of your group or all of them. Or you can ask for clarification by saying, “I’m not sure what you mean here” or “Please explain this.” The annotation tool has a 250 character limit on each comment.

“**Chit-chat**” is also welcome. Chit-chat is very brief—phrases like “Me too!”, “So true”, or “Not in my school!” It might also be a question like “What would that look like?” Please be generous with chit-chat. It lets others know how you’re feeling about the ideas in the response without going in to detail.

For each bit you’d like to discuss, select/highlight the words in the classmate’s response that you want to comment on. Press return. A flashing cursor will appear on the right side of the page. That is where your comment is going to appear.

Type your comment. Press return when you are finished. Your comment should appear beside the text you’d selected and the selected text should now be highlighted (yellow). You can revise your annotation by clicking on it if you want to change something.

You can find more help with annotations by clicking on the “Shared Annotations” bar. A few options will appear. “Annotation Help” is what you want. You can print that information if you’d like to have it available offline while you work.

Repeat this process for at least three more discussion comments elsewhere in the response.

Make an effort to use chit-chat and discussion comments to get a real conversation going. This will mean visiting each response, yours and those of others, a few times to see what’s new and what others have said. Go beyond the minimum number of comments; keep it lively.

That’s when a true discussion gets rolling—especially if the author of the response joins in with additional comments in the margin as well.

### 4. Extending the Discussion—CARRY ON!

If the members of your group want to continue your discussion of one or more of the responses beyond the scope of this assignment—please do! Although the minimum number of discussion comments needs to be completed on the Thursday prior to a class, you can certainly go beyond them before and after. You can use the “Reply” option as well if you’d like. It appears in the lower left corner of the response. It’s a good option when the right column get overloaded with comments/annotations which makes the discussion hard to follow. “Replies” will appear at the bottom of a response and can carry the conversation to a fresh location on the page.

